

Promoting gender equality worldwide November 2000, newsletter no. 21



**Gender
and
masculinities**

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Masculinities and gender analysis

At the beginning of the new millennium, gender analysis is revealing new concerns. The twentieth century was, in gender terms, the era of women. Feminist organisations, academic analysis and civil rights progress have meant a difference for women in many spheres of life. The new visibility of men as a gendered group creates a need for men to address many of the old feminist debates, as well as the new challenges of globalisation.

*Ruth Pearson
University of Leeds*

In most countries women have gained the right to equality in the political sphere. In the economy, restrictions on women's paid employment have been lifted and their economic contribution to the family budget is generally recognised and valued. There are laws enshrining the principle of equal pay for equal work, and women have entered all kinds of technical, professional and even military occupations. In the cultural sphere, women's writing, painting and other arts have enjoyed increasing recognition. In many religions women participate much more fully in rituals and community life, and are even being appointed to holy offices.

The changes in the private sphere, however, have been less rapid. In spite of much talk about 'new men' and 'liberated women', in virtually all countries women still retain primary responsibility for household well-being – infant and child care, shopping, cooking and cleaning, care of the sick and the elderly,

and organisation of the household finances. Moreover women have been less than successful in changing certain persistent dynamics of gender relations – violence against women, domestic despotism, and degrading and dehumanising representation of women's sexuality for advertising, entertainment and profit.

Focusing on men

There is, however, another important change going on. The study of men and masculinity in all its various forms has come out of the shadows. Men have been named – not as natural and timeless representatives of all rational humanity but as embodied outcomes of different historical social processes, grounded in the reality of lived experience. Men and their masculinities are no longer treated (or ignored) as though they represented unchanging and unchangeable standards around which women have to negotiate, bargain or organise.

Editorial

The theme of 'masculinities' for this edition of *the network newsletter* was chosen in response to widespread current interest. NGOs and academics in the UK world of gender and development have been debating questions of male power, identity and behaviour at length over the last year. The issues have also been prominent in Northern social policy debates and popular media, although not always in a very analytical form.

In many ways, the new focus is to be welcomed, as a real

analysis of gendered power structures has to look at the powerful, as well as the subordinated, and to recognise the complexities of power and powerlessness. Masculinities can be questioned and transformed by men themselves, creating potential for transforming gender relations, and for alliances with women's movements. The danger, however, is that this central challenge becomes lost among ideas of 'male exclusion', and that a simplistic focus on men encourages a backlash against the limited gains made by women. In order to avoid this, we have to be aware of

the different arguments and motives behind this emerging focus on the 'naming of men'.

The articles in this edition are more theoretical than usual. This reflects the nature of the current debate, but also the lack of specific projects which tackle masculinities. We are particularly pleased, therefore, to have two excellent examples of such work from Namibia and South Asia.

Our general articles include a report from the recent elections in Ethiopia and a new women's radio advice programme in China. The report

on sexual abuse of schoolgirls in Zimbabwe reflects an encouraging new focus on gender and education by the UK's DFID, which broadens the focus from numbers of girls enrolled, to the gendered nature of education and its institutions.

Our next edition will look at women's organisations, discussing questions of effective organisation and advocacy, including the potential of media strategies and new technologies. Articles should be submitted by 28 February 2001.

Maleness is seen to be as varied as femaleness, as subject to difference according to race, ethnicity, sexuality, family and life cycle position. Different groups of men stand in different relation to the processes of politics or globalisation. After a century of feminism and gender analysis which has problematised women and women's relationship to men, we have now reached a point at which men and men's gender relationships and power are also being deconstructed, questioned and analysed.

Theory and policy

This is not without its problems and contradictions. Men's studies and the study of masculinity has been promoted by a range of political and academic positions. Some embrace the challenge of self critique and the opportunity for change. Others resist the uncomfortable uncertainty of masculinity as a movable category, and have mobilised for a return to the (pre-feminist) *status quo*, which celebrates the difference between men and women and men's 'natural' authority over women. The emergence of a 'critical men's studies' body of research and literature has challenged women's monopoly of deconstructing gendered social relations and their outcomes. Such work has a varied and sometimes uneasy relationship to feminist politics and scholarship.

In policy terms, the masculinist turn of events in gender scholarship and politics also presents considerable challenges. Public legislation and institutions set up to focus on women's inequality have increasingly been invoked and utilised to ensure that men also can have equality of opportunity. Given the systematic gaps that still exist in terms of men and women's actual participation in political office, in salary levels, in educational opportunities and outcomes, in vulnerability to (sexual) violence within and outside the home, what is the significance of focusing on the fact that men are vulnerable too? If both (poor) men and women are losing out because of the unjust and unsustainable economic model of global economic accumulation, what kind of policy response is appropriate?

Development organisations may (or may not) rise to the challenge

of valuing domestic work and encouraging men to play a full role in household tasks – but without a more general policy framework, such efforts will have only limited effects. There has been little evidence of much crossover from new theoretical work and even domestic application to inform macro policy.

Developments in the UK

There have been some interesting recent developments in UK domestic policy which have placed men centre stage. In the area of health provision, a new 'Men's Health Forum' has been established, on the grounds that health education and promotion policy which is sensitive to men's attitudes and approaches will save costs on acute services, since more preventive use will be made of primary services. The gap between men's and women's mortality is persistent, particularly in poorer social groups.

There is also growing disquiet as boys are increasingly outperformed by girls in school examinations. This is generally discussed in terms of negative images and role models for male youth and changing gender roles and expectations of men, rather than provoking thoughtful reflection on the shortcomings of traditional models of masculinity which underlie the assumptions that boys should do better.

Challenging and changing masculinities

It is interesting to note that the issue of men themselves taking on masculinities has been most evident in Southern rather than Northern countries.¹ Particularly in countries in Southern Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and East Asia, the focus has not been limited to violence against women, or lack of active fathering. Groups such as Punto de Encuentro in Nicaragua work with groups of men to challenge the particular dominant masculinity that constructs men as violent.

In contrast, much of the 'critical men's studies' in Northern countries focuses on understanding the changing, contradictory and fragile nature of contemporary masculinities. They do not analyse the ways in which public culture and representation continuously re-present dominant models and standards of masculinity.



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New models of fatherhood?

