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**THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN:
FROM MARGINALITY TO
COEDUCATION**

**Proposals for a methodology to achieve
educational change**

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ABSTRACT

The importance of education for individual and collective development was brought into sharp focus in the 1970s, when the theory of human capital emphasized the fact that investment in education, in strictly economic terms, is the most profitable of all investments, both for society and for individuals. Since then the value of education has gone on rising: for all human groups in situations of marginalization, education has been the main mechanism for bringing about change, since it is one that provides people at the same time with the qualifications needed to improve production capabilities, awareness of their individual rights, and the self-esteem and self-confidence needed to begin a process of change in their personal attitudes, leading ultimately to greater control over the conditions in which they lead their lives.

The importance of education has manifested itself once again in the process of change experienced by women. For women, the path away from a situation of marginality and subordination towards one in which they are independent and have the opportunity to participate in collective decision-making processes invariably begins with the time they spend in the education system, the effects of which, as has been mentioned, are twofold: the development of capabilities that provide access to employment, and economic independence with enhanced self-esteem and confidence in their own capabilities. Objectively and subjectively, education creates the conditions for what has been called the "empowerment" of women, and is the first step towards access to any other form of "empowerment"*.

As things now stand in Latin America, this process of education needs to be speeded up, since it is a key element in the struggle against poverty which has been undertaken in the continent. If after a certain stage has been reached in economic development there is room for debate as to whether investment in education continues to offer the high levels of return that were expected of it, in the early stages of development these benefits are not open to question. The *Social Panorama of Latin America*¹ provides ample evidence of the economic contribution that can be made by education in the continent, and the cost involved in failing to make the necessary investment. If this is true for the population at large, it is particularly so for women, who in the aggregate have much lower levels of education than men, and who are increasing their participation in the labour market. A high percentage of single parent families are headed by women. Accelerating the process of women's education is now the best way to combat poverty in Latin America.

* *Note on terminology:* In the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and in the Beijing Platform for Action, the concept of *empowerment* is used, depending on the context, to mean the following: acquisition and exercise of power by women; enablement of women; realization of women's potential; full exercise of women's rights.

¹ ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 1995* (LC/G.1886-P), Santiago, Chile, December 1995.

In addition to its direct contribution to economic development, education makes a range of contributions to the workings of society. One of the problems that the world now faces, as was clearly established at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, is that of overpopulation: population growth needs to be controlled so that a degree of prosperity can be attained without destroying the resources of the planet and jeopardizing the inheritance of coming generations. Now, women's education is a vital factor in the control of population growth: all the studies on the issue show that this is the key variable. Increasing the level of education among women has a direct impact on birth control, as well as on levels of infant mortality, which decline as the level of education rises. In other words, women's education is of vital importance for all the major problems now being faced in the world, as it opens up the possibility of providing a very major part of the population with the ability to control their immediate environment, with all the repercussions this has for society as a whole.

Despite international recognition of the need to extend women's education, however, there are still numerous obstacles in the way of this educational change. These obstacles derive from settled habits, poverty, prejudices and lack of resources, and they are not specific to Latin America, but have manifested themselves in all countries at some time or other. To confront them, it has proved necessary to devise educational reforms and policies centred on the advancement of women.

Setting out from this international experience, we shall attempt in this report to lay down some methodological guidelines for an approach towards changing the way women are educated. To do this, there is no need to carry out an exhaustive preliminary analysis or to invent new objectives: world conferences on women have produced a sufficiently far-reaching and detailed agenda, which has been adopted by consensus. What is required now is to see how this agenda can be put into practice in the most concrete way possible.

The educational situation of women in Latin America is coming to be understood in some detail, although there are large gaps between countries in terms of the information available. To see what our point of departure is, a very general typology of the different situations has been included in an attempt to sketch out the problems that confront us. This is followed by a summary of the recommendations of the international documents that have laid down the general objectives to be achieved. Both of these appear in the first part of this document, and provide the background, so to speak, against which a methodology for change may be established and developed.

It is in the second part that we turn to this methodology, which consists in setting out in a logical order the problems that arise at different stages in the process of incorporating women into the education system, and in listing the measures to be undertaken in sequence, so that priorities can be established at each point. The report closes with some remarks about the agents of educational change.

I. THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA. CURRENT SITUATION AND PROPOSED OBJECTIVES

A. THE EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA

As things stand, the educational situation of women in Latin America is still very unsatisfactory. The first observation that needs to be made, however, is that it is impossible to generalize, since the differences between countries, as regards both the percentage of each generation that receives schooling and the relative proportions of men and women, are enormous, and the situation is one of sharp contrasts.

The comparative volume of the study "Mujeres latinoamericanas en cifras"² depicts the following situation:

a) There is a first group of countries where primary education coverage is high, being close to or in excess of 90%, and where secondary education includes percentages close to or in excess of 50% of each age group. Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Panama and Uruguay are the countries where this situation obtains, and they are followed by Costa Rica and Peru with somewhat lower percentages. In these countries less than 10% of the total population are without schooling, and illiteracy rates are likewise under 10%.

b) There is a second group of countries where almost universal coverage has been achieved in primary education, but where secondary education, by contrast, covers only a third or less of each age group, while at the same time the percentages of people without schooling and of illiterates range between 10% and 15% of over-15s. Colombia, Paraguay and Venezuela were in this situation in the 1980s, to be joined in the 1990s by Ecuador and Mexico.

c) In a third group of countries the coverage even of primary schooling is very inadequate. The percentages of people without schooling stand at over 16%, and the same holds for illiteracy rates. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were in this situation in the 1980s, and Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua in the 1990s. Within this group, the situation of El Salvador and Guatemala is particularly dramatic, the latter country having illiteracy rates of over 40% of the population.

This is the overall educational picture. If we analyse the educational situation of women specifically, we find that there is no strict correspondence between the general level of schooling and the level of schooling among women. Peru is the country that shows the greatest discrepancies in schooling by sex, with a 17.4% female illiteracy

² T. Valdés and E. Gomáriz (coords.), *Mujeres latinoamericanas en cifras: tomo comparativo*, Santiago, Ministry of Social Affairs/Institute for Women's Studies/FLACSO, 1995. This is the document that will be used as the basis for analysing the educational situation of women in Latin America, although we are of course aware of the limitations from which it sets out, given the difficulty of obtaining reliable information that is comparable between countries.

rate in 1990 as against 4.1% for men. Again, these percentages vary dramatically depending on whether it is the urban or rural population that is considered.

Patterns of growth in female schooling, however, are somewhat different in most Latin American countries from what they have been in European countries such as, for example, Spain. Whereas in Spain —which we are taking here solely as a point of reference for comparison— female education levels grew from the primary to the higher stage in such a way that the great expansion in university access for women took place once primary education coverage was complete, in some Latin American countries the pattern appears to be somewhat different: access by women to university education is growing strongly, while there is still something of a deficit in primary schooling. Thus, for example, again using information from the comparative volume of the study "Mujeres latinoamericanas en cifras", 51% of those graduating from Colombian universities in 1990 were women, while 14.1% of the female population was still illiterate. This shows, on the one hand, how fast the growth in education has been in recent years; for the greatest differences are intergenerational. Thus, for example, the illiteracy figures for Bolivia in 1988 were 3.5% for women aged 15 to 19, and 66.8% for those aged 50 and over,³ and this pattern is repeated in a number of countries. On the other hand, the figures reveal the specific characteristics of the Latin American situation, with large sectors of the rural or indigenous populations in some countries still having severe difficulties in obtaining access to schooling. The Panamanian National Plan "Mujer y desarrollo 1994-2000", for example, states that in the country as a whole some 10% of men and 11% of women are illiterate; among the indigenous population, however, these percentages are 36% and 54%.⁴

A number of countries have already attained female entry rates of 50% in higher education: in 1990, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Uruguay, Venezuela and Panama, as well as Colombia, were in this position, and in some countries the figure was considerably higher, this being the case with Panama, where women accounted for 66% of students in institutions of higher education. For Latin America as a whole, the percentage of women in higher education is 48%, a figure which is highly encouraging as regards the prospects for attaining equality between the sexes in education within a relatively short time.

Nonetheless, the distribution of female students by course type still has a heavily stereotypical slant: the lowest proportion of women students is generally in engineering courses. According to the data available, women account for 9.2% and 11.1% of engineering students in El Salvador and Argentina respectively, while the highest figures are found in Nicaragua and Cuba, with 27.3% and 30.9%. These figures are for the end of the 1980s or for 1990, so it is possible that there has been a trend towards greater equality since then. At the other extreme, women students are concentrated in Humanities (80.5% for Argentina, for example), Social Sciences (79.2% for Colombia) and Education Sciences (79.9% for Brazil). In other words, women have a strong presence in the universities, but men and women are not distributed evenly over the different types of courses.

The study already cited also provides some information about other basic indicators which reveal the educational situation of women. Thus, for example, the indicator on the presence of females in school textbooks shows the extent to which

³ D. Alméras, "Women's formal education: achievements and obstacles", *ECLAC Review*, No. 54 (LC/G.1845-P), Santiago, Chile, December 1994.

