

The Annual Journal of

**SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION**

of

# **WOMEN GRADUATES**

(formerly THE BLUESTOCKING)



# **2007**

In this issue

**Women - Agents for Change**

## **DROP-OUTS AT SCHOOL & TERTIARY LEVEL - WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR GIRLS?**

Higher Education and the Academic Performance of Women  
An Initial Review of Girl Drop-outs from School

Why Young Women drop out from Higher Education in the Western Cape

Walking to the Library at Night: Gender and Institutional Culture in African  
Universities

Challenges of Contraceptive Use by Adolescents in Tshwane, Gauteng

Three Cases of the "Girl Child" in Northern Tshwane

Is Education a priority for Muslim Women in South Africa

Gender Equality in Education in Rwanda: What is happening to our girls?

# 2007 JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN GRADUATES

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## EDITORIAL

Our Association was delighted to have the National Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, present at the opening of our National Annual General Meeting this year. We approached her to request an interview when questions could be posed regarding our concerns about education in the country, and she happily agreed to this taking place. However, in the light of the general strike of public servants which affected members of the teaching profession and our schools, we realized that the Minister's attention to these matters was far more important and so did not act on the invitation. We had hoped to include a report in this Journal but this was not to be.

Education was the topic at the core of our conference this year. Articles which appear in this edition, shed light on problems encountered by many learners - the high drop-out rate; the difficulties facing learners; the incidence of teenage pregnancies; and the need for changes to the curricula offered, the teaching and learning climate, funding available and attitudes of all stakeholders.

We have only to look at reports in the media to see how these problems have impacted on schools. The prospects for Grade 11s who failed, appear to be grim - Policy on failed pupils runs into heavy flak (Sunday Argus 22 April 2007). Teenage rage - another violent attack at a local school (Helderberg DistrictMail 20 April 2007) reflects a growing trend of disregard for the rights and safety of others. The editorial closed with these words: *"It might not be the task of schools to fight crime on their premises, but being hamstrung by a lack of resources, poor salaries and a drain of experienced teachers is certainly not going to contribute to an improvement of the situation any time soon."*

We can only hope that the deliberations and actions of the Minister and her department, all academic institutions, the teaching profession, governing bodies, parents and interested parties will find appropriate solutions and implement much-needed reform so that our learners may find their way and become meaningful contributors to a finer South African community.

Our youth need help. What is happening in our schools is a symptom of the violent society in which we live.

The South African community must reinstate a work ethos and forgo a sense of entitlement, and inculcate a strong moral fibre in our youth but find this again in our adult community too. Our National Government must play its part proactively and with integrity.

*"You make a living by what you get but you make a life by what you give."*

Norman MacEwan

**Editor: Peggy Impson**

# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

## REVIEWING OUR ASSESSMENT OF WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN OUR WORLD

**At** this time of evaluation when-

\* the IFUW 29th Triennial Conference is to be held in Manchester, UK, in August this year to coincide with 100th Anniversary of the British Federation,

\* the South African government report for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has been under consideration,

\* all countries represented in the United Nations are working towards the Millennium Goals established for 2015

\* and SAAWG is currently celebrating and reporting on its 84th year of existence

**- it seemed relevant that I should draw attention to the resolutions of our organization (international and national) so that we can recognize the depth of issues discussed, debated and implemented over these many years and how in tune and, in fact, ahead of time we have been on the appropriate topics of concern.**

The **APRM process** is designed to assist participating countries to develop and promote the adoption of laws, policies and practices that lead to:

- **Political stability**
- **High rates of economic growth**
- **Sustainable development and**
- **Continental economic integration.**

The **APRM Questionnaire** is divided into four major sections corresponding to the overall objectives to be achieved by the questionnaire.

These are:

**Democracy and political governance;**  
**Economic governance and management;**  
**Corporate governance;**  
**Socio-economic development.**

A number of Government Departments, Parliament, Provinces and Civil Society structures submitted reports

**Civil Society Structures** included :

- The Black Sash
- Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)
- First Children's Consultative Workshop  
Children's Sector Report
- COSATU
- Culture Sector
- Disability Sector
- HSRC



**Hazel Bowen**  
National President SAAWG

- IDASA
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
- NCPPDSA
- Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC)
- South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA)
- South African Institute of Corporate Fraud Management
- SAIIA (SA Institute of International Affairs)
- SANCO
- SANEF
- SANGOCO
- TAC
- Women's Sector
- Youth Sector
- 

The South African government in the end merely presented a draft report which still has to be finalized. In October 2006 SAAWG received an urgent invitation to attend a meeting called by the SA National Commission for UNESCO - this was for the Culture Sector. Unfortunately, no one was able to attend at such short notice.