A casual glance at local television reports, or the recent summit of UN leaders, would lead a Martian to believe that women are not part of public and political life, and reinforces a universal picture of men in power.

There has also been relatively little discussion to date about the implications of liberalisation and marketisation of the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There needs to be a more systematic analysis of the implications of globalisation and the new flexible economy in terms of gender identities and roles of both men and women. The key issues for the future² do not only concern seemingly remote issues of new systems of global production and international trade and investment. They are also about issues very close to home – the implications of the demographic ageing of the population and what that means for the economy of care. Who will be the carers of the present generation, and what recompense will they receive?

The debates and the dynamics of studies of men and masculinity need to address the old feminist issues of the relationship between the public and the private and begin to fashion an agenda that seeks to challenge and transform the values and assumptions about the role of men and women in the modern world.

References:

¹ Pearson 'Which Men, Why Now?' Reflections on Men and Development, in *IDS Bulletin* April 2000, Vol. 31 No. 2.

² Pearson 'All Change? Men, Women and Reproductive Work in the Global Economy' in Special Issue of the *Journal of Development Research*, December 2000, Vol. 12 No. 2.

The naming of men: national and transnational perspectives

Men are gendered, just as gendered as are women. Recent years have seen what Jalna Hanmer called the 'naming of men as men'. This is a lesson that is hard for many men to hear, often even harder to act on. It is a vital issue for theory, politics, policy-making, and indeed personal practice.

*Jeff Hearn
University of Manchester*

There have been many ways in which men have been 'named' in recent years, most noticeably in the Anglophone world and the Nordic region, though similar trends can be seen in much of the world.

The concept of 'anti-sexist men' originates from the issues raised by 'Second Wave' feminism in the 1970s. Other groupings and categories have included 'pro-feminist men' in the 1980s, the 'wild men' who wanted to reclaim some 'authentic' pre-capitalist (and usually reactionary) form of masculinity, and the media invented image of the 'new man' – the gentle, caring partner who both helps with the housework and child care and is smart, stylish and fashion-conscious.

The 1990s in the UK brought 'new lads' – unapologetically obsessed with football, cars and pin-up photographs of women – and 'men's rightists', who have focused on what they see as women's gains in welfare policy and family law. More recently, there have also been extremely worrying moves to gender-conscious, more or less anti-feminist, political organising by men, such as the the Promise Keepers (Christian) and Million Man March (Nation of Islam) in the US, which have stressed the need for a return to traditional gender roles and male power within the family.

Changes and continuities

If we compare women and men now and, say, a hundred years ago, both major changes and major continuities are obvious. Men's power has been modified, in many countries, through the expansion of women's citizenship and is being challenged, fragmented, and, in some cases, transformed. The experience of 'being a man' is now subject to questioning, and recognised as

culturally and ethnically variable. Yet there has been a widespread, stubborn persistence in men's overall dominance – in politics, business, finance, diplomacy, the state, policing, crime, violence, militarism, science, technology, media, and many other social arenas. In these and other ways, men still exclude women from power, participation and gender equality. The status of 'men' as a (the) dominant social category remains virtually unchanged and may even have become intensified in some respects.

One of the many paradoxes of men's situation is the combination of some men's structural power and some men's structural social exclusion, even when they themselves may enact power in their own lives. In many industrialised countries there have been rapid transformations of capitalism, huge losses of men's primary and manufacturing jobs, and often a relative growth in women's paid employment. For some men these changes bring severe personal consequences, exacerbating their relatively poor health, use of drink and drugs, depression, or early death. This is especially striking in some former Eastern bloc countries where men's life expectancy has dropped drastically.

In the UK and some other post-imperial countries there has also been the end of Empire and men's sense of a certain place in the world. More broadly, there is the movement towards the 'wired' or 'information' society, and the consequent social and psychological relocation of men. In different ways these account for some of the uncertainties around what it is to be a man in contemporary society in the North.

'New men' and 'Rambos'

In the domestic sphere there have been equally dramatic develop-

ments, with major changes in interpersonal relations, families, identities and sexualities. Individual fathers' authority, no longer automatic, is in possible tension with that of the state. More separations, divorces and remarriages have taken place, alongside changes in ideas of sexuality. These changes, and the ways in which they are represented, offer men new models of 'how to be men', in the workplace, the kitchen, the bed.

There is now an increasing recognition that ways of being men are culturally and ethnically variable. In the worlds of consumption, advertising, journalism, and popular culture, images of men now include both fierce reaffirmations of boring old 'Rambos' and their like, and more ambiguous and challenging man-woman pictures of 'men', in both mainstream and alternative media.

Research and policy

There is an increasing need to consider the changing global context for men's lives and power. While for most men life remains local in how it is lived, the forces that affect it are becoming more transnational in character; globalisation is in place and becoming ever more developed. This is a very complex, often contradictory picture. At its simplest it means that the fate of men and women is increasingly in the hands of economic, social and cultural processes that transcend the nation. These often involve racialisation, sexualisation, and the reproduction of other massive inequalities between 'North' and 'South' and between various 'cores' and 'peripheries'. These global changes have major implications for men and masculinities.

There has been a considerable growth in both policy development

and in focused, critical research and publishing on men and masculinities over the last twenty years. The Nordic countries have been at the forefront of this, with government and NGO policies and programmes on men's violence, youth work, and educational and training interventions. A government-funded Co-ordinator for Critical Studies on Men is part of the Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research, based in Oslo.

The International Association for Studies on Men has been active since 1993. The journal, *Men and Masculinities* (Sage), has an international editorial board from twenty-two countries. This year the EU has funded a three-year research network on 'The Social Problem of Men', with researchers in ten countries, focused on: men's relations to home and work; men's social exclusion; men's violences; and men's health.

Broadening the focus

As critical studies on men (CSM) have developed, the very concept of 'masculinities' has been criticised

as being too focused on Western history and models, and conceptually vague. Future studies need to be more precise, take a less ethnocentric and less national(istic) view, and look at men in a more global context that takes seriously the implications of global political economy, structural inequalities, radical multiculturalism and post-colonial debates. Research debates are now more explicitly gendered, more varied and sometimes, but certainly not always, more critical. They show that men, like women, are the result of historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces. While there are certain dangers in developing focused academic work on men, it is, with some qualifications, very important to study men, *critically*.