⁴ *National Plan "Mujer y desarrollo 1994-2000. Construyamos el futuro con igualdad"*, Centro de Estudio y Acción Social Panameño, Panama City, 1996.

change is coming about, not now in women's access to education, but in the cultural shift whereby the characteristics of the two genders are coming to be given equal consideration as basic components of culture. It transpires that as regards this indicator too, the differences between the countries for which information is available are striking. Thus, whereas in Chile in 1990 the presence of females varied between 25.4% and 36.4% depending on whether it is the titles or illustrations of textbooks that are considered, in Peru in 1986 only 8.5% of the people illustrated and 7.8% of those mentioned in texts were women, while in Uruguay, according to 1991 figures, only 16% of the people illustrated in school books were women.⁵ Again, the context in which women appear in school books is very often that of the home, which reveals that the image being presented is still a traditional one, stereotyped by gender profile.

Another indicator which needs to be considered is the one that reflects female participation in the teaching force at the different levels of the education system. Although overall women account for a large proportion of teachers, there is a very high degree of segmentation, so that while, in the countries for which figures are available, the percentages of women teachers at the pre-school level stand in some cases at 100%, this being the case in Honduras, Panama and Mexico, while the lowest figure was for Cuba in 1989, with 88%, nowhere do they attain 50% in the case of university teaching, and in general they are very far below this figure, with Paraguay and Ecuador being, in 1987 and 1988, the countries with the lowest proportions of women teachers in higher education, the figures being 15% and 18% respectively. Other countries, however, are approaching parity: Cuba with 44%, Brazil with 38% and Nicaragua with 36% of women on teaching staffs in higher education —these figures are for dates between 1990 and 1992— can show numbers of female university teaching staff that represent far more than a token presence, and that are attaining levels which give grounds for hoping that equality may be achieved within a relatively short time. The proportions of women teachers in secondary education are more balanced, with a low of 31% in El Salvador in 1988, while the figure is over 50% in several countries.

The documents which have sought to carry out analyses and establish the grievances of women in Latin America, such as the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001,⁶ also contain diagnoses of the educational situation. Among the obstacles are mentioned "insufficient opportunities for large sectors of the female population to enter and stay in the education system; maintenance of school curricula and teaching practices that limit women's opportunities to participate in society and reinforce the lack of equity between women and men, as well as women's subordination, instead of promoting their confidence and self-esteem" and "insufficiency of education reforms at all levels, in terms of leading to real changes in educational plans and programmes, teacher training and the updating of curricula in university and non-university higher education". The programme does however point to some advances, among them, as regards education, the "greater number of women participating at all levels of education and continuing their education; and significant increases in the proportion of women professionals" and the "improvement of teacher training to promote women's integration into formal and non-formal education". The current situation, then, has both a bright and a dark side: substantive advances,

⁵ In these last two cases the books concerned were for primary education, which should in theory tend to increase the percentage since women generally have a greater presence in primary school texts than in secondary school or higher education texts.

⁶ ECLAC, Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 (LC/G.1855), Santiago, Chile, January 1995.

particularly in the better-off sectors of society, but also serious deficiencies, which affect large groups of women living in a situation of poverty and marginalization.

This rapid survey of the educational position of women in Latin America, then, reveals on the one hand glaring inequalities between countries, and on the other substantial inequalities within each country. What we find, in fact, is that in many countries two contrasting situations exist side by side; sectors of society in which women have now gained relatively equal access to higher education, alongside the continuing marginalization of particular population sectors, and in particular of the women belonging to these sectors, as regards primary education. As we shall see further on, this means that measures to bring about educational equality between the sexes will have to aim at a variety of objectives, given that the difficulties which, taken together, stand in the way of educational equality are in some cases peculiar to developing countries, while in others they are the same as those currently observed in more developed countries.

B. THE MEASURES PROPOSED BY INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

Given this situation, we need to ask what objectives have to be achieved and what measures need to be taken to reduce inequalities in education and ensure that within a few years the women of Latin America have totally equal access to education and substantially higher levels of education and professional qualifications than at present.

To do this, we need to bear in mind, as a starting point, that there are a number of documents of international scope which have already laid down a set of objectives in relation to improved education for women. This is the framework within which policies to achieve equality in the educational sphere need to be situated. We shall therefore briefly review the most significant documents, which will be used as a basis for the considerations that follow.

The first document to be considered is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which by February 1995 had been signed by 141 countries, the countries of Latin America among them. In article 10 of part III, the Convention provides that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education"⁷. To this end, the Convention covers a number of areas in which equality will need to be achieved between men and women. To summarize its contents, these areas are:

- a) Career and vocational guidance, the opportunity for the entire population to enter courses and obtain diplomas in educational establishments of all categories.
- b) Access to study programmes, examinations and teaching staff, and the quality of school premises and equipment.
- c) Elimination of all stereotypes regarding the roles of men and women by promoting coeducation and revising school books and programmes.
- d) Opportunities to obtain scholarships and other study grants.
- e) Opportunities for entering programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes.

⁷ Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, resolution 34/180 of the General Assembly, New York, 1979.

f) Reduction in the female student drop-out rate and organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school early.

g) Opportunities to participate in sport and physical education.

h) Access to educational information to help ensure the health and well-being of families, with special mention of family planning advice.

As can be seen, the Convention mentions the fundamental aspects relating to equality of access to education, while making little mention of the contents of this education. The undertakings entered into by the States in this case therefore represent a first step in equal education policies, for which equality of access is obviously a precondition. Subsequent documents, including notably the Platform for Action that came out of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, already cited, which was the regional platform organized to prepare for the Beijing Conference, make some progress in respect of educational content, and in particular put forward a number of measures in greater detail than the Convention text.

The Platform for Action that came out of the Beijing World Conference devotes an entire section, section B of chapter IV, to considering the educational position of women and the measures that need to be taken to bring about real equality in this area. This section observes, firstly, that education "is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace".⁸ The Platform then goes on to establish the importance of non-discriminatory education for both girls and boys, and observes that investment in education for girls and women has proved to be one of the best ways of securing sustainable development and economic growth that is both steady and sustainable, with a very high social and economic return. The two fundamental reasons why more education for women is required are thus clearly established: for the individual, it is a human right; and for countries, it brings economic and social benefits of the first order.

The treatment given by the Platform for Action to educational issues is very far-reaching and detailed, which makes it difficult to summarize in these pages. In order to examine its operational aspects, we are going to refer to its main features in part II of this document, and see how they might give rise to concrete policies in each case. For the moment, it is enough to emphasize the importance given to Strategic Objective B.1., "Ensure equal access to education", in paragraph 82, letter (b) of which the following measures are prescribed for government action: "By the year 2000, universal action to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children; closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005; universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015". The objectives and undertakings set out here, then, are very specific, and are vital if progress is to be made towards eradicating poverty and empowering women.

As regards the recommendations of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, which laid down the objectives to be achieved at the Beijing Conference from a Latin American regional point of view, these are contained in Strategic Objective II.4.: "To ensure that the population in general, and especially girls and women, have access to formal and informal education that prepares them for the full exercise of their rights and of full citizenship, equitable participation in decision-making and the egalitarian sharing of family and

⁸ Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (China), September 1995. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.

household responsibilities, and to ensure that girls remain in the educational system". This objective entails a number of strategic actions which will also be included and detailed in the second part of this document.

II. TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

We have seen that the international documents which have addressed the issue have produced an analysis and a consensus regarding the objectives for change to be achieved in the education of women in Latin America. In this second part, we shall attempt to establish a methodology that can enable us to move on from statements of principle to actual implementation of this change, drawing on the experience of these processes that has been accumulated in Europe.

To do this, we shall take three considerations into account. Firstly, we shall establish in which areas action is most often needed in order to move towards greater equality between the sexes in the education system. Secondly, we shall establish a methodology to enable us to rank the different measures put forward in the international documents, so that these can be adapted at any given time to the objectives set for each country or each area, in the light of the advances in women's education achieved there. For this, we shall construct a typology by stages or points of development in an educational transformation towards coeducation, so as to have a concrete guide to action. By considering together all the fundamental aspects and characteristics of each stage we will be able to produce a table to show how objectives change and to help establish priorities.

The third consideration is who will be involved in implementing this change. Here again it will be necessary to establish a typology, given that the type of action which is possible varies enormously depending on whether the leading role in the proposed educational transformation falls to institutions of an international or governmental character, intermediate level institutions or institutions operating in civil society, or any of the possible combinations between two or more of these agents.

