THE ROLE OF GENDER IN THE EVALUATION OF LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF UNESCO

by

TIINA MARI MITCHELL

submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: MRS A LIEBENBERG

FEBRUARY 2003

"I declare that

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN THE EVALUATION OF LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN DEVELOPMENT:A CASE STUDY OF UNESCO

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."

Tiina Mari Mitchell
19 July 2003

Acknowledgements

The library staff and consultants of the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg were generous in their active advice and support. Thanks are also due to Ms Marietjie Wessels for translating the *Summary* into Afrikaans, and to Gordon Mitchell for his editorial advice.

Tiina Mitchell
Hamburg
May 2003

Abstract

UNESCO has been a forerunner in the field of mainstreaming of gender which is evident in countless conferences and publications, notably in its *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b). The branch with special responsibility for questions of Adult Literacy has been the UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE). Careful historical-comparative analysis of its publications reveals a varied picture on the question of gender. On the one hand it has published evaluation manuals (Bhola 1990, Easton 1996) in which gender goes virtually unnoticed. And on the other there are collected essays of workshops organised and published by the UIE which present some of the strongest voices on the subject, notably Sara Longwe (1997, 1999a), the exponent of the evaluation tool, *Women's Empowerment Framework*. While personnel changes in the UIE in the course of the nineties may be a partial explanation, there are other ambiguities in its policies and practice which are not as easily explained. When the evaluation reports of literacy programmes published as exemplary practice by the UIE are examined they reveal some striking differences.

Two evaluations of literacy programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa were analysed, one in Oyo State, Nigeria (Omolewa et al. 1998) and the other being the National Literacy Programme of Namibia (Lind 1996). The methods of analysis were both the *UNESCO Checklist* and the *Women's Empowerment Framework*. They both have received wide acceptance within this particular field. Furthermore, their use provides a means of internal comparison. What the study reveals is a striking discrepancy between such policy and the actual practice of evaluation, and at the same time it becomes clear that the *Women's Empowerment Framework* is the more rigorous of the two. Particularly in the analysis of the Oyo programme evaluation it becomes evident that such a gender approach is able to uncover significant failures, particular with regard to its patriarchal notion of "empowerment". Although it too falls short of the standards, the evaluation of the Namibian programme comes a lot closer to the requirements.

An explanation for the discrepancy between the two may be located in the fact that whereas the Oyo evaluation was conducted by a team of local consultants, all of whom were male, the Namibian evaluation was a joint local-international initiative with an equal male-female balance. Further study of UIE's other published evaluation reports would however be necessary in order to confirm such a conclusion.

What the study does succeed in establishing is the way in which the role of UNESCO through the UIE's has been that of a facilitator. By bringing different emphases into dialogue with one another it has served to open up new directions in the field of gender and literacy programme evaluation.

Opsomming

UNESCO was tot dusver ‘n voorloper in die stryd om die kwessie van geslag in die hoofstroom in te bring. Dit blyk duidelik uit talle konferensies en publikasies, veral die *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO’S programmes* (UNESCO 1999b). Die UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) was tot nog toe die tak met spesiale verantwoordelikheid vir kwessies rondom volwasse geletterdheid (Adult Literacy). ‘n Noukeurige histories-vergelykende analise van die publikasies bring ‘n gevarieerde prentjie na vore oor die kwessie van geslag. Aan die een kant het die UIE evalueringshandleidings gepubliseer (Bhola 1990, Easton 1996) waarin geslag skaars aandag geniet. Aan die ander kant is daar versamelings werkstukke van werkwinkels georganiseer en gepubliseer deur die UIE waarin van die sterktste stemme oor die onderwerp opgaan, veral Sara Longwe (1997, 1999a), met haar bekende evalueringsinstrument, *Women’s Empowerment Framework*. Terwyl personeelveranderinge in die UIE gedurende die negentigerjare hierdie verskynsel gedeeltelik kan verklaar, is daar ander dubbelsinnighede in die beleid en praktyk wat nie so maklik verklaar kan word nie. ‘n Ondersoek van die evalueringsverslae van geletterdheidsprogramme wat as navolgingswaardige praktyk deur die UIE gepubliseer is, bring opmerklike verskille na vore.

Twee evaluerings van geletterdheidsprogramme in Afrika suid van die Sahara is geanaliseer, een in Oyo, Nigerië (Omolewa et al. 1998), en die ander die nasionale geletterdheidsprogram van Namibië (Lind 1996). Die metodes van analise was die *UNESCO Checklist* en die *Women’s Empowerment Framework*. Beide word wyd aanvaar binne hierdie betrokke veld. Verder maak hulle aanwending ‘n interne vergelyking moontlik. Wat die studie aantoon is dat daar ’n opmerklike teenstrydigheid bestaan tussen evalueringsbeleid en –praktyk, en dit is terselfdertyd duidelik dat die *Women’s Empowerment Framework* die beter evalueringsinstrument van die twee is. Wat veral uit die analise van die Oyo evalueringsprogram blyk is dat so ‘n geslagsbenadering opvallende gebreke blootlê, veral wat betref die patriargale idee van “bemagtiging”. Alhoewel die evaluering van die Namibiëprogram ook nie ten volle aan die standaarde voldoen nie, kom dit baie nader aan die vereistes.