The Women's Sector was represented by the National Council of Women. Although SAAWG is part of this structure, we do not appear to have been included in the deliberations or process for this or any other current reports.

The submission for the Women's Sector as provided on the website seems very disjointed and there is no indication of where the information contained therein actually originated. *What a pity more women's organizations do not appear to have been actively involved in such an important process.*

### **Our resolutions and activities :**

The SAAWG resolutions, at present, are recorded in our AGM Minutes and the Journal. The late Margaret Lindsay of the Cape Town Branch also prepared a "Big Blue Book" in which she categorized our national resolutions. Most were typed up and then she recorded further resolutions up to 1994 in ink.

### **SAAWG has always participated actively in IFUW conferences and resolution making.**

On the **IFUW** website its resolutions are recorded **according to the year of adoption** and also **listed per theme.**

### **Education**

Within **Education** the IFUW resolutions went from, in **1925**, an appreciation that international relations as a subject was being adopted by “a great number” of schools and higher education institutions with the hope that this trend would increase, through to the **1961/2** concerns regarding girls having suitable lodgings and extra-curricula activities, as well as provision being made for and by mature students to re-enter the labour force and also to move into higher levels.

In **1965/6** the issue was for quality of education and what we now call life-long education. The **70's** saw literacy as a focus as well as equal opportunities into senior positions for women teachers. In the **80's** the focus turned to Maths, Science and Computer literacy teaching although in **1989** there was a call for balanced education, ie “concern at the growing emphasis on technological and vocational training at the expense of education in the arts, sciences and humanities, including modern languages”.

In **2001** the issue had expanded to education for teenage mothers and women in prison and the teaching of ethics. Increased access to education, quality education, life-long learning and promoting cultural diversity remain concerns expressed in various resolutions.

#### *IFUW Policy Resolutions*



**SAAWG** was, in the 30's and 40's, concerned about co-education, dual-medium schooling and

differentiation in syllabus for girls and boys as well as the dangers of dividing the population into separate sections - and, in 1986 we called for a single Ministry of Education. In 1955 we were already looking at ways of improving the teaching of mathematics. Fort Hare and the lowering of its status featured in a 1959 resolution. Tax on books featured in 1977 while in 1991 we supported compulsory AIDs education in schools “as part of a comprehensive system of sex and family planning education”. University subsidies and bursaries were issues raised from the 40's into the 60's. Career guidance was accepted as policy in the mid-40's and branches continue such work even today. We are currently looking into the potential dangers of cellphone masts being placed near schools.

### **International co-operation**

In the context of **international co-operation**, IFUW in **1995** urged that “NFAs should urge their governments to follow-up and implement the recommendations included in the programmes and platforms of action adopted at

- World Conference on Human Rights 1993*
- International Conference on Population and Development 1994*
- World Summit for Social Development 1995*
- Fourth World Conference on Women 1995*
- Habitat II 1996 with particular reference to the well-being of women and girls.”*

### **Population and Health**

In **Population and Health** in **1992** the issue of HIV/Aids was introduced. (Last year IFUW held an internet discussion forum on this issue). Family Planning and Safe Motherhood featured in **80's and 90's**. Of particular importance to the Western Cape was the resolution regarding Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. Resolutions on Human Cloning and Research in Human Genetics were presented in **1998** as was a resolution on Tobacco and Smoking.

**SAAWG** dealt with issues such as subsidies to feeding schemes (**1969**), Day Care Centres (**1978**), taxes on medical services (**70's**) as well as Family Allowances (**1941**). Although the motion was lost, it is illuminating to note that members were concerned that married people who desired it, should have access to birth control information (**1931**)!

### **Human Rights**

Resolutions dealing with **Human Rights**, naturally, have covered a broad spectrum. One can refer to *Increased Collective Violence Against Women (2004)*

A point of interest here is that the Mexican Association emphasized that violence against women was no longer directed merely at individuals but that there was the growing trend of collective violence with *groups* of women as targets.

