TW
GEN
003

CHRISTIAN RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

"Beyond Beijing" Workshop
(summarized edition)

CCRDA

December, 1995

Table of Contents

Contents *Page*

1. Introduction to the 'Beyond Beijing' Workshop 1

2. Group Discussions and Recommendations 4

2.1 Women's Education and the Girl-Child 5

2.2 Women and Environment 8

2.3 Women and Health 10

2.4 Women's Empowerment 14

2.5 Human Rights of Women 16

CCRDA

NOTE: This is a summarized edition of the 'Beyond Beijing' workshop. Full copies of the report are available from the CRDA library. Please contact the Communictions Unit for further details.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 'BEYOND BEIJING' WORKSHOP

The workshop entitled **'Beyond Beijing'** took place on December 5th and 6th 1995. It was held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa where 102 organizations were represented by 160 participants.

This workshop, which was organized by **Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA)** and sponsored by the **Netherlands Embassy**, was the first of its kind to take place as a follow up to the **Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW)** in Beijing.

As **Wz. Tadelech H/Micheal, Women's Affairs Minister** said, FWCW *"designed and adopted a Plan of Action and a Declaration to serve as a guideline for the promotion of gender equality by government and international communities"*. The main issues raised by the Conference and identified by the Document as the twelve areas of critical concern in women's lives are:

1. women and poverty;
2. education and training of women;
3. women and health;
4. violence against women;
5. women and armed conflict;
6. women and the economy;
7. women in power and decision-making roles;
8. institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women;
9. human rights of women;
10. women and the media;
11. women and the environment;
12. the girl child.

CCRDA

The 'Beyond Beijing' workshop's aim was to formulate strategies, in accordance with national priorities, so as to implement the recommendations of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As **Wz. Kibra Dawit, AVA** stated, the objective of the workshop was to

- share information and exchange experiences on the Fourth UN World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum;
- devise strategies for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration;
- assess and design strategies on how best to orient NGO activities with a

view to addressing the needs of women;

- create and strengthen networking among NGOs; between the government and NGOs and with other concerned groups.

The main concerns which were addressed in the workshop were:

Women and Health

Women and the Environment

Human Rights of Women

Violence Against Women

Education of Women/Girls

The Girl Child

By uniting the activities of governments, NGOs, international agencies and other organizations, it tried to find ways of improving the situation of Ethiopian women, particularly rural women who are the most marginalised sector of society. The workshop *"...prepares the way forward for NGO WID activities based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action"* according to **Dr. Mulatu Baffa, Chairman of the Executive Committee, CRDA**. In addition he stated that *"... CRDA is very keen to support efforts in this direction. We recognize that self reliance through sustainable development can only be achieved by ensuring that the role of women includes participation and leadership. The transition from relief to development which we are all striving towards cannot be gained without the empowerment and full involvement of women in the decision making process"*

The 'Beyond Beijing' workshop is only the beginning. The group discussions and recommendations of this workshop, by prioritizing problems, which women in general and Ethiopian women in particular face, aims at establishing other similar follow up programmes.

The main focus of the workshop was the groupwork which is hoped to contribute significantly to **Women in Development (WID)** programmes. This report therefore mainly focuses on these groups discussions and recommendations.

CRDA would like to thank the Netherlands Embassy for making this workshop possible and for the continued support it has promised to give in the future.

Our appreciation is also extended to all individuals, organizations and agencies who

CCRDA

have supported CRDA's efforts in organizing the workshop.

CRDA would also like to thank all participants who showed a great interest in the workshop, thereby confirming their commitment to improving the lives of Ethiopian women.

As Wz. Tadelech stated *"... a new unity of purpose and action needs to be established with international organizations, bilateral agencies and NGOs. This will contribute to the provision of effective, coordinated support for national action. ... The close partnership between the various institutions and organizations will enable an indepth review and analysis of options for the national priorities to be carried out".*

Thus it is hoped that this report will motivate government organizations, NGOs and all other agencies in realizing these goals.

CCRDA

GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CCRDA

education for girls is stressed, should be carried out. Giving non formal education to communities, involving parents in the school system i.e. from the building of the school to the preparation of the curriculum with the school authorities, teachers and students plays an important role in achieving this.