A. THE STAGES IN EDUCATIONAL CHANGE: FROM THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN TO A REDEFINED CULTURAL MODEL THAT IS COEDUCATIONAL, NON-SEXIST AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY

The first observation to make, one of a methodological nature, is that the progress of women towards equality, in any area of society, has differentiated stages or points in time that, although not mutually contradictory, require a sequential approach to be taken given that not all changes can be attempted at the same time. In the feminist movement, as is the case indeed in most social movements, there has been a strong tendency towards radicalism, meaning by this a demand for maximum change, without implementation of the intermediate stages which enable progress to be made towards this change. This has often led to certain objectives being regarded as utopian when they are not really so, but are simply not directly attainable at a given moment in history, because they belong to a horizon of possibilities that can only be reached once a

number of preliminary changes have been made. The speed with which the situation of women in the western countries has changed, with all the advantages and disadvantages, progress and unforeseen problems that this has entailed, shows that no transformation can be regarded as utopian or unattainable in itself, but that all transformations require a methodology of change to minimize not only the social effort and cost involved but also any possible negative repercussions that have not been foreseen, since it is often repercussions of this kind that lead to retreats or changes of heart which are difficult to reverse.

It is for this reason that a maximum of rationality needs to be applied when the necessary transformations are effected, meaning by this not that a predetermined pattern should be followed everywhere, but that the process should not be left to chance. It is with this in mind, and on the basis of the experience of western countries, that the following typology, which describes stages or points in the transformation process, is put forward.

Developments in the way women are taught in modern education systems have tended, with particular rapidity in the last few years, towards a situation in which women cease to be excluded and marginalized and come to share the leading role in actually determining and shaping the education system and the cultural models to be transmitted to younger generations. This stage has not yet been reached in any country, but the time is clearly coming when it will be an immediate necessity in many western countries, for both economic and cultural reasons.

This process of change has gone through different stages or points. Of course, what happens in the education system is intimately connected with the position and progress of women in the social system as a whole, or in other subsystems within each society. Nonetheless, these subsystems generally have a degree of independence from one another, and the education system in particular tends to be among the first to work towards equality between men and women, being more sensitive to this issue than other subsystems, such as labour or political subsystems, not to speak of the military or religious spheres. As a result, and even bearing in mind that the education system cannot by itself bring about a transformation that ensures equality across the board, or even equality of opportunity, it is important not to underrate its contribution to this process, especially as a point of departure for establishing women's claim to the equality they seek.

For a policy of change in women's education to be constructed, it is always necessary as a first step to carry out an analysis of the situation that focuses on what forms of discrimination actually operate in the education of women, and which sectors are most affected. Once this knowledge has been obtained, a set of priorities needs to be established, and a methodology devised for each of them.

In the case of Latin America, as was noted earlier, there are very great differences both between countries and within each country, which means that it is impossible to establish general priorities. Nonetheless, we can establish some typical situations and suggest a set of measures and recommendations for each of them.

The stages referred to, although they do not correspond rigidly to historical processes, obviously represent points in the development of women's schooling at which stress is placed on a few specific objectives in the light of what are considered to be the most urgent aims. In Latin America, given that in many countries sectors in which women are illiterate or children do not go to school coexist with what is now large-scale university attendance by women, a system of priorities needs to be established. If we are setting out from the need to use education as an instrument for economic development and the fight against poverty, for the benefit of both individuals

and the community, it follows that emphasis needs to be placed first and foremost on extending education to all girls and providing adult women with literacy and occupational training, as a first step towards attaining equality, proceeding thereafter to measures that not only improve women's access to education but produce changes in the education system.

The whole process of change in women's education involves a number of measures relating to infrastructure and educational resources, to ensure that the territory concerned has adequate school coverage, that education is free, at least at the primary level, and that books and working materials are supplied at least to the poorest people. These measures, however, are not specific to women's education, but are applicable to the entire population, which means they are well-known enough for us not to have to concentrate on them. In this report, then, we shall focus primarily on issues relating to differential aspects, i.e. to the concrete difficulties involved in changing the way women are educated and to the obstacles of an ideological nature that need to be overcome. We shall therefore take it for granted that there are a number of basic measures which need to be implemented, given that if schooling is not free or widely available, measures of other kinds will obviously fail.

To concentrate, then, on the problems that actually exist in the sphere of women's education, we shall distinguish four types of situations and four types of policies that will have to be developed to provide guidelines for priority action in different areas in the light of the objectives that have to be met at any given time. This does not mean that these cannot be addressed at the same time; but it does need to be emphasized that not everything can be resolved at once, and certain historical developments require ideological and cultural foundations that do not come into being until other preliminary transformations have taken place.

First of all, we shall establish the main areas in which action needs to be taken:

1. Legislation. Legislative changes are needed to remove all the legal barriers that might deny women access to education on equal terms.
2. Access for female students. This refers to the process whereby women enter the education system, until they achieve parity at every level and in every type of course.
3. The structure of educational establishments, meaning whether these are mixed or segregated, and the use made of spaces within them.
4. Structure of the curriculum. This refers to the prescriptions that govern curricula, at every level of education, and the knowledge and values that are included in them.
5. Textbooks. The issue is whether or not women and subjects relating to private life feature in textbooks.
6. Hidden curriculum. This refers to all customary practices in the education system that are not spelt out explicitly but that are enshrined in teaching habits, including both the way pupils are treated and the kind of observations, value judgements, etc., that teaching staff express.
7. Language. The issue is whether the language used in school texts and in the classroom is sexist or not.
8. Sporting activities. This refers to all sports and games, both in and out of school, that are carried on within the framework of the education system.
9. Occupational education and training. This refers to the treatment to be given to occupational education and training at every level.

10. Parity of teaching staff. This refers to the composition by sex of teaching staffs, in terms both of the actual proportions of both sexes and of the positions held and duties performed.

The following table, which will be explained more fully in the following sections, contains a summary of the priorities to be set at each stage.

Main stages	Access	Unification	Visibility of women	Coeducation
Aspects				
Legislation	Removal of obstacles and compulsory schooling	Prohibition of various forms of discrimination	Emphasis on equality	Inclusion of "female" learning material Transversality
Access for female students	Official campaign	Statistical monitoring	Statistical monitoring	Statistical monitoring
Structure of establishments	Maximum coverage	Mixed centres	Some separate teaching	Unification of spaces
Structure of curriculum	Adaptation to what is possible for women	Unification of curriculum	Analysis of aspects that fall short of women's needs and introduction of "female" subjects	Transversality values and issues relating to reproduction
Textbooks	Adaptation to women's cultural levels	Unification of textbooks	Analysis of language and absence of women	Balance between male and female subjects and prominence
Hidden curriculum	Analysis of how women are treated	Inclusion of women in highly regarded activities	Analysis of educational practices: attention, spaces	Balanced values and treatment
Language	Elimination of pejorative terms	Elimination of pejorative terms	Analysis of absence, reference to women and introduction of changes	Language with balanced presence of males and females
Sporting activities	Introduction of "female" activities	Inclusion in mixed activities	Re-evaluation of female activities	Inclusion of men in female activities
Occupational education and training	Adaptation to actual opportunities, recycling and ongoing training	Unification of occupational training	Encouragement for occupational diversification	Male-female balance in all occupational courses
Teaching staff	Adaptation to women's needs	Unification of teaching staff	Analysis of differential situations and promotion of female teachers	Male-female balance in all teaching positions

In the next part we shall take each one of the stages described separately, looking at certain problems that arise, main objectives, and concrete recommendations. A more flexible method has been followed in the exposition than in the table, since the aim is to understand the logic of the problems which can arise at each stage. Once again, it has to be borne in mind that this is only a guide to action and needs to be used flexibly; i.e., if at a given stage it is possible to achieve the objectives of subsequent stages, this will help save time. Nonetheless, proper ordering of objectives enables resources to be better organized and the results obtained at each point to be maximized.

1. Extending education and training for adult women

There is an initial stage in which the norms that have traditionally governed gender prescriptions continue to operate and maintain a very pronounced division between the social spheres in which men and women act, and between the attitudes and patterns of conduct each gender is expected to conform to. This situation is generally characterized by a hierarchical set of values whereby the male sex is much more highly valued than the female sex and men are much more highly valued than women. This means that, to an ever-increasing extent in our society, women suffer from a twofold marginalization: severe limitations are placed on their personal development, as they do not have the opportunity to educate themselves to the same level as men from the same social milieu, or to cultivate and extend their capabilities; while as regards participation in the public sphere, their situation at present is one of exclusion that is prescribed by gender norms and justified by the real inequality that exists in education.

In situations of this type, which have arisen in every country, albeit at different stages in history, what the struggle for equality fundamentally requires is that the barriers to women obtaining access to officially and generally recognized education in each country be done away with, since the first objective to aim for is full development of their individual capabilities and recognition of these capabilities, this being an indispensable precondition for women to become fully fledged citizens, and to have the power, from that point on, to act as such in order to attain their objectives, moving away from passive acceptance of their circumstances to active transformation of their environment, and thereby securing increasing control over the conditions under which their lives are led. At this stage, therefore, what needs to be called into question is not the nature of existing institutions, but the limitations they impose upon women, so that the obstacles which produce marginalization can then be cleared away. As regards the educational system, this is not the time to question the male-centred model of culture; it is rather the barriers preventing women from gaining access to this on equal terms that need to be challenged; at the same time, there is a need to create more awareness of how important it is for women to have access to the education system, because it is here that women can develop capabilities which are lacking in them as long as they remain outside it. We can therefore describe the general objective to be achieved in this first instance as *inclusion of all women of school age in the education system, and education to the highest possible level of all adult women who have hitherto been excluded from the education system.*

The most urgent task at this stage, given that it is the one which can best contribute to eradicating poverty, is to raise the educational levels of those population sectors that suffer from the greatest exclusion. If priorities need to be established between these, two characteristics need to be considered. Firstly, particular attention needs to be paid to the youngest generations so that existing levels of illiteracy are not

reproduced, and so that a new position can be secured for the young women of the future. The second great need is to train women for the labour market, basing this training not on some general principle, but on the prospects that actually exist for them in each area, either because there are specific job opportunities, or because there is scope for them to create their own work once their self-initiative has been developed. A third priority is for women to be trained for sectors and jobs that offer the best prospects for the future.