- Child Soldiers and in Armed Conflict (2001 (1989), Women in Afghanistan (1998), Trafficking and Exploitation of Women and Children (1998), Balancing The Responsibilities of Family and Work (1998), Promoting Violence-Free Family Life (1998), Women and Academic Freedom (1989), Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education (1989), Child Pornography (1986), Data Banks (1971), High Commission for Human Rights (1971), Education of Handicapped Youth (1969)”. An issue which has*

grown in importance again in recent times - *Rights of the Child and Right to Reproductive Freedom (1968)*, *Implementation and Promotion of Human Rights (1968)*, *UNESCO and Human Rights (1965)*

The following issues were dealt with by **SAAWG**: In **1938** democracy in Central Europe and also censorship; **from 1928** at various times resolutions regarding enfranchising women of all races were adopted; **from 1949** SAAWG looked at issues such as a black female student being refused a passport to take up a scholarship in India; equal pay for equal work; from the **mid 50's to the 80's** Academic freedom; in the **late 90's** the penal system and currently the Sexual Violence Bill is being monitored.

### **Peace**

A major theme in IFUW resolutions has been the participation of women in peace negotiations and conflict resolution. In the **30's** focus was on disarmament. In the **80's and 90's** there was concern about nuclear weapons, military spending and landmines as well as rape and violence against women as a war crime. **Since 2001** there has been a call for more education at school level regarding peace and conflict resolution. There have also been calls for greater control of sales of small arms and light weapons.

### **The Status of Women**

Another broad category where constant themes have emerged is that of **The Status of Women**. In the **20's and 30's** the barriers to be surmounted by women and married women in employment were discussed; this topic was revisited in 60's, 80's and 90's highlighting the barriers in careers and the unequal pay for women. In the **50's** attention turned to UN and women in delegations - in recent years this focus has been more on women in senior positions at the UN.

We need to pause here to appreciate that finally the United Nations General Assembly has as its new president (September 2006), Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, a Bahrain lawyer, only the third woman in the position in the 61 years existence of the UN. However, as Jessica Neuwirth, Women's Media Centre, USA, notes :

*"No woman has served as secretary general in the 61 years since the United Nations was founded, and despite the body's stated goal of achieving gender parity within the system by the year 2000, only 16 percent of undersecretaries general are women."*

While on this topic, although there has been some negativity around her lack of experience, the good news is that Dr Asha-Rose Migiro of the United Republic of Tanzania has been appointed as the new Deputy Secretary General of the UN.

**Back to SAAWG resolutions**, unpaid work and the value of the family were issues for the **70's and 80's** and into the present time. In the **60's** scientific employment opportunities and scientific teaching were explored while women moving into decision making positions was raised in **1980** and revisited in **2004** regarding women in such positions in World

Financial Institutions. In **2001** a resolution headed "Establishing a society of gender equality" had an all embracing ring to it. Another interesting theme which has now emerged is the recognition of the longer life cycle of women and that new choices are necessary.

SAAWG has constantly **since the early 30's** voted on aspects of women's representation on bodies such as university senates and councils, on the teaching staff and into senior positions, and also in the Civil Service. In the **1970's** government was asked to establish a Women's National Advisory Commission as a permanent consultative body. Issues regarding joint taxation, limited control by a woman over her finances, guardianship and other "legal disabilities" have been other **constant themes**.

### **Environment**

The last category to look at is **The Environment**. Here, I believe, Al Gore would be very proud of our international organization! "*An inconvenient Truth*" is, by the way, a documentary worth viewing.

**IFUW** resolutions have ranged from nuclear testing (1959), human shelter needs (1989), and have covered marine, endangered ecosystems, hazardous waste, energy conservation strategies (1992), the Ozone layer (1995), health and the environment issues of personal and government responsibilities, sustainable forestry (1998) and water protection (2001). Pollution featured from 1971 into the 1990's. Equitable Economic Policies and Development Indicators were explored (1992) and the dangers of desertification through unsustainable development were focused on in 1998. Although **SAAWG** passed few resolutions on this topic, the issue has been raised at a number of annual conferences.

### **Millennium Goals**

If we examine the Millennium Goals, and the aims of the APRM, we can see clearly that both IFUW and SAAWG have actively raised, timeously, pertinent issues and implemented policies, programmes and projects designed to achieve such goals internationally and within South Africa.

It was fascinating to read the changing concerns within one theme over a period of time.