- sharing of household chores by all members of the family should be encouraged.
- pre-schools should be established within primary schools. This reduces the problem of assigning teachers for pre schools and primary schools separately.
- encourage the employment of more female instructors in order to reduce the perpetuating gender based stereotypes.
- appropriate technologies should be implemented.
- mandatory school attendance by legislation needs to be established. In addition each parent should be charged with the responsibility of making sure that their child stays in school for at least a certain period of time. This will minimize the number of girls dropping out from school. In addition, it will help avoiding the danger of girls becoming a burden to the nation instead of becoming active participants in developmental programmes.
- community participation in combating girls harassment and violation of their rights is imperative. Since harassment is one factor contributing to girls abandoning school, the establishment of counselling services is important.
- living and working conditions have to be improved for prospective teachers. These improvements ensure better education.
- the government and NGOs should work towards implementing existing policies that promote the education of girls. For an effective implementation, NGOs should also be involved in formulating policies.
- an advocacy role should be played by NGOs.

Due to the severe constraints faced by the girl child and the negative impacts these have on her, the issue of the girl child has sparked serious attention. Parents and various government institutions like the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, National Children's Committee and above all the legal force of the government, must be held accountable for the resolution of these problems.

In general more efforts have to made in strengthening education for women and improving the conditions of the girl child. It is believed that the following

CCRDA

recommendations will achieve this.

Recommendations

(1) Construct more schools, which are closely located, with qualified teachers . The effort should be by both government and NGOs.

(2) Give specialization training for women working in various capacities and levels within government institutions.

(3) Give non formal education for parents so as to help them develop an awareness of the importance of education for their children especially for girls.

(4) Produce labor saving devices e.g. instead of hand mills constructing wind mills which will help save time for girls to do their studies.

(5) Governments, NGOs and any other institutions' economic and financial intervention in the educational development; assisting in giving incentives for incoming generating activities and making credit facilities available.

(6) Ensuring the follow up of strategies drafted by creating a network among governments, NGOs and all policy formulating and implementing agencies.

(7) Policy formulating institutions informing the public of their policies and reviewing current policies to strengthen the vocational training programmes.

(8) More consideration and priority should be given to the issue of women by the Ministry of Justice.

(10) Promoting equality standards through training and developing incentives e.g. making efforts by which the positive roles of women are portrayed by authors, actors, mass media etc.

(11) Illustrate the positive role of women in the school curriculum.

CCRDA

Women and Environment

The issue of women and environment is an important one for it is known that women play a vital role as managers, protectors and defenders of the environment. Their extensive knowledge of the environment contributes significantly to the developmental process.

Nevertheless the issue of environment and natural resources in relation to women has not been given due consideration. Environmental problems are rarely solved with gender sensitive strategies.

Thus to enhance an awareness of the importance of women's relationship with the environment and natural resources, the following recommendations have been made.

Recommendations

1. Environmental problems have a negative impact on the lives of communities particularly on women. Women are the principal victims of environmental degradation. Therefore strategies geared towards solving these problems should be gender related.

2. Environmental problems vary between urban and rural areas and even between rich and poor in specific areas. Thus rural and urban development strategies should be sensitive and responsive to the varying degrees of poverty within each setting.

3. Environmental policies should be comprehensive and ought to include matters of deforestation, soil erosion, preservation of the natural environment and sanitary services both in rural and urban areas. The participation of communities in policy formulation and implementation guarantees an effective implementation of environmental polices.

4. There should be an active partnership between the government and NGOs in terms of funding and planning of projects identified by the community.

5. To ensure sustainable development, participatory approaches necessitate capacity building through training of communities in technical skills. These training programmes should be accessible to both men and women on an equal basis.

6. The programmes of NGOs should be geared towards and enforced by an ethic

CCRDA

of power sharing, equality, shared responsibilities and accountability. Accountability is a two way process between NGOs and the community.

7. The government and NGOs should promote the ethics of power sharing, equality and shared responsibility with a view to reducing the heavy burden and responsibility women carry in the household and community. For example easily accessible potable water, fuel and sanitation services reduce the burden of women. Promoting equal division of labour with regard to housework, child care and household expenses also vastly reduces women's work and responsibilities.