These are the primary objectives established by the Platform for Action that came out of the Beijing Conference. Paragraph 82 of strategic objective B.1., "Ensure equal access to education", details the measures that need to be adopted by governments, and paragraph 83 of objective B.2., "Eradicate illiteracy among women", sets out the measures to be taken by governments, national, regional and international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, also includes the following in paragraph 65 of its strategic objective II.4.: "To ensure that the population in general, and especially girls and women, have access to formal and informal education that prepares them for the full exercise of their rights and of full citizenship, equitable participation in decision-making and the egalitarian sharing of family and household responsibilities, and to ensure that girls remain in the educational system", an objective which is further spelt out in paragraph 70 of strategic action II.4.e, as follows: "Conducting research and taking actions to eradicate female illiteracy, reduce women's drop-out and repetition rates and encourage women, especially rural and indigenous women, to remain in the educational system".

As regards implementation of the recommendations contained in these documents, we may add some reflections on the methodology to be followed.

At this stage, as was pointed out earlier, the fundamental objective is to bring the greatest possible number of women into education, and to acquire basic training tools. It is therefore vital to ensure that the entire country understands the importance of women's education, and to follow a two-pronged approach, on the one hand motivating people to desire education, and on the other hand developing the instruments needed to spread it to every corner of the country. Clearly, motivation is of no use if the necessary infrastructure is not there. Consequently, there is a vital need to produce a school map setting out in minute detail what resources and needs there are in each area and drawing up a plan for school building and supply, school transport where required, distribution of textbooks and specific material for adult literacy training and the training of teaching staff to specialize in this work. The plan must aim to give women the easiest possible access to education, which means that schooling must be free, at least where all the compulsory components are concerned.

The necessary corollary to this are motivation campaigns, which can be publicized through posters, radio campaigns, talks, etc., aiming to show women the importance of education in helping them to exercise their rights and participate in the modern world. The media can play a leading role in this, not only by promoting schooling directly, but by encouraging reading, portraying women in different occupations, etc. Again, very often it is women who have themselves undergone literacy or training courses that are best able to motivate other women in the same circumstances as themselves to attend educational institutions.

So far we have been dealing with macro policies covering an entire country. These need to be complemented by more detailed policies at the micro level that take into account not only the differences between the literacy and school attendance rates of girls of school age and those of adult women, but also local specificities or

difficulties, whether these are of an urban/rural nature or are associated with indigenous cultures or with subcultures produced by the workings of the local economy, traditions of some kind, patterns of male/female relationships that have distinctive features of their own, etc.

As regards school attendance by girls, efforts must be made even at this stage to incorporate them into the existing education system, promote mixed schooling in cases where there is none or there is a high percentage of single-sex schooling, and promote unified curricula and mixed teaching staffs; in other words, to make progress right from the start towards what will be the objectives of the second stage. These, however, are not the top priority at the moment: *the overriding objective is to bring girls into education*. To do this, it is necessary to use all existing resources, agreeing to separate schooling if this is the only kind the population will accept, or the use of female teachers only, or any other measure that facilitates the incorporation of girls, such as special hours, specially designed curricula, separate classes to carry out compensatory types of education, etc. These measures, which will subsequently need to disappear and give way to unification of the education system, may be acceptable for the purpose of promoting access, if the first step can thereby be achieved more easily.

Another important aspect of schooling for girls is the need for them to remain in the education system at least for the entire compulsory education stage. One feature that has been found to characterize several Latin American countries is the tendency for girls from certain poor sectors to drop out of school. To avoid this, action can be taken on a number of fronts, from the use of motivation techniques as already emphasized —picturing women who have achieved independence by studying, or arranging for women to give talks in schools, emphasizing how important education was to them and how many advantages they have derived from it— to the supervisory activities of teaching staff, who can seek to find out what the problem is when girls stop attending educational establishments before the appropriate age.

Work with families is also a useful strategy for keeping girls in the school system throughout the compulsory education stage. The most common reason for girls to drop out of school is that their families have never been convinced by direct example of the importance of schooling to their daughters' future, because the women in their social circle have never attended school, or there are no jobs requiring schooling. Nonetheless, mothers tend to take a very critical approach to their own personal histories, and to be receptive to suggestions that may be put forward for improving their daughters' prospects. Except in the case of very marginal sectors, therefore, talks with families, and especially with mothers, explaining to them that time at school is something which their daughters are entitled to and which will bring them advantages in future, tend to be a very effective way of altering this situation.

Another factor which causes many adolescent girls to drop out of the education system is teenage pregnancy, and the mockery or comments this gives rise to in the classroom among their fellow pupils. This is another area where teachers can play a vital role in removing all the negative aspects that can arise in schools and welcoming pregnant girls in the most natural way, even making it clear that it is particularly important for them, in this situation, to receive an education which can enable them to find work.

The final aspect to consider is the cultural specificity of certain population groups, or the possibility that girls may lag behind boys in the development of particular capabilities, such as some specific manual skills, for example. These characteristics may make it necessary for girls to be given some separate teaching when they come to be integrated into the school system, if the system is a mixed one, so they can start out

from a basis of competitiveness that enables them to join in with boys on equal terms and ensures that the interaction of the two sexes in games, sports and so on is not a cause of trauma.

Broadly speaking, the fundamental objective of this stage is to open up opportunities for girls so that they do not assume their lives will follow the same pattern as their mothers', but become aware that they can act to change and control the conditions in which they live, and that education is a vital step towards this. For this reason, it is important for them to be in contact, through school texts, talks, etc., with women who are living examples of these opportunities, and who can show them a level of self-esteem and independence that they may not have had the opportunity to observe in their own social environment.

As regards education of adult women, their circumstances differ greatly from girls'. Special attention needs to be paid, therefore, to certain aspects which are different from those dealt with so far.

At the stage when adult women are incorporated into the education system, it is less important, and may even be counterproductive, for this to be unified. Of course, it is impossible to generalize about this, so for every individual case —each country, region, area, etc.— a specific strategy needs to be devised to match local cultural conditions, taking into account the most common forms of gender relationships in the area. It can often be useful to produce a literacy or vocational training plan exclusively for women, or for women from a particular sector, urban district, company or ethnic group, and make specific resources available for this plan, in terms of both infrastructure and teaching staff, the curriculum, material and textbooks, among other things. Education for adult women must above all be regarded as a specific transitional operation, not as a permanent training system, since new generations of women need to be educated from childhood. Thus, more attention needs to be given to immediate effectiveness than to the way adult education fits into the general system of education.

As regards educational content, a number of aspects need to be taken into account. The first of these is the need to link the process of learning to read and write to specific content that is intelligible and motivating for women who have been in certain types of cultural contexts of a particularistic character. The methodology for this type of teaching can draw on a great deal of previous experience, since this is a field where an immense amount of work has been done in Latin America by non-governmental organizations.⁹

Secondly, over and above the acquisition of basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, schooling at this stage needs to inculcate certain habits of mind that are indispensable if women are to take on a more prominent role in the public sphere. Self-esteem, confidence in their capabilities and knowledge of their rights are objectives to be aimed for at this stage, alongside other basic skills such as a methodology for analysing and classifying situations, dealing with ideas of cause and effect, etc. All of this needs to draw on language and examples taken from women's everyday life, avoiding an excessively academic approach which would be totally out of place in this situation. Although the different social environments that women who have not passed

⁹ There is a considerable amount of adult literacy and vocational training material based on methodologies of this type. Among these, I would like to draw attention to the material published by the Institute for Women's Studies in Spain, *De otra manera*, which can be a useful model, although it might need to be adapted for specific cultural contexts. Ministry of Social Affairs, Institute for Women's Studies, Ministry of Education and Science, *De otra manera. Cuadernos de Educación de Adultas*, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, Madrid.

through the education system are born into contain very valuable elements of culture, what is often lacking is the ability to formulate abstractions and generalizations, which is needed to deal with contemporary culture. This deficiency is especially marked in the case of women born in very run-down urban environments which cannot properly be said to have a culture of their own but where life is rather governed by immediate adaptation and survival measures, and where the transmission of very elementary cultural capabilities and norms is far less assured than it is in indigenous cultures of long standing.