Die teenstrydighede tussen die twee evaluerings kan moontlik verklaar word deur die feit dat die Oyo evaluering deur ‘n span plaaslike konsultante gedoen is wat almal manlik was, terwyl die Namibie evaluering ‘n gesamentlike poging deur plaaslike en internasionale konsultante was, met ewe veel mans en vrouens in die span/met ‘n gelyke balans tussen mans en vrouens in die span.

Wat die studie suksesvol bepaal het is die wyse waarop die rol van UNESCO deur die UIE die van ‘n fasiliteerder was. Deur verskillende beklemtonings met mekaar in dialoog te bring is nuwe rigtings in die veld van geslag en die evaluering van geletterdheidsprogramme ontsluit.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction **1**

1.1 Background to the research 1

1.2 Defining the research problem and the formulation of a hypothesis 2

1.3 Method of research 4

1.4 Summary of chapters 12

1.5 Conclusions 14

Chapter 2: Location of the UNESCO approach and the Women's Empowerment Framework in relation to the debate regarding gender in Development Studies **15**

2.1 Introduction 15

2.2 A historical overview of WID (Women in Development) 16

2.3 Gender and Development (GAD): gender relations as societal relations 21

2.4 UNESCO and gender. Analysis of UNESCO's policy on women and gender equality issues 22

2.5 The Women's Empowerment Framework outlined and compared with other gender perspectives used in literacy evaluations 27

2.5.1 Historical location and theoretical background to the Women's Empowerment Framework
2.5.2 Outline of the Women's Empowerment Framework
2.5.3 Assessment of the Women's Empowerment Framework

2.6 Conclusion 33

Chapter 3: The debate about the role of gender in literacy evaluation 37

3.1 Introduction 37

3.2 A brief introduction to the debate about the ideal evaluation method: quantitative versus qualitative 37

3.3 The philosophy of evaluation within UNESCO 40

3.4 The UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) policy and practice for evaluating literacy 40

3.5 Evaluation of literacy programmes from a gender perspective 44

3.5.1 Historical and theoretical location of women and literacy projects
3.5.2 UNESCO's approach to the integration of gender issues in the evaluation of UNESCO's programmes

3.5 Literacy Programme evaluation according to Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework 50

3.7 Conclusion 54

Chapter 4: Survey of Evaluation reports 57

4.1 Introduction 57

4.2 Literacy Programme, Oyo Province, Nigeria 57

4.2.1 Background and context of evaluation
4.2.2 Report in relation to formal UNESCO Policy
4.2.3 Report in relation to the Women's Empowerment Framework
4.2.4 Further critique and conclusions

4.3 National Literacy Programme in Namibia 79

4.3.1 Background and context of evaluation
4.3.2 Report in relation to UNESCO guidelines
4.3.3 Report in relation to the Women's Empowerment Framework
4.3.4 Further critique and conclusions

4.4 General conclusions: Oyo evaluation and NLPN evaluation 98

Chapter 5: Conclusion **100**

5.1 Objectives and overview of the research 100

5.2 The results of the investigation into evaluation research 102

5.3 The role of the UIE in programme evaluation 103

5.4 Conclusion and suggestions for further research 105

Annexures **107**

Appendix A: Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues 107

Appendix B: Women's Empowerment Framework 109

Bibliography **110**

Glossary of Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women; a subcommittee of UNESCO.
CONFITEA	UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education
DABE	Directorate of Adult Basic Education, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, Namibia.
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DLOs	District Literacy Organisers; NLPN.
DSE	German Foundation for International Development
FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communication Network
GAD	Gender and Development; an approach on development with emphasis on gender relations.
MIS	Management Information System. A system including planning and to a program or project.
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations.
NLPN	National Literacy Programme in Namibia
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
RLOs	Regional Literacy Organisers; NLPN.
SSD	Social Sciences Division of the University of Namibia, Windhoek.
UIE	UNESCO Institute for Education, a subsidiary organisation of UNESCO specialised in education.
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States

USAID	United States Agency for International Development.
WAD	Women and Development; a critical approach to the relationship of women to development.
WEF	World Education Forum in Dakar, 2000.
WID	Women in Development; from 1975 onwards, a policy approach to Third World women.