8. Local government personnel need to be trained in community leadership.

CCRDA

Women and Health

Women's health particularly in rural areas, is seriously affected due to malnutrition, ignorance and environmental factors such as lack of clean water. Above all the application of **Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP)** poses a serious threat to women's health. It also hinders the efforts of women to realize their full potential. As a result, the legislation against HTP is consistent with the new Ethiopian constitution and all other human rights conventions.

Women's health is a sensitive issue which has called for more global attention. As women play a major role in any developmental process, the need to ensure the promotion of their health is unquestionable. Thus, the private sector i.e. individuals within communities, the government and NGOs should make a coordinated effort to bring about positive changes in this. To do so, an awareness of the problems, priorities and strategies is essential.

1. Priority issues on women's health in Ethiopia

- Access to health education in order to create awareness especially in relation to avoiding adolescent and unplanned pregnancies, abortion, AIDS and elimination of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs);
- Provision of primary health care as 50 per cent of women do not have access to modern health care;
- Reduction of maternal and infant mortality;
- Provision of pre-natal, peri-natal and post-natal care especially primary delivery service;
- Conducting research on traditional medicine and thereby giving education; and
- Provision of adequate and clean water.

CCRDA

2. The role of government and NGOs in promoting reproductive health

Government's Role

I. Education:

- The Ministry of Education should incorporate sex education into the school curriculum to reduce problems of adolescent pregnancy and abortion;
- Education on Family Planning i.e. on birth control and contraception, should be carried out by institutions such as the Family Guidance Association (FGA);
- More effort should be made in using the media to educate the public on AIDS;
- Education on the elimination of HTP e.g. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early marriages, should be given serious consideration;
- Distinct action should be taken on the issue of abortion :
  - liberalize abortion or
  - encourage contraceptive education
- Research work and education on the eradication of HTP should be encouraged.

II. Building infrastructures (health institutions, roads, etc.) to make modern health care services accessible to women.

III. Encourage more NGOs to become involved in women's health issues.

IV. Provide women with education and employment opportunities to enhance their economic status. This in turn will ensure the promotion of women's health.

V. The establishment of a multi-sectoral approach with regard to the issue on women's health.

NGOs Role

I. Incorporate women's health issues in their programmes and implement them at grass roots level:

CCRDA

II. Urge governments to set up better policies and laws regarding women's health;

III. Undertake community health education and training such as family planning, HTPs, child care, nutrition etc.;

IV. Assist in developing income generating activities for women i.e. training women in various skills, credit provision etc.

3. Resource Mobilization

Source

In order to implement strategies with a focus on promoting reproductive health, budget allocation from various sources is necessary. The following could provide such sources:

- national budget;
- NGOs and
- communities.

Strategy

In order to implement strategies :

- encourage the participation of women in decision-making as they can influence policy making;
- encourage NGOs involvement in activities related to women's health;
- encourage communities, particularly women, to take charge of resource mobilization.

Coordination

To ensure successful implementation of strategies it is important to create networking among implementing agencies/bodies i.e. creating

- coordination among NGOs and government institutions. In addition, coordination among NGOs working in similar areas of activities. This is important in mobilizing resources and avoiding duplication of efforts;
- giving women responsibilities;
- involving the community as a whole.

CCRDA

Recommendations

1. Educate the girl child;
2. Give health education in schools and communities;
3. Incorporate sex education in school curriculum;
4. Strengthen programmes that promote women's health;
5. Follow-up and monitor communities' health trainees;
6. Conduct formal and informal education on the eradication of HTP and on the dymystification of beliefs attached to these practices;
7. Devise policies for decreasing work load of women;
8. Provide clean and accessible water;
9. Incorporate, in the national policy, recommendations on women's health issues as given by the Beijing Conference and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

CCRDA

Women's Empowerment

Empowerment is the process whereby women assert their rights by gradually eliminating existing social gender biases. It cannot be handed out, but is achieved by a process of relentless struggle in overcoming the fundamental gender based inequities.

Women need to assert their rights so as to :

- be treated with respect and dignity as human beings;
- express their feelings, state their needs and set their priorities as individuals;
- be treated equally and fairly before the law.

Empowerment means:

- participating in decision making, policy formulation and planning at all levels;
- access to and control over resources;
- access to education and information;
- reaping equitable benefits from the development process.

Women's empowerment affects the political, economic and social sectors of society. Thus the lack of women being empowered has an adverse effect on each sector. The following recommendations state areas of focus for empowering women.