Education and information about general health and sexual and reproductive health is another area of great importance for women, and it needs to be brought in at this stage, especially where adult women are concerned. To do this, it is necessary to design suitable material, and to determine, in the light of existing cultural forms relating to reproductive issues, which approaches are most appropriate for addressing this issue both in literacy courses and in all the types of recycling that are carried out with adults.

In the sphere of vocational training this stage is characterized by the great discrepancy that exists between men and women, due to the limited access that the latter have had not only to the educational system but even to employment opportunities. The overriding need, therefore, is to include the greatest possible number of women in different types of vocational courses, even if they are of a low level or lead to what are regarded as female jobs; the beneficial effect of this is to legitimize female demand for work and to show that they have the same capabilities as men. At the same time, it is important for at least some women to be able to enter the most highly regarded higher education courses, to break down stereotypes and open up gaps through which other women can subsequently enter.

Given the objective of eradicating poverty, the main requirement is that the education received should enable resources to be rapidly obtained in the coming labour market. Consequently, action needs to be very decentralized, taking account of local employment opportunities for adult women and giving them the right training to maximize their chances in this market. These local employment opportunities, however, should not be assessed strictly on the basis of the male labour market. In some cases this market may tend to disappear, as particular productive activities become obsolete; if possible, it is easier for women needing to enter the labour market for the first time to do so in new fields which have no tradition in the area than to try to displace men, when the area has some local labour specialization that has traditionally generated jobs.

Consequently, the occupational or professional training of adult women needs to be carefully planned in consultation with local bodies that work with economic and employment issues and that can in some cases foresee the future economic development of a region and the prospects for developing new forms of productive activity as alternatives to the existing ones, so that women can be guided towards these areas rather than towards traditional ones where they would not only be at a disadvantage compared to men, but would even run the risk of finding before too long that their work was becoming obsolete. At the same time, attention needs to be paid to their needs in terms of day nurseries and other services to enable them to reconcile their training with their family responsibilities.

2. Unifying the education system for men and women

In the second stage, problems and objectives of a different kind arise. This second stage is reached once a very high percentage of women have been incorporated into the public

sphere in such a way that they are able to obtain access to the different kinds of occupations, decision-making positions, etc., and the formal barriers debarring them from these have disappeared. Nonetheless, due to habit and the imprint of the gender models that still subsist, women continue to gravitate into specific groups, so that they tend to be in a majority in particular sectors of the economy or particular types of work, but do not yet have real access to all areas of society. This happens because, although society accepts the right to equality, in reality a double standard continues to be used to judge the capabilities of men and women, and their destinations in society continue to be differentiated.

In the sphere of education this phase is generally characterized by the maintenance of separate educational establishments for the two sexes, by the existence of wholly or partially differentiated curricula, with specific courses like needlework and domestic science for girls, etc., being retained, by the use of different textbooks for the two sexes, different sporting practices and sometimes different teaching staff, so that it is commoner for women to teach women and men men. These features may be found in conjunction or separately, and they may be the norm within the educational system or appear sporadically, depending on the habits and traditions of the country concerned.

Even when women do have access to the education system, this continues, generally speaking, to be designed for the education of men, and thus to maintain a whole set of features which mean that women are explicitly or implicitly discriminated against and obtain lower returns from the system in several areas: a lower level of academic qualifications, the choosing of less highly regarded vocational courses, lower academic returns in certain prestigious areas such as those of a more technical nature, lower levels of assertiveness and self-esteem, less awareness of their rights as individuals, etc. There are still a great many educational mechanisms that differentiate between men and women, and it is still men who play the most prominent role in education. Thus, numerous barriers to equality still exist within the education system itself.

The maintenance of different forms of education for men and women has some highly negative consequences for women, as a hierarchical point of view continues to operate between the genders, considering everything male as "better" or more important. The capabilities developed by women in separate schools and with separate curricula entail segregation of what is regarded as most valuable in the education system, and consequently women's opportunities for entering the courses or positions that are most highly prized in society are still few. Consequently, *the main objective to be achieved at this stage is formal unification of the education system, so that boys and girls study to the same curriculum; unification of educational establishments so that individuals of both sexes share the same classrooms, assignments and types of study; unification of the type of examinations and tests, the performance expected and the monitoring of school progress; unification of the time spent by men and women in education, so that the average number of years of schooling is eventually the same for both sexes; unification of sporting practices, so that women participate in the sports and competitions that are seen as most prestigious, etc. Another objective for this stage is unification of the teaching staff, so that both men and women teach in schools and there is a balance between them at every level of the education system.* Although unification of the education system does not appear as a specific objective in international documents, these dwell repeatedly on the need for women to have access to non-discriminatory education, which can only be achieved by unification of this kind.

At this stage, however, the prevailing cultural model survives, generally speaking, unquestioned, so that what mainly takes place is what we might call the

masculinization of girls, meaning by masculinization the adoption of gender norms that were formerly the exclusive preserve of boys, but that at this stage have to become universal.

As for vocational education and training, the issue at this stage is how to secure universal access for women to vocational courses, under the same conditions and in the same educational establishments as men. In practice, however, it is difficult to prevent course choices continuing to reflect a gender bias, and this is hard to combat, since we are now dealing with differences that do not appear to be imposed from outside, but that rather spring from a personal choice which is interpreted as a free one, and which appears to confirm the idea that girls have a preference for options that are different to and less prestigious than those chosen by boys.

Consequently, the priority objective in this situation is to place the emphasis on formal unification of the education system. The main aspects of this unification are:

a) Unification of teaching establishments. Girls and boys must attend the same schools and the same classes, at every level of the education system. Efforts need to be made to maintain a numerical balance between the two sexes, given that any disproportion between them tends to work against harmonious integration and to be detrimental to the girls, if they are in the minority. What tends to happen at this stage is that families accept mixed schooling for their sons, but are more reluctant to accept it for their daughters, so that girls-only schools —religious schools, for example— are sometimes maintained. In this situation, there is a risk of the balance between the sexes being lost in state schools. For this reason, and although it is difficult to prevent single-sex schooling being maintained, explanatory campaigns need to be conducted to show that it is much better for girls to attend mixed schools.

b) Unification of the curriculum. The educational curriculum needs to be revised by the competent authorities in order to eliminate all the differences that may still exist between the educational material prescribed for the two sexes, including domestic science courses, which should be done away with unless they can be made universal —and at this stage it would be difficult to extend them to boys as well. Likewise, girls must be able to learn male subjects— vocational training for occupations such as metallurgy, for example. Again, in secondary and higher teaching institutions all barriers imposed selectively on individuals of one or the other sex, and all specific requirements such as differentiated supplementary courses, need to disappear.

c) The curricular unification dealt with so far is of a formal nature, and does not always translate into changes on the ground. Consequently, action at the macro level needs to be combined with action at the micro level designed for specific urban districts, small towns or establishments, so that patterns of schooling actually change and there is a real fusion of institutions and classrooms where these were formerly separate, and real unification of the way games and sports are conducted, the use made of spaces, extracurricular activities, etc. In some cases, this may mean that it is temporarily necessary to maintain an element of single-sex teaching, to bring the capabilities of the two sexes up to the same standard before going on to combine groups into mixed ones. At this stage, though, it would be best to play down any element of single-sex teaching, since any activity that is exclusively feminine still tends to be devalued, and participation in such activities still confers a badge of inferiority.

d) Textbooks also need to be unified so that there are no differences between those used by boys and girls. At the same time it would be helpful to revise many of the stories, tales and other material used in primary education; most of these tend to be tremendously sexist and derogatory to women, so it is important for a start to be made

on reviewing these texts and replacing them with others that present women and men in more varied and balanced situations.

e) Unification of teaching staffs is also vital at this stage. The aim should be for both men and women to be represented on staffs in all teaching institutions and on all courses, from day-care centres to universities, with the further objective of producing a mix that is close to 50:50. However, not only should teaching staffs be mixed, but the representation of the sexes in different positions and functions should be balanced as well. To achieve this balance pressure will need to be exerted both at the macro level —i.e. Ministries of Education, by means of policies to promote women to high positions and controls on the way elections to educational posts are carried out, etc.— and at the micro level, reviewing what happens in each individual establishment, what functions are discharged by men and women and how these functions are allocated, and establishing egalitarian rules to balance these situations.¹⁰

f) Another aspect to which great attention must be paid at this stage is the need to change the career options open to girls. Even if the obstacles to their entering certain vocational courses have disappeared, force of mental habit and the examples they see around them tend to guide them towards traditionally female courses and occupations, which are generally of little value in the labour market, and which in many cases are oversubscribed. If these choices are to be changed, it is once again vital for action to be taken both by the bodies that run the education system as a whole, with media campaigns, posters, etc., showing women in all types of occupations, and by the actual institutions concerned, in towns, urban districts, educational centres, etc., by organizing talks in which women in non-traditional occupations relate their experiences, and by training teaching staff so that, if there is a career advisory system, male and female counsellors do not just reiterate the traditional options but help female students to set new objectives. The ultimate purpose of all this is to open up new horizons for young women and show them that all kinds of occupations are open to them, including occupations they have never considered because they imagined they were out of the question for them. Teachers themselves, however, will require recycling to ensure that they have these options in mind when carrying out advisory work.

