



the *active*
learning centre

Annual Review September 2003 - August 2004



A woman's right to participate in decisions

Poverty rates are falling in many parts of the world. Discrimination continues to exclude women from the benefits of development. Where women have the opportunities they can raise farming output, earn more cash by working outside the home, have fewer and raise healthier children.

But lack of control over family resources is one reason why even in growing economies child hunger remains high, why we are unlikely to achieve child survival targets, especially for girls, and why in developing countries 4 out of 10 women still give birth without medical help.

The impact of the Zambia rights project

22 women volunteers trained 114 community animators who held 361 discussion groups for 11,581 people, one-third of them men. We know from our evaluation for the European Union that many more listened in and participants took the debate to traditional meetings and church groups. Two manuals were produced, one to guide the animators, another for the workshop participants covering: rights of citizens, women and children, building democracy and the Zambian Poverty Reduction Strategy. Each workshop chose two topics. A short presentation was followed by discussion and role play to develop speaking, lobbying and negotiating skills. The animators were members of

YWCA, Women's Lobby Group, Women for Change, the National Council of Catholic Women, teachers and community workers.

Local monitoring of the poverty reduction strategy, challenges to land allocation and campaigns about farming inputs and clean water were some of the results. Women contested seats in local elections and parent teachers associations (PTA), groups went out to persuade parents to send girls to school and schools to readmit girls after the birth of a child. Chiefs, who often took part in the workshops, were lobbied about traditional practices including domestic violence and sexual cleansing.



called upon to advise

Iraq women find a voice

Requested by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and organised by the British Council, a two day workshop was developed and facilitated by Active Learning Centre in June. Iraq is not a poor country. If there are elections soon, women want to take part. To do so they need to know how. They want to prioritise the rebuilding of communities and organise women to work with the interim minister for women. We worked with them because this was a unique opportunity to focus attention on the voices of women in Iraq. Human rights documents provided a framework. The women's discussion was intense and thoughtful. Their concerns focused firmly on the future of the country.



discussion was intense

Kuwait

Esther Quinn reported that women participants in this FCO funded workshop reflected that they had more education, financial independence, work opportunities and influence in society than their mothers ever had, but they still lack political rights. The workshop focused on specific areas; rights to

inherit, improved access to jobs and maternity rights, equal chances to be promoted at work, rights to child support and custody after divorce but they also wanted faster progress towards a more liberal society in which women could move freely and confidently.

Zambia trainers gain university qualification

11 trainers in the Zambia project, most of whom have no higher education, successfully completed our Community Educators' module accredited by Glasgow Caledonian University. The module involved attendance at the training for trainers' courses, a portfolio of work and a practical assessment. The external examiner from Glasgow University commented on their very high level of understanding

of the communities in which they worked.

"The students in Zambia managed to complete despite difficult circumstances and limited resources. Some have become reflective and creative practitioners and others more critical thinkers. I look forward to seeing more work"
Lynette Jordan



reflective and creative practitioners

"Poverty everywhere is a threat to human security..."

"Poverty everywhere is a threat to human security... and... a denial of human rights". Usha Brown joined us for this workshop which brought together UNESCO project staff from across the world. In his opening remarks Pierre Sané, Assistant Director General for Social and Human Sciences in UNESCO reminded everyone of 'The Vienna Declaration' statement that poverty is a denial of

human rights. He noted that we do not see campaigns to dismantle the structures that produce and reproduce poverty even though people who manipulate such structures commit human rights violations. He emphasised UNESCO's contribution to poverty reduction in advocating for a rights approach and using projects to identify good practice and lesson learning.

China: workers' rights

Kate Phillips' evaluation visit this year found this British Council partnership with the University, State Radio and the Chinese Women's Federation (CWF) in Guangdong to be broadly on track.

The radio programme featuring women workers' rights is well received, open air campaigns are creating lots of interest, the project publications are very informative and training activities have developed capacity. But some things are more difficult to develop. Hotlines are running but are not very busy and CWF are not interacting at the factory level in the ways envisaged by the project.



open air rights campaigns are creating interest

Dissemination seminar in Turkey

Public awareness raising was the final activity in this very successful British Council managed, FCO funded, project. NGOs from the South East had the opportunity to discuss their work on violence with national NGO members, lawyers, police, Human Rights Ministry personnel and academics. Around 120 people took part in workshops on implementing the law on violence, women's organisations' role in social change, and the lack of work and housing for victims of violence. During the workshops government officials, including security personnel

and policemen, were challenged by project participants to improve official responses.