CSM have derived primarily from feminist critiques of men, gay studies, and some men's pro-feminist or anti-sexist responses to feminism. There are also many other critical perspectives that have directly or indirectly problematised men and masculinities. CSM are thus: critical; on men; explicitly gendered; and by men and women, separately or collaboratively. Their develop-

ment implies drastic rewritings of academic disciplines, and their frequent ignoring of the fact that their 'science' has been dominantly done by men, for men, and even primarily about men.

It is amazing how many male social scientists seem able to 'forget' that the economy, the state, international relations, politics, and violence are very difficult to understand without explicit analyses of men and gender relations. It is still possible to be a respected male academic without paying any attention to feminist and critical gender scholarship. It is time for most male social scientists to base their work on more accurate analyses of how societies work and how gender inequalities are maintained.

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For a review of the contemporary situation in the UK, see:

Jeff Hearn (1999) 'A crisis in masculinity, or new agendas for men?' in Sylvia Walby (ed.) *New Agendas for Women*, Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 148–168.



Coal miners in South Wales, enjoying a drink

Feminism and men's theorising on masculinity

Feminists have been theorising men and masculinities in relation to areas such as sexuality, work, the family and reproduction since the 1960s and before. But it is only relatively recently that men themselves have turned to the thorny issue of men, masculinity and power. What implications will this theorising have for women?

Vicky Robinson
Director of Women's Studies
University of Manchester

Issues of men's violence towards women, the changing nature of heterosexual relationships, policy questions concerned with men in relation to their children and men's political, economic and social power are questions of central concern to women globally, albeit in different contexts and with diverse consequences. If, as I do, you believe that academic theory has an influence on practice in all areas of our lives, then the new theories on men and masculinities will have an effect on such issues.

The emerging discipline of 'men's studies' in North America and Europe has been based on the idea that, although traditional scholarship seems to be all about men, it does not allow the study of masculinity as a specific male experience. Men's studies, like women's studies, is seen as opposed to 'patriarchal ideology's masquerade as knowledge' (Brod, 1987). Research by men on masculinity has covered many areas from sexuality, health, violence and culture to male friendships and men's roles as fathers and workers. Central issues have been the definition and discussion of the 'crisis in masculinity' and male identity.

The debt to feminism

Men's studies has recognised that it '... owes much to those voices proclaiming the legitimacy of experience and the need for recognition of the inherent dignity of other marginalised groups (gays, lesbians and people of colour).' The discipline has not been without its critics and controversies, however, from both practitioners of men's studies and from feminists. Some prefer the term 'critical studies of men and masculinities', while feminists have had a diversity of opinions on the relevance and relationship of men's

studies to women's studies and feminist theory.

To varying degrees, those involved in men's studies have recognised the influence and vital importance of feminist ideas, though some have only paid lip-service to the debt. 'Feminism provided the context, the overall set of assumptions within which the current studies of men and masculinities are being conducted' (Morgan, 1992).

There have also been different motivations for the practitioners of men's studies, including the view that feminism has ignored the specific experiences of men, that it is not politically correct for men to study women, or a genuine recognition of male power and the specificity of male experience. It is clear that some men more than others have reflected on their own motivations.

Feminist concerns

Feminists have fairly recently turned their theoretical attention to men's studies and men studying masculinities. There have been various criticisms made by feminists and central ones are similar to those which have concerned some male theorists. These have been about the politics of naming 'men's studies', the relationship of men's studies to feminism, women's studies and gender studies, and the methodologies and perspectives employed within the field.

A central concern has been the fear that both theoretical attention and institutional position and rewards will move from women's studies, which has still only limited institutional recognition and security in different countries, to the newer area of men's studies. In relation to feminism and women's

studies, some feminists assert that it is still unclear if men's studies will be part of the problem or part of the solution to end women's oppression.

At the recent 4th European Feminist Research conference in September 2000 at Bologna, I gave a paper which explores the most recent developments by male masculinity theorists, in the hope of furthering dialogue between feminist theorists and men writing on masculinities. A central question for me is to assess whether recent theories have dealt systematically with earlier feminist concerns and criticisms – such as the need for men to engage with their own and other men's power over women, children and other men. These questions will also be central to future writings on masculinities.

Just what 'the boys' are getting up to nowadays is, in theoretical terms, still a case for cautious optimism. How and in what ways their ideas are to have an influence on policy as well as men's behaviour and actions, in different cultural contexts, remains to be seen.

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Web site

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Integrating men and masculinity into development policy and practice

During 1999 and 2000, Oxfam GB, the University of Bradford, and the University of East Anglia instigated a seminar series, sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), on Integrating Men and Masculinity into Gender and Development. Gender analysis offers a key to understanding that 'male exclusion' and 'feminisation of employment' are in fact two sides of the same coin.

Caroline Sweetman, Oxfam

Studies by feminist economists have shown how manufacturing and service sectors use gender stereotypes about men's and women's roles to pay women 'pin-money' instead of a living wage. The stereotype is that women are dependent on male breadwinners, but, in reality, the women and girls who take jobs in export-processing zones and call centres are breadwinners themselves, desperate to support their families. Stereotypes of masculinity dictate that many men who have been laid off from heavy industry do not go out to fight for one of the new low-paid, exploitative jobs (an exception is men from minority and/or migrant communities, whose desperation forces them to perform 'menial' jobs associated with women, in European and North American cities).

The result is a global system where families exist on poverty-line wages; exhausted, predominantly female carers are being pressured into a double day; and most 'excluded' men do not assist their working partners by taking over the housework and child care. Violence against women increases in times of stress, and women all too often pay an appalling price for men's frustration and loss of status.

The clear message from this for development policy-makers is that men are not 'losing out' to women: poor women and poor men are both losing out from an unjust and unsustainable economic model. Both women and men need support to fight for a decent livelihood for themselves and their families, through challenging stereotypes of what work they 'should' do as women or men, in the workplace and at home. Development policy-makers who aim to influence international economic policy should advocate a holistic understanding of 'work', as all liveli-

hood activities performed by women, men, older people, and children.