g) By this stage, there are usually groups of women in universities carrying out research into women's issues, and these need to be supported and linked up to the educational process as a whole, both to have an up-to-date source for statistical information and analysis of the educational situation and the academic achievements of men and women, and to generate a pool of knowledge that can be incorporated into the culture and mechanisms of education in the following stage.

h) In the case of higher education, when there are very prestigious institutions that operate highly potent systems of entry screening, consideration needs to be given to the possibility of developing positive action measures, such as taking into account not

¹⁰ For staffs to uncover the concealed aspects of the forms of discrimination which still affect teachers, use can be made of material that lays down guidelines for observation. See M. Rovira and A. Tomé, "La enseñanza, ¿una profesión femenina?", *Cuadernos para la Coeducación*, No. 4, Barcelona, Institut de Ciències de l'Educació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1993. The *Cuadernos para la Coeducación* collection seeks to establish a working methodology, primarily for the use of educational establishments, that can be applied to the objectives of giving greater prominence to women in various ways within the education system and effecting the changes that need to be made by teaching staff. See also the excellent studies carried out in Argentina by Gloria Bonder's team in the context of the National Programme to Promote Equal Opportunities for Women in Education (PRIOM).

just the capabilities but also the sex of applicants in order to work towards equal representation of men and women in these institutions.

3. The emergence of women and cultural change

The third stage is where, in society at large, androcentrism as a universal model begins to be criticized. As women come to occupy positions of responsibility, less attention is given to the reproductive sphere on which their energies were previously focused; not that they have ceased to fulfil this role, but their dedication is lessened because they now have to divide their attention between these functions and those they perform in the productive sphere. At the same time, women have acquired capabilities that were previously denied to them, and consequently have ceased to regard the public arena and professional activities as a higher orbit that they might aspire to but could scarcely imagine themselves entering, and begin to discover their drawbacks and limitations. In consequence, they begin to draw attention to a difference, that is, to certain values and activities traditionally regarded as typically female, which are coming to be discarded in the process of reorganizing society. They begin to realize that these activities and values, however low they may have been rated by society, were in themselves of great service to that society as a whole, and that their disappearance entails negative consequences both for individuals, in the form of a lack of emotional bonding for women themselves, and for the community, in the form of a decline in care for weaker age groups, such as children and the elderly. All this leads them to affirm the importance of this difference, which may be regarded in a confrontational way and as a return to aspects of the past, or may be channelled positively into strengthening the key components of what historically have been the gender prescriptions for women.

In the education system, this is the stage where the male-centredness of culture is discovered as a problem. The invisibility of women and of their actions in history and the social sciences, the opacity of language with regard to the existence of women, the absence from school curricula of tasks that have traditionally been associated with the domestic sphere, the subordinate treatment and lesser attention given to girls and young women by teachers, are problems that used to go virtually unnoticed, or that if noticed did not find enough resonance in the teaching profession as a whole, whereas at the stage we are now discussing they begin to be regarded as one of the great shortcomings of the education system, leading girls and young women to develop a consciousness that they occupy a secondary position in society, and depriving them of positive models to show them what they can achieve in life. The result is that, although in general by this stage the number of women in higher education has risen greatly, a degree of diversification has been introduced in terms of curriculum and career options, and the academic achievements of women have improved greatly, and may even be beginning to surpass those of men, real equality is not yet guaranteed. Despite the success that girls might achieve at school in terms of marks and diplomas, the male-centred education system continues to inculcate into them the expectation that they will play a secondary part in society, and this leads them to accept their domestic roles and the difficulty of obtaining access to decision-making positions in what is still a fairly passive way.

The fundamental objective to be achieved at this stage, therefore, is to make women visible, bringing to light the role they play in society, their own objectives and their historical contribution to the progress of humankind, and eventually constructing an alternative cultural model to the androcentric one on the basis of a re-evaluation of

certain of the traditional characteristics of the female sex and a critique of the fitness of the masculine model, taken as a whole, to be a universal one.

As regards the vocational training situation, two kinds of objectives need to be set at this stage. The first is to analyse the reason why there is still a gender bias in the choice of vocational courses, and implement a system to enable girls to view the whole gamut of possible options and make their choice unimpeded by gender prejudices; and the second is to carry out a reassessment in society at large of the types of work that are regarded as female, so that they can accrue greater prestige, serious consideration can be given to teaching them as subjects within the education system, and they can be offered to boys as interesting career options.

Although this stage is not dealt with as such in the international planning documents, many of the education-related measures included in these apply to the objectives that have to be achieved at this point, since these needs have now manifested themselves in a number of countries.

For schools to cease to be transmitters of inequalities, there needs to be a change in the culture they transmit, be this in written and oral form or through the values and practices that are spread through the education system and that often only come to light when the concealed curriculum is analysed. But in a unified education system inequality is ignored, so at this stage a number of measures need to be implemented to reveal this inequality and begin to correct it.

A first class of measures, which are the province of governments and the highest education authorities, relate to textbooks. It is well known that textbooks are male-centred to a high degree. To change this it is necessary a) for this male-centredness to be brought to the attention of society and acknowledged by it; b) for the situation to be recognized as wrong and the need for change accepted; c) for influence to be exerted on the publishers so that they change their texts; d) for them to have knowledge of an alternative kind so that they can give a new slant to school material and the established culture.

To achieve this, the basic resource to be used by those who run education is the impetus of research on women's issues, involving criticism of androcentrism in the intellectual sphere —drawing on the very extensive international literature that now exists— and reinstatement of the lives and persons of illustrious women and women generally. Secondly, researchers need to draw attention to the male-centredness of textbooks and the under-representation of women in these. Finally, it is vital that contact be made with publishers and change promoted, either by rewarding those that make efforts in this direction, or —and this second approach has proved more efficient than incentives— by introducing regulations with which textbooks will have to comply in order for permission to be granted for publication.

As regards individual teaching establishments and the actions of teaching staff, there is scope at this level too for dealing with the issue of textbooks, by exercising care in selecting the texts to be used and by producing and disseminating appropriate material when there are no non-sexist texts available. Another very useful proceeding is to analyse textbooks in class with the pupils themselves and bring their unegalitarian character to light, as this can make both female and male students highly aware of established distinctions and hierarchies.

A second aspect of cultural change relates to the agents of education: teaching staff, inspectors, teacher trainers, etc. At this stage it is necessary on the one hand to carry out recycling of teaching staff to make them aware of issues connected with equality between boys and girls and show them that what they consider to be egalitarian education is in fact still sexist education. At the same time, this needs to

happen at the teacher training stage, and so should be introduced into the colleges where this is carried out.

It must be recognized however that the transition to non-sexist education will require a change in mindset that has still not been achieved in society at large, where sexist stereotypes continue to be transmitted. This means that it is not enough to hold lectures to recycle teaching staff: teachers themselves need to carry out research and activities in the classroom to enable them to discover in what ways sexist attitudes still influence their own actions and experiment with alternatives to try and change the values that are passed on.

Once again, there is a need to draw on international experience and on existing material and methodologies, which will need to be adapted in each case to the cultural characteristics and potential of each area and each level of the education system. Real change in education can be achieved only through a corresponding change in mentality and practices, and for this to come about teachers will need to analyse the values that they unconsciously hold and modify them by introducing practices that have the effect of giving a more prominent role to girls and women in the classroom.

At the same time, for the cultural change that is needed at this stage to be achieved, practices and values formerly regarded as characteristic of women will have to be reintroduced into the education system, as they now need to be extended to both sexes. Thus, the education system needs to include subjects relating to both personal and generational reproduction where knowledge of these is necessary: skills needed for domestic tasks, emotional and sex education, appreciation of care-related tasks, knowledge of dietary and health issues, etc. The effect of introducing these subjects is to balance the curriculum so that it no longer attributes importance solely to the tasks necessary for production, and at the same time to give girls and women a more central position within the education system.

Introduction of these types of knowledge, values and practices, however, requires a logic different from the one usually applied in education; although in some cases they can be imparted in the form of subjects in the traditional sense, what is primarily at issue here are values, and these therefore need to impregnate the entire education system. This is where the need for transversality comes in; in other words, the change needs to be felt in all subject areas. Thus, for example, the teaching of sciences or mathematics needs to be changed so that the examples given or the problems set refer to situations that are normal for both men and women, in order for the latter to realize that mathematics and sciences are not wholly alien to their lives, but have practical applications of the greatest use for many of the tasks that women perform every day.

We need to be aware, however, of the difficulties that transversality entails: in the final analysis, it entails total reorganization of curricula, as these, especially in the case of primary teaching, need to be reshaped in such a way that individual subjects are not the main form of division, but rather tools taught as a direct extension of basic items of knowledge that are necessary for life. This involves reorientation of teacher training, and thus a sea-change in education. This development, which is already underway in the western world, entails a change in the role of teachers, who cease to be mere conveyor belts for passing on a culture they have no part in shaping, and begin to play a much more active role, which we might properly describe as an intellectual function, whereby they take into account the social environment in which they work, the underlying cultural forms and the objectives in terms of knowledge which need to be attained if their pupils are to develop a maximum of initiative and effectiveness in adapting to their environment.