The project has greatly increased cooperation. Campaigns have led to a greater demand for counselling and legal advice which organisations are now better equipped to provide. They admitted that before the project many "had no systematic methodology in counselling women" and used to simply "cry with them". Jan McLeod and Dinah Bennett joined us in working with this project.

Political skills

The World Bank argues for measures to strengthen women's voices in politics. Research shows that a woman's voice can improve the impact of development policies, reduce corruption and strengthen accountability to voters. 30 countries now have special measures for women, many review the gender impact of their budgets, others have strong links between civil groups and government.

In Azerbaijan we trained 40 parliamentary aspirants and 10 trainers, from a range of political groups, who will run a series of follow up workshops. In Ethiopia 160 trainers have educated 4,550 women across the country. In Poland we held a workshop with 24 young women. In Romania we trained 25 who in turn developed 38 workshops with 1,025 participants. We aimed to encourage their political parties to recruit and provide a better environment for women and support women candidates in the coming elections.

In Tanzania we have conducted a five year partnership with British Council and Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) to support the cross party parliamentary women's group over 60 members of which attended the current and final training which will prepare them for the next elections.



a woman's voice can improve the impact of development

Girls in school

Girls do not attend school in some parts of China because parents can't afford school fees, daughters are expected to work in the home and schools may be far away and standards poor. This DFID funded project is aimed at getting girls into school by building the capacity of the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) to

advocate girls rights to parents, teachers and education officials. Customs are changing, nowadays girls do migrate from poor areas to work and send funds home to support their parents but there is still a need to advocate special measures in poor areas to ensure equality policy is implemented.



getting girls into school

Mapping study with non-governmental groups in Ethiopia

Gil Long from Active Learning Centre took part in this European Union study which found that building mutual trust between government and civil groups is a long, slow process in countries with no existing tradition of civil consultation. A better legal framework, consultation procedures, and freedom of information to allow monitoring of government policy could all help in building an alternative governance framework. Development associations

exist in Ethiopia, as well as many membership organizations for women, farmers and youth. Their grass roots nature would suggest that with capacity building they could provide a popular voice. However, government involvement in some groups raises crucial questions about civil independence and minority rights and the ethnic base of all of these organisations raises problems in terms of national policy dialogue and mutual trust.

Poverty workshops and continuing contacts with Croatia

Poverty workshops continue to be popular, with over 60 DFID staff attending workshops in Nairobi and London. The Nairobi workshop drew staff from offices across East Africa.

Esther Quinn and Lynette Jordan trained women for Active Learning Centre and recorded their experience

of living in Croatia after the conflict in Former Yugoslavia. They wrote an article for Concept magazine and a paper which was accepted for a Community Development conference in Melbourne. Some of their participants have formed 'the Dominoes' support group and Esther and Lynette have recently returned to record more of their story.

People

Noreen Burrows

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

Dinah Bennett

Women's entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

Usha Brown

Anti-poverty researcher and campaigner.

Gil Long

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

Kate Phillips

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

Joseph Simekha

Rights and democracy campaigner and poverty researcher.

Esther Quinn

Trade union educator with extensive experience of working with women.

Lynette Jordan

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

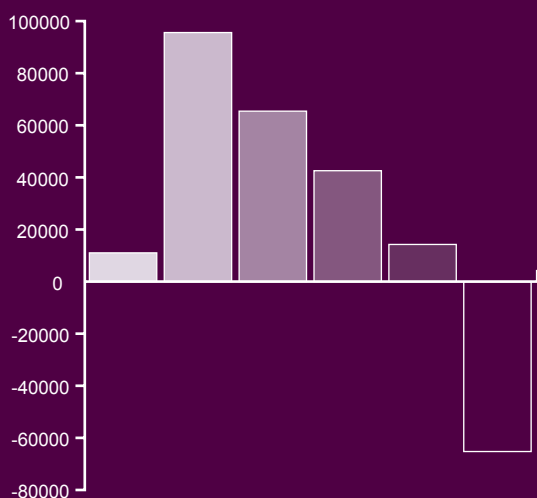
Brenda Graham

Administrator and business manager.



The Active Learning Centre wishes to acknowledge the work of our partners, especially the valuable volunteer work of all of the adult educators we have trained in Zambia, Ethiopia, Romania, Turkey and Tanzania, the support of the European Union to the programme in Zambia and our partnership with British Council in developing our work with women and girls.

Funding and finances



	Costs of generating funds	£11,021	7%
	Direct project costs	£95,598	50%
	Directors' salaries for consultancy services	£65,424	40%
	Support costs	£42,562	26%
	Administration	£14,256	9%
	Movement reserves*	(£65,242)	(40%)

* Negative movement in reserves represents the forward funding of project activities.



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