Development organisations are as guilty as other employers of demanding long hours from their workforce, incompatible with employees' other responsibilities. No development organisation with a gender policy can shy away from the challenge to evolve family-friendly policies and transform the gender division of labour to make it more equal. If development conceptualises women's unpaid work only as a 'constraint' on their formal employment, we are ignoring the need of the human race to – literally – 'reproduce' itself, and men's need and right to shoulder part of this burden. The vast majority of development projects promote women's participation without providing child care, or challenging men in the community to do household work.

Several men involved in the ESRC seminars commented that it is a pity that debates on men and masculinity are numerically dominated by women, reflecting the fact that most 'gender specialists' are female. What makes men want to work on this agenda? Aspects of personal identity which differ from the ruling, ('hegemonic') male identity of white, Northern, heterosexual men may spark off individual men's interest in challenging gender stereotypes. How can social pioneers of both sexes be supported in our own institutions? Specialists in gender and organisational change need to analyse further the ways in which gender identity affects our ability as professionals, and learn from pioneers of change of both sexes, as well as parallel social movements, including anti-racism work.

For me, the ESRC seminar series confirmed that the men and masculinity debates need to stimulate development policy-makers and practitioners to put gender and development theory into practice – we have tended to focus too much on women as a group, rather than on gender power relations, despite the rhetoric. Gender analysis has helped women to challenge unequal power relations and the stereotypes of what women 'should' be. It needs to continue to do so – the statistics still show that globally, they face growing economic poverty, and their political and social marginalisation, in any of our societies, has not ended – but its insights now need to be applied much more consciously and rigorously to men.

Energy needs to go into promoting the rights of both men and women to live free from restrictive and oppressive gender stereotypes, which perpetuate poverty and injustice. For this, we need to understand how gender stereotypes differ from individuals' lived reality, and how they are used to disempower men in disadvantaged groups, as well as women.



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Window dresser – challenging stereotypes

Worldwide update

Images of Women for the Millennium – Mauritius

British Council Mauritius has been working with Mauritian men and women to promote positive images of women in all walks of life. A workshop, held in 1999 to encourage the media to portray women in a positive way, led to a request from women for a permanent record of women's contribution to the development of Mauritius. With support from the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development and the British High Commission, the award-winning photographer Nancy Durrell McKenna was commissioned to produce a collection of photographs in Mauritius and Rodrigues highlighting the contribution women have made to Mauritius as it enters the third millennium.

The exhibition of sixty-three photographs features women engaged in a variety of activities ranging from planting sugar cane in Mauritius, fishing for octopus in Rodrigues, working as judges and ministers, running the Stock Exchange and heading organisations in the non-governmental sector.

The President of the Republic of Mauritius, Cassam Uteem, formally opened the exhibition in the Fine Arts Building of the Mahatma



Mauritian women judges

Gandhi Institute on 22 September 2000. It will then tour the island before being found a permanent home at the Ministry of Women from where it will be available for public display on request.

Reclaiming Women's Spaces – South Africa

South Africa's National Women's Day takes place on 9 August each year and has been declared a public holiday. This year, the British Council's Johannesburg Information Centre, in collaboration with the Johannesburg Skills and Governance Team and the Nisaa Institute for Women's Development, marked it by a book launch attended by women's

and human rights organisations throughout Johannesburg.

The newly published book by Nisaa, *Reclaiming Women's Spaces*, was funded by Interfund, Novib and Bilance, based on initial research funded through a DFID/British Council higher education link with the University of Bristol. It offers new perspectives on violence against women in South Africa, looking at legal, economic and political contexts, and includes the personal stories of survivors and activists. Copies are available from Nisaa, fax +27 11 854 5718, for R110 plus VAT and postage.

Chilean Women's Minister visits UK

Adriana Delpiano, Chilean Cabinet Minister and Director of the National Women's Service, (SERNAM) has accepted an invitation from the British Council to visit the UK in November, along with Teresa Rodriguez, SERNAM's Head of International Affairs and Co-operation. In addition to meeting the UK Women's Minister, Baroness Jay, and the Women's Unit, they will be visiting the new devolved administration in Scotland, and meeting the Scottish Executive women's ministers and Scottish Parliamentary Cross-Party Group on Women. They will also be visiting local government and



Mauritian woman working in the Salt Pans

civil society initiatives on women's employment and on violence against women, and looking at UK impact indicators for women's quality of life, in preparation for a Chilean national survey in 2002.

Women's political participation – China

The last general election in Britain and the elections to the Scottish and Welsh Assemblies showed a significant increase in the number of women elected. The All China Women's Federation is keen to explore the campaigns and mechanisms in the UK which have led to this increase, in order to enhance its own strategy to increase women's political participation. Harriet Harman, MP; Christine Chapman, Assembly Member of the National Assembly for Wales; Bronagh Hinds, member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition; and Dr Jude Howell, University of Sussex, visited China from 29 October to 4 November. The workshops and meetings which they attended discussed the UK and international experience, and how it might be applied to the Chinese context.

Elections, theatre and 'Mr Democracy' – Tanzania

The British Council will invite all women candidates who stand in the October general election to a meeting on 22 and 23 November 2000, to debate action needed to further increase the number of women candidates in the next election in five years' time. Representatives from government, political parties, media and civil society will be invited, as part of British Council Tanzania's project to support increased participation by women in political decision-making. It follows a training course in August attended by 100 women candidates to help hone their campaigning skills. The project is implemented with our partners, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, Tanzania

Media Women's Association, and the Active Learning Centre, UK.

In a related project, 'Your vote counts' was the message from Mr Democracy, a giant puppet, which featured in an entertaining drama performed recently in low-income communities around Dar es Salaam. The Tanzanian performers were trained by Ann Shrosbree and Bill Hamblett, of Small World Theatre, UK, to develop a participatory piece of theatre exploring the reasons why women might not use their vote in the general election on 29 October. The Tanzanian group gave forty performances during August as part of this British Council project.

For further information contact Jackie Peace, Assistant Director (Projects), British Council Tanzania. E-mail jackie.peace@britishcouncil.or.tz

Connecting women, politicians and public policy through radio – Brazil

In Joao Pessoa, in north-eastern Brazil, an innovative radio project has linked up local women's organisations and students, in order to stimulate public debate and hold their local politicians to account. The women's NGO Centro da

Mulher 8 de Marco and Federal University of Paraiba produced twenty-five radio programmes on a range of issues in gender and public policy, which were broadcast in April 2000, with great success, reaching an audience of over 300,000.