Language is something else that requires attention during this stage, the objective being, as in the case of cultural content, to reveal the systematic way in which it is used to keep women in the background.

4. Making coeducational schooling a reality

The objective of the fourth stage —which has not yet been fully attained in any country— is to achieve total equality, meaning by this the elimination of any difference in the socialization of boys and girls, from a basis that is now in itself coeducational. This objective involves the disappearance of genders —though of course not of sexes— and the reinstatement of all the positive features which formerly, because of the division of labour by sex, were attributed to one or the other sex, as aspects of human activity regardless of the sex of individuals. At a stage when women hold public power in society in a proportion that is close to parity, it entails a transformation of this society such that the traditional values of the female gender can become universal practices, in the same way as traditional male values previously became universal, due to the disappearance of the barriers that shut out women.

This is a stage that at present can only be regarded as hypothetical, and the main purpose of considering it is to indicate the direction to aim at. As to whether it will come about, there is a diversity of opinion. There is no point in dealing with it here in more detail, since it belongs to a future that will be shaped and defined as the relations between men and women evolve.

Within the education system, this stage —which will probably need to be subdivided into other sub-stages as the issues involved emerge as practical realities— is characterized by a crisis of masculinity. Boys and young men, the unquestioned leaders in culture and society throughout history, enter a phase of disorientation as they are faced with girls and young women who are powerful, capable and resourceful, who refuse on principle to acknowledge any marginalization and who are capable of competing and at the same time —if the previous stage has worked out successfully— of maintaining levels of personal life, affection and intercommunication in which boys are lacking. At this stage, therefore, it will be necessary to change the model of masculinity, and to give boys access to traditionally feminine capabilities to enable them, in the subjective sphere, to re-establish their personal equilibrium and diversify their objectives, and in the practical sphere to deal with a number of social needs connected with reproduction that will arise at this stage both in domestic life and in the world of paid work. *The fundamental objective at this stage, in terms of education, is therefore to produce a new cultural model that not only recognizes the existence of differences, but is structured in such a way that it gives universal currency to different capabilities and forms of behaviour previously regarded as being specific to particular groups.*

As regards vocational training objectives, it is necessary at this stage to proclaim openly that, in general terms, those occupations traditionally regarded as feminine are equal in social value to those traditionally regarded as masculine, and more specifically, that the same holds for professions pertaining to the two groups. At the same time, the mechanisms needed to put an end to the division of labour by sex must be implemented, with the aim of achieving something close to balance in the representation of men and women in every kind of occupation.

The division by stages or points in time to which reference has been made is a useful working tool for establishing priorities in each country or each social environment.

It should not be taken as a prescription, or as a limitation on what can or cannot be done, but rather as an analytical tool for setting in order the different problems that arise in relation to the education of women and for enabling concrete objectives and a logical plan of action to be established at any given time.

If we analyse the measures referred to in the documents that set out worldwide agreements, such as the Beijing Platform for Action for example, we can see that these measures are designed to achieve very diverse objectives, something that is perfectly consistent with the diversity of situations that we find when we are operating on a worldwide stage, which is what the United Nations is. When a specific policy has to be produced in a given country, region or area, however, objectives need to be selected on the basis both of the actual situation on the ground and the needs of the place concerned and the resources available there. It is at this point that the typology set out above can be of use in enabling us to avoid the common error of attempting to tackle all the problems at the same time, which results in contradictory messages being sent out.

B. THE AGENTS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

In devising a policy to change the way women are educated, account also needs to be taken of where the main impetus for this change has come from. Although internationally approved measures like the Platform for Action of the Beijing Conference assign different measures to different types of agents, including international institutions, governments, intermediate organizations and non-governmental organizations, experience shows that the same level of commitment is not always forthcoming from all sectors of society, and that, consequently, in each individual situation an assessment has to be made of which sectors are most committed to change, as it is these that will have to provide the impetus for specific policies.

In practice, one or other of two situations tends to exist:

1) *Change from above*: this happens in situations where the government accepts the need for change, which then tends to be driven by government bodies, without there being any clear movement in this direction in society at large. It is generally combined with a desire for social change in general, and thus may be part of a phase of review and reform in the education system. This situation undoubtedly makes it easier to include objectives that are specific to women.

In these cases, it is essential for a specific body to be set up to devise and promote policies for the advancement of women, as all the international documents have recommended, whether this body works along the lines of the Institute for Women's Studies in Spain, the National Women's Service in Chile (SERNAM) or the ministries for women's affairs that have been set up under various names in other countries of Latin America, or, if this is not possible, and for the purposes of education only, a specific body —ministry of state, general administration or sub-administration— to devise such a policy within the Ministry of Education and ensure that it is included in general policies.

Where the advancement of women is concerned, the work of governments has to be carried out through two channels: on the one hand a specific body, or mechanism, to use the language of the Platform for Action, and on the other a transversality operation, whereby policies concerning women are incorporated into all public policies. Experience shows that transversality is very difficult to achieve unless it is promoted by a specific body, since all parts of an administration have their own clearly defined tasks

to perform and it is difficult for them to take on others that are not assigned to any department within their organizational structure. The first step, then, is to set up a mechanism whose primary function is to promote policies for the advancement of women.

This mechanism must be up and running before transversality is attempted. Its work consists in:

- a) Analysing the current situation in each country and deciding upon objectives, in the light of the most urgent needs.

- b) Establishing a working methodology, either of its own devising or drawn from accrued international experience.

- c) Setting concrete tasks to be carried out: publicity campaigns, teacher training, preparation of material, stimulation of research, implementation of operations of an experimental nature which may be applied on a large scale subsequently, etc.

- d) Once objectives have been set and a group of women experts who are familiar with and accept these has been set up, the mechanism to promote women's policies must commence a dialogue with the Ministry of Education, if this has not already been done, so that the Ministry can accept these objectives and disseminate them through the formal education network.

At this point a new stage in the work begins, with tasks being divided between the equality mechanism and the Ministry of Education. In this stage, the Ministry of Education needs to set up a working group, which should then maintain permanent contact with the equality mechanism, so that it acts as a channel for transmitting educational policy relating to women within this Ministry. Thus, any education policy that is considered by the Ministry of Education, or any change that is proposed, will have to be examined in the light of the objectives pertaining to educational equality between men and women, to see if these objectives are included and if the changes being introduced are consistent with them.

This way of working is especially useful during stages of educational reform, since this entails systematic restructuring of all educational institutions and activities, and it is vital for this review to take detailed account of the educational interests of women, and for these interests to be clearly set out both in the laws and statutes of the Educational Reform and when courses, the contents of curricula and teacher training are planned and teaching material prepared. It needs to be reiterated that a declaration of principles by the Ministry of Education is not enough: a twofold logic which it would be absurd to try to ignore, of an androcentric and bureaucratic character, tends to produce systematic neglect of educational objectives that are specific to women unless there is a mechanism in being that has a strict remit to constantly consider and reintroduce these objectives.

Even when no reform process is underway, today's education systems tend to be subject to frequent reviews and restructuring to bring them into line with constantly changing cultural and labour market conditions. It is therefore necessary for constant communication to be maintained between the government mechanism for promoting equality and the corresponding Ministry of Education, for an ad hoc working group to be set up, and for all measures that emanate from this Ministry to be systematically monitored, at the same time as changes needed to meet the educational requirements of women are being proposed.

Once this coordination has been established with the Ministry of Education, or with other similar mechanisms of a regional or local character, depending on the way education is organized in each country, the task of the equality mechanism changes slightly. Its function consists on the one hand in constantly transferring ideas to this

Ministry, and on the other hand in monitoring its work, evaluating the results and devising new proposals or new experimental initiatives as required to further the transversal action being taken throughout the education system. Again, at this stage it is very important to launch initiatives in the areas of research, reinstatement of historical female figures that have been forgotten, analysis of the educational needs of women, evaluation of their situation in the labour market in order to make the necessary corrections to their training, preparation of women training staff to train others, contact with universities and teacher training colleges, etc. In other words, it is up to the equality mechanism to produce ground-breaking initiatives that can be assimilated and disseminated by the Ministry of Education once they have been evaluated and turned into solid objectives, and thus diffused through the entire education system. To this end it is useful, for example, to produce a Plan for Equality in education, set time horizons within which a number of operations are to be implemented, and determine each year what measures are to be taken jointly by the Ministry of Education and the equality mechanism, considering the budgetary implications of these. The Ministry of Education, for its part, must work to disseminate the objectives pertaining to educational equality between men and women through all the mechanisms that it uses to transmit educational innovations, i.e., by training regional and provincial representatives, setting up ad hoc departments in government administrations, training inspectors and teaching staff, introducing suitable indicators into routine assessments, appointing people to take charge of equality issues where necessary, etc., all of this to be done in the manner best suited to the way education is administered in each country.