*We need to provide our own SAAWG resolutions on a website as a matter of urgency.*

I wonder whether SAAWG should not commission a member or a student to undertake more indepth research than I could do for this Address.

**It is, however, clear that we have a history to be proud of and a firm foundation to build on for future work. We need to inspire prospective members with a desire to be involved in this forging of policy and practice to improve the society we live in.**

**APRM** (<<http://www.aprm.org.za>>

**IFUW** (<<http://ifuw.org/>>

**Hazel Bowen**

National President SAAWG

## STUDENT AID 2006 AWARDS

Tertiary Institution	New/ Renew	Student Name	Course	Year
Uni of Cape Town	R	T Adams	MBCHB	3rd
	R	T Masina	MBCHB	3rd
	R	N Solomon	BSoc Sc	3rd
Uni of Limpopo	N	J Meyer	MBCHB	4th
	N	MJ Shadung	BA	2nd
	N	MM Mahlela	BA	2nd
Tshwane Uni of Technology		Nil		
Uni of Free State	N	A Coetzee	BCom	2nd
	R	NP Nhlapo	BCom	3rd
	R	MG Mosekeli	BSc	3rd
	R	PP Zulu	BCom	3rd
	R	NP Tihotlhomisang	BSc	4th
	R	MD Kibe	BSc	4th
Cape Peninsula Uni of Techngy	N	Elizabeth Mwansa	B Tech	2nd
	N	Philani Makwati	ND:	4th
Walter Sisulu University	N	Matshaya OKO	B Legum	2nd
	N	N P Sindiswa	BSoc Sc	2nd
Uni of Jhb		NIL		
Rhodes Uni	R	L N Siswana	B Com	4th
	R	A D Wescott	B Journ	3rd
Dbn Inst of Tech	R	P N Dlamini	ND:	3rd
	N	P M Buthelezi	ND:	2nd
	R	Natasha Panday	ND:	3rd
Uni of Stellenbosch	N	M Benjamin	B Social Work	
	N	K Kleinhans	BA	
	N	KR Ntasi	BEng	
C Uni of Tech Free State	R	EM Kheleroa	ND:	3rd
	R	ME Mokeki	B ED	3rd
	R	D Coetzer	N Dip:	2nd
Vaal Uni of Tech	R	RT Dikane	Bio med	2nd
	R	MP Ramoshaba	Chem Eng	2nd
UNISA	R	LMF Kodisang	BCompt	3rd
	R	RD Moroasi	NHC	2nd
	N	SP Moshoeane	B Human Ecology	2nd
	R	SS Shabally	BTech	Final
Wits	N	SP Cele	BA	3rd
	R	Daphney Ntsobe	BCom	3rd
UWC	R	Z P Kubheka	BSc	4th
	N	AB Cupido	BCom	2nd
Uni KZN	N	CJ Williams	BCom	2nd
	R	P S Majola	B.Comm)	2nd
	R	Dibuseng Moss	BSc	4th
	R	N M Ntaka	BSocSc)	2nd
North West Uni	R	N P Mdimma	MBCHB	5th
	R	S N N Makhaye	BA (HR Management)	2nd
	N	AL Botha	BA SWork	3rd
	N	BF Makhale	BA SWork	3rd
	N	M Fenyane	B Com	3rd
N	NB Sonyane	B Com	3rd	

<b>Nelson Mandela Metro Uni</b>	N	MC Piko	Journal-ism	2nd
	N	Z Nazo	Engineer	2nd
	N	M Finca	Acc	3rd
<b>Uni of Pretoria</b>		Nil		
<b>Uni of Fort Hare</b>	N	N Boqwana	BSc	2nd
	N	N Dube	Socl Work	2nd
<b>52 Awards</b>			R 104,000	

# BRANCH REPORTS

## CAPE TOWN

The Cape Town Branch Executive assumed office on 13 May 2006 with the following members:

Phuti Mogase - President

Ruth Brown - Secretary

Shirley Churms - Treasurer

This very small executive committee met regularly on a monthly basis and worked diligently to meet goals set for the year.

I should like to acknowledge the hard work of Shirley Churms who provided guidance and continuity in the committee. Ruth Brown who joined the committee in 2005, contributed much of value to our discussions, and we especially appreciated her insights in dealing with areas of interest beyond the academic world *per se*.

### ACTIVITIES IN 2006

The Executive Committee for 2006 aimed mainly at following the goals set for 2005 by aligning activities around the National and IFUW goals having the theme "Women as Agents of Change".