Each programme used short dramas, interviews with politicians and 'phone-ins' to discuss women's perspectives on health, political participation, violence, education and work. The Women's Radio Network, a national organisation of community radio stations, will also be broadcasting the programmes throughout Brazil. As well as obliging politicians to take a public position on the demands of women, the programmes have enabled students to be trained in gender-aware news production, and created new links between activists, politicians and academics. The project was funded by the Small Projects Fund of the DFID Fund for International Co-operation in Higher Education, and builds on the higher education link between Paraiba and the University of Leeds.

A CD of the programmes is available in Portuguese. For more information, contact roberta.kacowitz@britishcouncil.org.br



Members of the Gender and Development Network with Baroness Valerie Amos, UK Government spokesperson on women and on international development at the UN Special Session 'Women 2000', in front of the British Council exhibition 'Free and Equal? Women's Rights as Human Rights'. *Left to right:* Jane Goldsmith of GADN, Baronnes Amos, Andrea Murray of the British Council, Marilyn Thompson of Save the Children UK

Namibian men against violence against women and children

Since gaining independence in 1990 much has been done to promote gender equality and the human rights of women in Namibia. The Constitution provides for equality between the two sexes, law reform on domestic violence is underway, and the recent Combating of Rape Act is highly progressive. While civil society, women's groups and NGOs are playing an active part in finding solutions in the fight against violence against women, other strategies were needed. This led to the world's first national conference of men against violence against women.

Milly Jafta
Legal Assistance Centre

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Conference participants

In response to concern from individual men and grass-roots groups scattered throughout the country about continuing violence against women and children, the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) facilitated a successful National Conference on Men against Violence against Women in February 2000. The British Council, the Austrian Development Co-operation, the Ford Foundation and UNICEF provided funding.

Prior to the conference, the LAC conducted a number of consultative meetings with men around the country to solicit input and support, and to identify suitable men participants. Dr Michael Kaufman, keynote speaker and Canadian founder of the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), conducted a one-day workshop for men from different regions to act as facilitators during the conference. Michael Kaufman was supported by four African leaders in the field, namely Jonah Gokova and Augustine Mututu from Zimbabwe and Thulani Nkosi and Samkelo Madonsela from South Africa, and various Namibian speakers.

The participants, more than 200 men from all walks of life, were surprised at the scope and incidence of violence against women. They

sought clarification for men's behaviour and women's feelings of fear and anxiety, and established bonds that would go far beyond the conference. They discussed African manhood, culture, tradition, attitudes and behaviour and in unison said: 'Real men don't rape.' Some took the brave step of publicly admitting that they were abusive to women or had previously abused women. They concluded that violence against women cannot be addressed in isolation but that it had to be addressed together with other forms of violence in the community, like men's violence against other men, women's violence against men, parents' violence against their off-spring and children's violence against their parents. They came to the realisation that violence against women is perpetuated and condoned by silence and indifference.

Utilising the momentum – the birth of NAMEC

Following the conference, delegates formed groups to address violence in the communities, organised public demonstrations, signed petitions, called for crucial legislation to be passed and publicly condemned violence against women. They highlighted the issue of violence against women and children by visiting schools, speaking in churches, on the radio and during the celebration of other national health days and campaigns. They have started networking with women's groups and government ministries, and setting up regional structures. Even men who did not attend the conference have started groups and are establishing linkages with the LAC and the core group in Windhoek.

Like any other new movement, these men are facing some opposition from other men, who are making fun

of them and calling them names. They are very focused, however, and understand that they have adopted a difficult and sometimes unpopular cause. They motivate themselves by talking to and supporting each other, and sharing ideas and planning activities. Namibian Men for Change (NAMEC) was finally launched in July 2000.

Calling on young men to add their voices

One of the strategies the LAC is using to involve young men is a voluntary countrywide essay competition for full time grade twelve male learners on Men against Violence against Women. Sponsored by the British Council and the Austrian Development Co-operation, the aim of the competition is to raise awareness among young men on this national issue, and to get information on how young men perceive the problem and what they think they could do to address it. The information and ideas obtained through the essay competition will be utilised to inform planned interventions in future.

Namibian men have started the process. They are on the move. Their efforts, together with that of women, girls and boys can help to change attitudes and behaviour to ensure that violence in our society and against women decreases.

NAMEC is still in the process of setting up an office and can, meanwhile, be contacted through the Legal Assistance Centre, PO Box 64, Windhoek, Republic of Namibia, fax 264 61 234953 or e-mail legal@iafrica.com.na Contact details for White Ribbon are on the back page.

Let's talk MEN: a film initiative to address masculinities in South Asia

Let's talk MEN is a series of educational films on masculinities, to be used with children and young people, in order to present alternative male role models. They are mainly intended for use with boys but can also be used with girls, as a learning tool in tackling the problems of increasing violence against girls.

Ranjan Poudyal, Save the Children Fund

Film has a persuasive power to change social attitudes in general, and attitudes about masculine gender roles are more strongly entrenched than most. In many cases, schools and families may only reinforce received ideas, and portray behaviour such as violence against women as being normal and desirable.

While violence against girls and women can be found in some form in all societies and cultures, this phenomenon is made worse in South Asia by entrenched patriarchal practice in the family, society, and institutions. Gender discrimination and violence against women are exceedingly high, with severe oppression of girls and women. In such a situation, how can an organisation like Save the Children and UNICEF help in reducing violence against girls and women? One response was to work with boys and men.

Efforts to tackle such violence have, in the past, focused on the agency of the girl child and women. Their methods have also often been didactic – telling young people how to behave, rather than enabling them to question and explore the roles and responsibilities of girls and of boys. These films allow children to start at a level of general experience, and move on to problem experiences. They can then reflect on institutions such as schools, society, families, on relationships and roles, on gender, on patriarchy and biases, on attractions and conflicts, on abuse, violence, or HIV/AIDS.

Becoming a man

Since men are perpetrators of violence it is imperative that men's roles and responsibilities should be

put in focus. In South Asia, the role of segregating and separating boys from girls begins at home, and is reinforced at school. When a boy enters school, it is impressed upon him that to be male is to be the opposite of feminine, and to be a man he must break away from women. The further he travels, the greater the success of his journey. With segregation comes another essential lesson, that of superiority and dominance.