CCRDA

Recommendations

The government and NGOs in collaboration should:

1. strengthen the Women's Affairs Office (WAO) at national and regional levels, i.e. capacity building;
2. encourage women's participation in the decision-making process;

3. encourage women's political participation at grass roots level as very few women are currently active in political activities;

4. enforce the implementation of government policies, currently existing;

5. enforce laws that promote the economic participation of women, i.e. property rights, asset holdings, inheritance laws, credit polices, etc;

6. include the rights of women in the civil code;

7. encourage full participation of women in the formulation and enforcement of laws.

8. enhance women's capacity to achieve self-sufficiency by ensuring access to and control over productive resources, i.e., land, capital, credit, agricultural inputs and appropriate technology;

9. ensure that macro policies are gender sensitive and accommodate the needs and interests of women;

10. encourage women in identifying their needs and interests, designing development projects and implementing them;

11. educate women in credit and loans as well as in financial management and establish financial institutions that specialize in providing loans to women;

12. establish fund-raising committees to mobilize resources so as to make credit available to women;

13. encourage the enrollment of girls at higher levels of education;

14. make schools accessible i.e. build more community schools;

15. ensure protection from any form of violence to school girls on their way to and from school;

16. revise the curriculum so as to incorporate gender issues and eradicate gender bias in the curriculum;

17. tailor non formal education to women's needs to ensure equal employment opportunities in both formal and informal sectors;

18. incorporate civic education in all development programmes.

CCRDA

Human Rights of Women

The problem of women's violation has existed for a long time throughout the world. As a result, the issue of the human rights of women has called for considerable global attention.

The rights of women are violated in a number of ways e.g. by inflicting physical and mental abuse. The abuse of women in Ethiopia has been given little or no attention by the law. For example, women are often intimidated by their husbands as they are usually considered to be his inferior. An effort to eradicate such negative attitudes/beliefs has not been made. This practice has instead been assimilated into the culture of society and therefore has been accepted as the standard norm. To make matters worse, women themselves have accepted their position as being inferior to that of their husbands'. Due to ignorance of their rights as women, they do not make the effort of resisting harassment or intimidation inflicted on them. Women have long been and are even still being discriminated by the very fact that they are women.

However, today the struggle is for women to enjoy the basic human rights as equal individuals to men. As they deserve this, there is the need for the formulation of special rights for women especially in a male dominated society.

What are these special rights ? What roles can the government and NGOs play in alleviating women's problems in this regard ? What efforts can women themselves make in confronting this issue ? The implementation of following recommendations will answer these questions and the issue of women's rights. These recommendations are intended to enable women to develop a spirit of self confidence thus contributing to their independence.

CCRDA

Recommendations

1. The government should take affirmative measures with respect to enforcing:

   - the rights to property, health etc.;
   - all international conventions and declarations;
   - education (which is a basic right).

2. The implementation of strategies should be carried out with focus on:

   - conducting research with the aim of identifying the problems of women's rights;
   - providing the government with complete information that warrants

amendments to existing laws if the need arises;
- educating society at large and women in particular, on the rights of women, with the aim of raising awareness;
- providing civic education.

3. The law enforcing organs should play a role whereby they:

- commit themselves to the promotion of women's special rights;
- make the effort in changing their skeptical attitudes towards this issue;
- make the effort in changing societies' negative attitudes;
- contribute to the empowerment of women;
- make all policies, constitutions and other legal documents that protect the rights of women, accessible.

4. NGOs in support of this issue should play a role whereby they:

- make resources available for activities that work towards achieving the rights of women;
- work towards the promotion of protecting the rights of women;
- make efforts in educating women on their rights.

5. Women's groups should also make the effort of:

- organizing pressure groups;
- conducting research work that lends to the improvement of their lives;
- see to it that research work and recommendations are properly implemented and accepted by the state and all government bodies;
- establishing lobbing groups that continuously advocate the issues of women and gain the attention of both government and NGOs.

6. The government should make an effort of:

- enacting and enforcing laws in line with declarations, conventions and other international documents on women's rights which Ethiopia has ratified as a state;
- enacting and enforcing the national policies on women e.g. the family, penal, commercial laws etc.;
- changing or amending polices and laws when necessary.

CCRDA