These remarks may appear obvious. Experience has taught us, however, that countries do not always proceed in this way, and that in many cases there has been a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Education and the equality mechanism, often resulting in duplicated efforts, wasted resources, uncoordinated action, etc., and sometimes even in a degree of competition between the two bodies, or in the work done by one being ignored by the other. This is why it is necessary to insist on the need for regular liaison and for a working method that enables maximum use to be made of human and economic resources that are generally scarce when compared to the tasks that need to be carried out.

Institutional action, which we have termed "change from above", unquestionably has advantages, since the government has the necessary means and legitimacy to carry through change. Nonetheless, it can run up against difficulties at the micro level if it is not supported by sectors of teaching staff or the population. There is a twofold danger: either that the efforts towards change may be purely formal and not reach the grass roots of the population, so that the end result is frustration and a lost opportunity, or that they may not be understood by the population, in which case they arouse resistance which may lead to conflicts or to people abandoning the education system. Thus, institutional action needs to find support at the grass roots by mobilizing sectors of the population that are willing to participate in and spread the changes, while at the same time ensuring that the policy is explained to the entire population so that the objectives which the change is designed to achieve are sufficiently understood and debated, thus gaining support for these policies and ensuring that they are not regarded as an arbitrary imposition. It is also very important for alliances to be sought with the most suitable sectors of the population so that their participation can be secured, as all change tends to generate some form of resistance or conflict.

2) *Change from below*: this term may be applied to situations where the impetus for change comes from civil society, whether from intermediate organizations or institutions such as unions, religious or civil organizations, non-governmental

organizations, women's associations or teaching reform movements, or from groups of women or teachers who believe it is necessary to change the way women are educated.

In these situations it is more difficult for systematic action to be taken, and reforms tend to be more or less restricted to the meso- or microsocial level: very specific sectors of women, teaching establishments, etc., in other words very limited spheres where the groups seeking change can take action directly.

In these situations, it is important for the following recommendations to be considered:

a) It is vital for the situation and the objectives for change to be properly diagnosed. Actions taken by isolated women, groups of militant feminists, etc., are usually very valuable insofar as these people are prepared to put maximum effort into the project; at the same time, though, there is the danger that they may set objectives which are too ambitious in relation to the real scope for transforming the social sectors to which they are applied, and when this happens resistance or conflicts tend to arise between the agents of change and those around them. For this reason, change should never be considered as a personal objective, but rather as an action aimed at a social sector, requiring an analysis of the situation, objective needs, real prospects, etc., and great efforts should be made to establish alliances that are as broad as possible, to avoid arousing animosity in educational circles or in the very sectors that the action is intended to assist.

b) Secondly, it is crucial to secure the greatest possible legitimacy for the action to be taken, by preparing a set of arguments that are sufficiently convincing to ensure that the proposed change is not viewed as arbitrary or capricious; the analyses and recommendations prepared by international bodies are an excellent basis for obtaining this legitimacy. At the same time, care should be taken to avoid throwing any kind of blame on people who continue to act in a sexist way, as this type of behaviour is usually not deliberate and voluntarily adopted, but is rather a reflection of the culture that has been handed down and of patterns of thought that still have currency in society. It is important to involve the greatest possible number of people prepared to help bring about change, even if this means that the scope of the action initially has to be more modest than what is ultimately aimed at or could be aimed at with a small group of people who were more committed and prepared; any casting of blame tends to create a defensive barrier and a reaction against the aims being proposed. Consequently, care has to be taken at every step to convince both the other teachers and the families involved in the change, and any kind of imposition or authoritarianism needs to be avoided, as these tend to lead to greater isolation and to the creation of barriers that make any kind of progress more difficult.

c) Thirdly, use has to be made of all existing human and methodological resources, to facilitate action for educational change. It has happened all too often that women teachers and professors, upon becoming aware of the sexist features of education, have tried to create their own methodology for removing them. This urge, although it is in itself very positive and was indispensable at one stage when there were scarcely any studies or methods available for progressing towards an egalitarian education system, now means a waste of effort, since the different individuals attempting to bring about change in this way have to devote a great part of their labour to devising materials and methods. A large bibliography and abundant international experience now exist, and the correct approach at this stage is to draw on these, adapting the materials and methods to be used to each situation, after which they can be disseminated and experimented with, their advantages and drawbacks gauged, etc.

The need to make use of everything available also holds true for human resources. "Change from below" tends to be frustrated by the incohesion of the agents involved, and the way to remedy this is to create networks of contacts, debating forums, associations, bulletins, etc., as soon as possible, so that some type of organizational structure can be consolidated. When the impetus originates from isolated women or groups of women, these should try to ally themselves with organizational platforms that already exist, approaching teachers' unions, parents' associations, professional associations and the different institutions that operate in the world of education, universities, and especially women teachers and researchers in related areas or women's studies seminars if any yet exist. This strategy is also worthwhile when the initiative comes from intermediate organizations: the objective of uniting agents of change, as discussed above, is valid at every level; and it is vital to avoid a certain tendency that women's groups have towards isolation when confronted with initial hostility from many sectors of society.

Once again, several dangers arise when action is taken from below, and some of these have already been mentioned: isolation, conflicts and resistance which can sometimes be experienced in very personal ways, the creation of radical attitudes in a hostile environment, energy wasted on duplicated actions which produce little progress. But the most common problem is a failure to achieve concrete and widespread results, because the resources available are insufficient to change a situation which is deeply rooted in society. For this reason, movements which aim at educational change must try to ensure that action is also taken through governments, and must devote some of their energy to demanding equality mechanisms, or whatever bodies are best able to implement the policies set out above, and to persuading governments to adopt objectives and measures generated by movements in society.

If we review the way in which policies relating to women's education have actually emerged in different countries, we can see that, by and large, the first impetus has come from women themselves, often organized into associations working within the feminist movement or in schools or universities; these have been the first to denounce the position of women in education and to seek new alternatives, and it is thanks to their demands that these objectives have been introduced into the official thinking of governments. Consequently, even though we have distinguished between changes generated by government and those initiated at the grass roots, it is possible and desirable for the two to be combined, and thus for action to be taken simultaneously at the macrosocial and microsocial levels. When this is the case, it is highly advisable for government action to include women who have worked and thought on the issue beforehand. These women are in fact the experts, the people best equipped to implement these changes, since they have accumulated knowledge and experience that is generally not to be found in any other sphere of society, and that usually cannot be measured in academic qualifications, since the importance given to the gender angle still varies greatly between universities.

At the same time as governments need to be willing to work with those who are the real experts in the issue, rather than leaving it in the hands of educational experts who generally do not have specific awareness of the problems that affect women —not out of deliberate choice, but because until recently this problem never formed part of the training of education managers and professionals— it is also very important for women who have worked for change in women's education to agree to join government bodies when they have the opportunity to do so. Although this means acting in a complex environment, where one may sometimes get the feeling that no progress is being made and one's efforts are useless, or that all one's energy is being frittered away on the

bureaucratic ins and outs of the administration, and even though those who work through the government to achieve their aims may meet with a degree of incomprehension from other women who were formerly partners, far greater resources of all kinds are available in this situation than in civil society, and the results that can be obtained are correspondingly greater. In these situations, it is extremely useful to maintain informal networks, or even to formalize them by setting up councils in which experts who are not directly involved in the government administration can participate, so that action can continue to be guided by the interests of women in general rather than losing itself in corporate, party or propaganda objectives from which the administration is very unlikely to be free. Finally, solidarity and agreement between women in different positions and with different levels of decision-making power is the best resource for increasing the likelihood of educational change.

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The methodology expounded in this report is a first step towards planning educational change for women so that they can achieve empowerment and equality. Since it does not refer to any one specific situation, the aim has been to lay down some general guidelines, which will then need to be adapted to each set of circumstances. Let us briefly reiterate the operations involved in this process:

1) Map out the area in which action is to be taken and analyse the concrete problems that will have to be addressed by carrying out a situation analysis to determine what stage in the process of change has so far been reached. For this, use can be made of indicators that have not been explicitly mentioned here, but which can easily be defined.

2) Determine which social groups are the main agents of change and what shape a system of alliances might have.

3) Set priorities, using the guidelines given in the table. What concrete tasks are to be undertaken, and by whom, can be established by crossing the table with the agents involved, something that has not been done in this report given how manifold the possibilities are.

4) Plan out these tasks, setting objectives to be achieved in the short, medium and long terms and producing a detailed timetable for achieving them, showing the economic and human resources that are required and that can be assigned to them.

5) Collect whatever information exists on the tasks that are to be undertaken: curricular material, textbooks, methodology.

6) Detail the obstacles and conflicts that may arise and try to create suitable mechanisms to avoid them.

7) Design evaluation tools.

These operations can produce a highly detailed working plan which can then be used as a guide to action. At this stage a task of a different kind begins: that of mobilizing the different social sectors involved, and disseminating the objectives it is hoped to achieve.

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