Schooldays are a critical stage in defining a boy's sexuality and masculinity – a time full of confusion and conflicts, when gender attitudes are still being defined and the sense of entitlement to power has not yet been fully formed. A few steps here or there can still make a difference as to what kind of man he is ultimately going to be. Masculinities are critically about values, and very different forms of masculinity may be developed over time.

Participatory film-making

The development of *Let's talk MEN* was a process which took over two years. The four films have been a collective and participatory endeavour, developed through workshops and events in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. The ownership of the idea and the films was transferred to the filmmakers, despite there being several powerful donors with lots of film-making and media experience. This was done to encourage the film-makers to question their own experience as men, and to depict realistic situations and stories, rooted in the cultures and perceptions of the society in which they live.

Television, video and films are fast growing in South Asia with a national television channel in each



© Jim Holmes/Panos Pictures

Bangladeshi boys on their way to school

country plus access to over forty satellite channels. Children and young people are much more visually literate than ever before. While there is diversity of languages spoken and particularities of cultural context, there is also a general similarity in culture and spill-over of languages across the countries. Each of the films has been translated into five South Asian languages and these will be shown all over South Asia as a package.

The initial screenings of the films have shown that they can act as a catalyst for men and boys to question patriarchal structures, nurture respect for women and girls, and acknowledge the right of both the sexes to live free of violence. During the second half of 2000, the films are to be distributed through interactive workshops in twenty-five cities of South Asia, to NGOs, social activists, gender institutions and government educational departments.

Further information:

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Making democracy work – Ethiopia

'People won't vote for women – they don't think we're equal.' 'Women are not seen as competent or managers.' 'Men have no confidence in women and women have no confidence in themselves.'

Gil Long
The Active Learning Centre

These were the comments of the participants at the beginning of the Making Democracy Work seminars, organised by the British Council and the Active Learning Centre, in co-operation with the Ethiopian Office for Women's Affairs in Addis Ababa in November 1999 and March 2000. With elections for the national and regional parliaments due in May 2000, the prospects for women looked bleak. Women are over fifty per cent of the population in Ethiopia yet, prior to the May elections, there were only fifteen women representatives in the national Parliament (two per cent) and women's representation at the regional and local government was only five and seven per cent respectively. This was the challenge facing Ethiopian women.

Twenty-five women representatives from all of the political parties were trained as trainers, and they in turn passed on their newly acquired skills to a further 300 potential women candidates.

A major focus of the training was political skills: how to speak in public; how to develop campaign messages and organise for campaigning; and how to get your message across on radio and television. Mike Donnelly, an associate of the Active Learning Centre, was a keynote speaker, drawing on his own personal and practical experience of organising the campaign for the Labour Party in the 1997 election in Scotland. Kate Phillips and Gil Long of the Active Learning Centre led many of the practical sessions, and Kathy Long, a student journalist, volunteered to spend a week conducting radio and television interviews to allow candidates to practice.

Consultation and representation

'Find out what the voters think before you design your campaign'

was a key piece of advice. Despite participants' misgivings about whether people in the streets of Addis Ababa would talk to them, opinion polling turned out to be a popular and informative exercise. Two polling teams surveyed the key issues for the election and views about women candidates. Contrary to expectations a very large majority of those interviewed thought women candidates would be honest, hardworking and trustworthy and said that given a choice they would vote for a woman.

There was also much discussion about how to promote women and secure representation in a male dominated multi-party system, political parties often presenting as much as a barrier to women's representation as electoral systems. Betty Byanyima, one of the contributors to the seminar, spoke forcefully about the experience of Ugandan women during the period of constitutional change and their fight for affirmative action to secure women's representation, and the ways in which this has enabled Ugandan women to put women's issues on the political agenda and to lobby for their support and implementation. A discussion on affirmative action followed and an exercise on lobbying to practice promoting systems to ensure better representation for women.

Before and after the election

On the final day of the workshop the Vice-Chair of the Electoral Commission attended, to answer questions on the procedure to be adopted during the election. The need for education of candidates and voters on democratic procedures was highlighted at a meeting held after the main elections had taken place. Participants listed a number of abuses, including a failure to set up enough electoral

board centres for the registration of complaints, lack of fair access to the media, pressurising of voters and harassment of scrutineers.

And the results? At the time of writing these are still not entirely complete, as the elections in some regions, took place much later. However, the news so far is very good. In the national parliament there are now forty women and at the regional level the numbers have risen from seventy-seven to 350. And how did the seminar participants fare? While there were some notable successes not all managed to overcome the substantial odds. However, many remarked on how the seminar had raised their confidence. As one participant remarked: 'If it had been a fair fight we would have won. We ran the best campaigns.'

The Active Learning Centre is a charity based in Glasgow Caledonian University and is registered as a charity that works for people's rights through education and training. There is a video of the Making Democracy Work seminar which is available from British Council Ethiopia.



Firezer Negash, newly elected representative in the Addis Ababa regional parliament

In early July, four UK gender and media specialists visited a very hot and humid Guangzhou in South China. Julie Hill, the Director of the Women's Radio Group, Ann Kaye, Training Consultant and Media Trainer of Crystal Media, Anne Neale from the Women Against Rape Group and Dr Marina Calloni from the Gender Institute of LSE came to Guangzhou and helped to review Radio Guangdong's Women's Hour programme.

Erica Chen, British Council Guangzhou with contributions from Julie Hill

Women's Hour is a phone-in programme aired on Radio Guangdong's Satellite Radio Station every Friday afternoon to provide legal advice to local women. Lawyers from local organisations such as the Women's Federation and legal aid centres are invited to take part in the programme to help the callers. The programme reaches thirty million woman listeners in six South China provinces. It was launched in January this year after a study tour organised by the British Council to the UK in October last year, and led by Zeng Guangxing, the Director-General of Radio Guangdong. After six months, the time for a follow-up visit seemed to be ripe, and British Council Guangzhou and Radio Guangdong jointly put together a programme for the visit.

