



Concepts for Gender Awareness in Vocational Training

Basic principles

- Women are «protagonists», not «addressees».
- Building on competencies instead of compensating for deficiencies.
- Vocational training must be adapted to women's needs while at the same time guaranteeing their equality.
- It is imperative to work with the participation of women, and this already as from the planning stage. It should always be evaluated whether a program or project is of any specific use to women.
- Women and men should be integrated as equally responsible partners.
- In the conflict area between tradition and changes in the role allocation between man and woman, opportunities for change must always be perceived in the respective context.
- The aim is a new allocation of responsibilities within the family (productive and reproductive tasks) so that the extra-burden on women during vocational training may be alleviated.
- Offer of and demand for vocational training are slowly growing in the course of time.
- When training young women, it is important to pay attention to society, to the area in which learning takes place and especially to the trainee's parents.
- When learning in groups, women and men should be able to benefit from the presence or absence of the other sex (e.g. health education, AIDS prevention).

Approaches and levels of Cooperation

- The formal education system requires efforts and approaches on all levels: support on a local level should be completed by system-building measures.
- As far as non-formal education aimed at poverty-alleviation is concerned, a «bottom-up» approach with small-scale coordinated and interconnected actions is promising.
- Instructional skills, motivation and gender awareness of instructors should be fostered.
- Female trainees who have been successful in their work should be recruited as instructors.

Branches and executing agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executing agencies are selected on the basis of their efficiency and closeness to women. Cooperation with local organizations and social movements raises the pertinence and acceptance of training inputs. • The selection of sectors and executing agencies is always a tightrope walk between tradition and modernity. • Educational programs and projects should take into consideration traditional professions as far as those are likely to improve the social status and the income of women. • Women should be granted better access to modern professions. • There should be a distinction between further education and informal (traditional) vocational training in the informal sector.
Competencies and level of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the informal sector, it is decisive to learn about business management relations such as mid-term planning, cost calculation, marketing a.o. Already existing knowledge should be used as a basis to build upon; it should be systematized and further developed. In the area of formal training, it is possible to treat economical issues only in further education courses. • The personality development of participants must not be disregarded. Starting point are already existing skills or qualities such as communication skills, curiosity a.o. It is absolutely imperative to assume a positive, appreciative attitude towards trainees. • Admission requirements for formal training should be established in such a way that women (who generally have a lower level of education) also have the chance to participate. • Access to basic schooling (including literacy courses) is particularly important for girls and women, so that they may close possible gaps in their education. This requirement is met best by specific courses held either before or parallel to the actual training itself.

Curricula development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and courses offered are based on occupational analysis and on an analysis of the situation on the employment market. • It is highly important for women that the contents as well as the forms of learning be practical and productive. This means learning by experience and by experimenting with products and services of practical value and good marketability. • Male as well as female entrepreneurs and participants should have the possibility to influence the development of curricula. • Vocational training should also include practical survival know-how bearing a relation to the working and living situation of the trainees. This also means that great importance should be attached to already existing know-how that can be used as a basis to build upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In formal education, this calls for an adaptable, realistic curriculum, for equipment and facilities suited to actual management conditions and for flexible teaching staff. – Regarding non-formal education, curricula should be orientated towards the short-term needs of adults and adapted according to need.
Organisational aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In non-formal training, flexible and short courses prove to be better suited for women. • The living conditions of women – in all their varieties – should be taken into consideration when deciding about time and length of a specific course. • Women do not frequent public places as often as men do. «Informal» places are therefore better suited for holding courses. • Due to domestic tasks, women need to be able to enroll for a course well beforehand so that they have time to organize their everyday life. • Female vocational counselors are very useful for women to define their position and to make a self-assessment. • It should be guaranteed that women decide for themselves about kind and organization of courses to follow .

Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • «Learning by doing» enables trainees to experience own successes, thus strengthening their self-confidence. • Women should be supported in their search for identity. To achieve this goal, methods using images of the self or the other may be employed; however, it is recommended to make sure that such methods are closely related to the subjects to be taught. Women should learn to see their personal crisis not only as a personal failure but also as a result of their specific life as a woman. • Working in groups, thus bringing out common ground but also, and particularly, differences is especially important for women.
Financing, costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two conflicting aims of teaching and earning money should be permanently monitored and carefully balanced. • Teaching involves costs, and trainees should no doubt cover part of them. However, women must not be excluded from vocational training as a result of the financing scheme. • Concrete possibilities to share out the costs between several protagonists and levels should constantly be analyzed. Awarding scholarships to women is a better choice than granting general subsidies.
Combination of training with other means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a basic principle, specific training for women forms an integral part of other programs such as trade promotion, entrepreneurial training for women, regional development or community development. • Training for women should be linked with access to credits and other supporting means and institutions such as vocational counselling and job placement support. • Project work should be associated with gender policy advice and public relation work.

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