Since the programme has been on air, it has provided legal advice to numerous listeners who raised their questions either by phoning in or by writing letters. The number of enquiries has risen dramatically since the programme began, and it is clearly addressing a significant need. Many of the problems which are raised have resulted from recent societal changes in China. The sharp increase in divorce rates, for example, has created a demand for practical advice for women on the division of the marital home and the custody of children. There have also been huge increases in mobility across regions, and in migration from rural areas. The existing laws and rights for women need to be publicised in order to be accessible, and the programme plays an important role in this.

In addition to advice on practical matters, however, the women callers have been seeking emotional and moral support, and the UK visitors stressed the importance of dealing with this. Broadening the focus of the programme beyond technical

legal advice would also require a re-definition of the idea of 'expert', and a recognition that personal experience is a valid form of 'expertise'. The principle of women helping women goes far wider than questions of legal procedure, law and rights, and the pool of advisers could well be expanded to include NGOs and women in various professions, as well as featuring the stories of those who have survived difficult situations. Women callers also raised more far-reaching questions on how to create a 'new normality' of gender equality in the home and in the workplace, which takes account of the new needs of all members of the family, including children and the elderly.

The UK specialists had intensive meetings with the Women's Hour's producers, presenters, consultative experts and listener representatives to get an overview of the programme and the current issues and problems, and made various constructive suggestions on the next steps. These included running cross-media campaigns to expand the scope of the work, plus developing web sites, fact sheets, and an independent and confidential advice line, separate from the publicly-aired Women's Hour. Pre-recorded items on issues such as violence against women would also contribute to shaping the public debate, as well as responding to individual problems.

New technologies

In addition to helping review the programme, Ann Kaye gave a lecture to Radio Guangdong staff on UK experiences in different aspects of media development including new technologies and their effect on radio growth, production techniques, calls screening, balancing programmes and choice of presenters. With more than twenty years' work experience with

BBC, GLR, LBC, Radio London and Radio and Television Training, Ann was able to respond to the questions on a wide range of areas from the Radio Guangdong audiences who were keen to know more about broadcasting in the UK. Anne Neale also made a valuable contribution to the visit by attending a workshop with people from the Guangdong Women's Federation. Facing increasingly serious problems regarding extra-marital love affairs in Guangdong, the Women's Federation was anxious to learn from overseas experiences and find a way to address problems generated from it effectively.

The UK specialists also made presentations at a Radio Guangdong-organised seminar on Media, Community and Women, attended by representatives from the media, women's groups, legal organisations and universities in Guangzhou. Julie's presentation was on how to turn audiences into useful contributors to programming, radio as part of campaigns and working with other agencies. Anne discussed individual and collective ways of empowering women. Marina Calloni's presentation was on Beijing Plus Five while Ann's focused on target audience and off-air advice.

A source of inspiration

On the last day of the visit, the four UK specialists were interviewed by Forest Yu, the presenter of Women's Hour, on a variety of gender and media issues in the UK. The interview was later aired on five consecutive editions of the programme.

As the main co-ordinator from Radio Guangdong for this visit, Forest said the visit was very inspiring and gave her and her colleagues new directions in thinking about women's issues.

Books, etc.

Men, Masculinities and Development: Politics, Policies and Practice

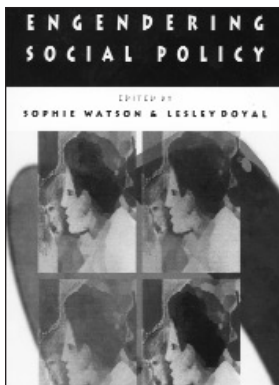
IDS Bulletin Volume 31, Number 2, April 2000
ISSN 0265 5012 £11.95 plus post and packing
Available from publications@ids.ac.uk

This groundbreaking collection of articles covers the conceptual, practical and strategic reasons for 'including' men in gender and development policy and practice, as well as questioning how such engagement can be tackled. All of the authors are broadly committed to the advancement of gender equality, but hold a wide range of views on whether and how to extend GAD work to include work with and by men.

Most of the articles are largely theoretical, with a couple focusing on men and gender relations in natural resource management and in health. Perhaps the most useful contribution to specific policy debate is that by Mark Figueroa, who analyses the famous example of male educational underachievement in the Caribbean. He argues that it results not from male exclusion, but from a particular and complex historical context of male privilege.

Overall, this is a valuable collection, raising important and difficult questions which will soon start to affect development debates worldwide.

Engendering Social Policy



Edited by Sophie Watson and Lesley Doyal
Open University Press, 1999
ISBN 0 335 20113 X £15.99

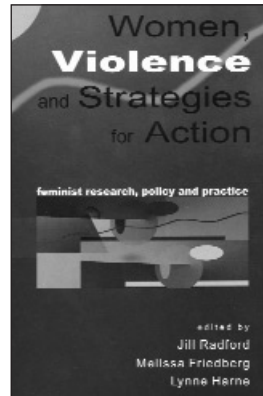
This collection explores recent developments in the UK but also uses a wide range of international research and comparisons. Taking into account shifting political ideologies, the interaction of the women's movement with govern-

ment, and the new focus on masculinities, it analyses and debates the gendered assumptions behind the construction of social policy, and documents various breakthroughs and backlashes.

Articles include: an update on the changing world of work and families; a fascinating overview of biological and social factors in health policy; feminist approaches to urban planning; male and female caring roles; child protection; the criminalisation of female poverty; UK policy ambivalence on violence against women; and equality and gender mainstreaming initiatives in the UK and EU. Two articles with a particular focus on masculinity cover new models of fatherhood (making a

useful distinction between fathers who 'care about' children and those who actually 'care for' them) and the construction of young black men as a threat in debates on mental health policy. A readable and fascinating collection.

Women, violence and strategies for action



Edited by Jill Radford, Melissa Friedberg and Lynne Harné
Open University Press, 2000
ISBN 0 335 20369 8 £15.99

This book brings together the many ideas, discussions and developments arising from the work of the researchers and activists who are part of the British Sociological Association Violence Against Women Study Group. It aims to present current research findings and theoretical developments in relation to a range of forms of sexual violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault, prostitution, pornography and child sexual abuse.

It will be of value to activists, professionals, students and researchers in the fields of women's studies, sociology, social policy, social work and criminology.

Progress of the World's Women 2000 - UNIFEM Biennial Report

Edited by Diane Elson
United Nations Development Fund, 2000
ISBN 0 9679502 1 X £10.32

This publication considers what has been achieved for women from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, focusing on the economic dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of globalisation. It assesses women's progress using a variety of indicators and looks in particular at government accountability for the gender impact of their policies and programmes, including national budgets, and on corporate accountability for the social impact of their operations.

It uses a combination of statistical indicators and personal testimonies and shows that while there has been progress in many countries, this progress is uneven. Even in the richest countries some forms of gender inequality still persist.

This publication will be of interest and value to all those who wish to know what progress the world's women have made and where we go from here.

The abuse of girls in African schools

Abuse of girls in schools is widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa (and possibly elsewhere) but until recently, was little talked about. This abuse is perpetrated by male teachers and older male pupils. There is a particular reluctance to admit that teachers, appointed as the guardians and protectors of our children, are also their abusers and that the school, which should be a safe haven for children, merely duplicates abuses perpetrated elsewhere.

Dr Fiona Leach
University of Sussex



School girls, Zimbabwe

In a recent study carried out in co-educational junior secondary schools in Zimbabwe, male sexual aggression was found to be endemic and institutionalised. Male teachers abused their positions of authority and their duty of care by making sexual advances to girls, confident that they would not be reported or disciplined. The youngest girls entering the school were subjected to the well-developed ritual of older boys propositioning them, in a peer culture which requires boys to boast about their sexual conquests. In both cases, money, gifts or promises of marriage were used to tempt girls into a sexual liaison. If girls refused their advances, they risked being victimised by the teacher in class or beaten up by the boy (sometimes assisted by his friends). Other ways in which boys sought affirmation of male dominance in and around the school was by touching girls provocatively, shouting obscenities at them and at times assaulting them for no apparent reason.

Evidence suggests that such behaviour is commonplace in schools throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Where girls are boarders, they are particularly at risk of assault or rape from older boys. This abuse is regarded as 'normal' in an environment where other forms of violence are also tolerated.

Corporal punishment is routine, despite its use being officially banned in many countries. Female teachers appear to administer beatings, and to use verbal abuse, almost as frequently as their male colleagues.

By taking little or no disciplinary action against either teachers or pupils, school heads and ministry officials are in fact condoning abuse. Dismissals and expulsions appear to be few, even when a teacher or pupil makes a girl pregnant. Teaching staff are complicit in this by choosing to turn a blind eye to what is going on around them.

The causes of abuse

This abuse of girls in school is linked to their abuse elsewhere in society. Physical and verbal abuse is commonplace in the home. Adolescent girls are subjected to sexual advances from relatives or family friends, and sometimes raped. They may be assaulted by male strangers for no reason whatsoever. It was shocking to learn that over half the sample of 112 girls in this Zimbabwe study (aged twelve to sixteen) had experienced unsolicited physical contact from strange men, such as being grabbed or pinched on the breasts or buttocks at a bus stop or on the road home. And almost all the girls said male strangers or neighbours had propositioned them. These were often 'sugar daddies' who prey on girls in the vicinity of the school, tempting them into sexual relations with gifts and false promises. These men place girls' lives in very real danger. The highest rate of new HIV infection in Africa is now among females in the fifteen to nineteen age group.

Abuse of girls is also linked to poverty and to the expectation that women should be financially

dependent on men. A girl may be tempted to accept money or gifts if her family cannot provide for her fully. In accepting, she is drawing herself unwittingly into a relationship of dependence and obligation in which the man or boy will eventually demand sexual favours. The devastating impact of AIDS on family livelihoods in Africa has increased this risk to girls.

The consequences of abuse

Many girls in the twelve to fifteen age group drop out of school as a result of pregnancy. For them, this will probably be the end of their formal education, whereas the teacher or pupil who made them pregnant will stay on. For girls in school, the risk of attracting the teacher's attention discourages many from participating fully in lessons and fear of being accosted by boys restricts their movement around the school. Such a hostile environment is neither conducive to girls' learning nor to their forming mature relations with boys. Not only does it result in low achievement for girls but also in low self-esteem and low aspirations – and confirmation that society values them less than boys.

Action

A follow-up study is being planned to explore this issue of abuse further in a number of other African countries and with a younger age group. Strategies will be trialled and monitored in three countries, and there may be a web site to document research in this area and successful interventions. To contribute or to receive more information, please contact f.e.leach@sussex.ac.uk

The full report (*DFID Education Report No. 39*) is available from dfidpubs@christian.co.uk

Noticeboard

Seminars and conferences

Gender and Development Training Centre, Haarlem, The Netherlands

Data international courses in 2000–2001

- International Training of Trainers in Gender and Development (English) 3–15 December 2000
- Advanced course in Gender, Development and Organisational Change (English) 15–27 January 2001
- International Training of Trainers in Gender and Development (Portuguese) 11–24 March 2001

The venue for the above courses is the Hotel 'De Golfzang', Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands.

Brochures about all courses are available from:

Gender and Development Training Centre
Wilhelminastraat 18
2011 VM Haarlem
The Netherlands

Telephone +31 (0)23 5342149
Fax +31 (0)23 5312481
E-mail gen.dtc@inter.nl.net

Other information

Women 2000: advancement and empowerment

This British Council virtual book exhibition has been put together to mark the UN General Assembly Special Session 'Women 2000' which reviewed progress against the Beijing Platform for Action in New York in June of this year. It contains a selection of recent UK publications relating to women's rights and gender equality which we hope will be of interest to partners overseas.

Categories include:

- education for women
- history of women
- women's civil and political rights
- women's health
- women in society
- women in the workplace.

The web site can be found at:

<http://www.britcoun.org/virtual/women/index.htm>

'Namibian men against violence against women', held in Windhoek, 23–25 February 2000

Copies of the conference report are available from:

Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)
4 Korner Street
PO box 604
Windhoek, Namibia

Telephone +264 61 223356
Fax +264 61 234953
E-mail legal@iafrica.com.na

Contributions

The Gender Team wishes to thank all those who have contributed to this issue of *the network newsletter*. This edition has been compiled by Andrea Murray and Paula Wayling. We welcome articles for the next issue, on women's organisations, by 28 February 2001.

Cover photography

Rifle drill, Army basic training
© Paul Smith/Panos Pictures

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<http://www.britishcouncil.org/governance/gendev/index.htm>

The opinions expressed in *the network newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of the British Council.