An Internet Research Workshop held in March and the Margaret Lindsay Lecture, delivered by **Dr Bette Davidowitz** on 22 April 2006, which were included in our report for the 2005-6 period, were consistent with these goals. However, it was hoped also to organize some purely social functions, with the objective of encouraging members to become better acquainted with one another. Unfortunately, a "soup and sing-along" evening envisaged for June had to be abandoned mainly due to the wintry conditions experienced in Cape Town at this time of year.

### Annual luncheon

The annual luncheon took place on 29 July 2006, once again at the Mowbray Golf Club restaurant. Our speaker was **Margaret McCulloch**, of the National Sea Rescue Institute. Mrs McCulloch, in a talk entitled "**A Woman in a Man's World**", told us about her work as a fundraising and publicity officer for NSRI and illustrated the lifesaving achievements of this organisation with several interesting anecdotes. The talk was much enjoyed by all present who gave a substantial donation to the organisation when the traditional collection tin in the shape of a lifeboat was passed around the table. A copy of the SAAWG 80th anniversary publication, *A Tinge of Blue*, was presented to the speaker.

### Writing workshops

As reported last year, it was hoped to organise further writing workshops directed at undergraduate and postgraduate students, as a contribution to the National Mentorship Programme. An undergraduate workshop was scheduled for 13 August 2006, to be held at UCT, but it was found that this University was holding faculty-wide writing workshops during

the same month and the plan was therefore aborted. It was decided that a writing workshop should be planned for the first semester of 2007, in order to prepare students for the second semester mini-research assignments. Subsequently the Executive Committee received a request from a group of senior medical students for a writing workshop to be centred around their specific needs; this will be included in our programme for 2007. Writing workshops at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that had been planned for the University of the Western Cape (UWC) campus in September had to be cancelled but we hope to offer these in 2007.

### Marie Grant Award

Presentations of the Marie Grant Book Award to top female Education graduates considered by Faculty members to show strong teaching ability and dedication to the profession, were again made at three universities in the Western Cape, namely UCT, UWC and the University of Stellenbosch. The first presentation took place at UCT on 10 November. The recipient was **Kathryn Gomes**, who plans to spend a year teaching English in South Korea before taking a teaching post in South Africa. We were pleased to receive news of the 2005 recipient, Kathryn Nurse, who is currently in the Eastern Cape working at the Mdumbi Education centre, run by the NPO Transcape in a remote rural area in the former Transkei. She has now joined SAAWG as an Independent Member.

Our second award ceremony to be held at the University of Stellenbosch was held on 16 November. The recipient was **Lisa Jones**. She has accepted a Grade R post at a local school in Stellenbosch, where most of the children are from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the member of the Faculty of Education staff who organized the presentation for us, conditions at the school are such as to require much hard work and initiative from her, capabilities she has already amply demonstrated.

The presentation at UWC was made on 17 November, the recipient being **Matseliso Maphole Khoarai**. As in the case of the 2005 recipient, she was from Lesotho and intended to pursue her teaching career in that country. Here too we received news of last year's winner, Mamonaheng Elizabeth Monoto, who has been appointed to an important post in the Lesotho Department of Education.

### Year end function

The year end function was again held at Tugwell Hall Residence (UCT), on 25 November. This took the form of a "bring and share" party, with an interesting address by the National President, **Hazel Bowen**, on various matters relating to SAAWG, FUWA and IFUW.

## PROJECTS

The Branch Executive decided to consider some small projects, rather than a major one, as the active membership of the branch is small and these members have limited time available. The branch has previously shown interest in **Ons Plek** which provides two shelters for girls rescued from the streets, one in the city and the other at a second-stage residence in Woodstock. Ons Plek is currently even more in need of support after the destruction of much of the furniture and equipment in the city shelter due to a disastrous fire there in June 2006. At present the staff and girls are crowded together at Siviwe, the Woodstock shelter, and an appeal for donations in cash or kind has been made. The Branch Executive plans to visit Siviwe and to donate stationery and other educational requisites for the girls' use. A request for such donations was sent to members with the circular announcing the year end function. This appeal will be renewed in 2007.

The Branch President would like to establish links with the disability unit (TCATS) at UCT to establish whether the branch can play a role in their activities. This interaction is planned for the second semester of 2007.

## MEMBERSHIP

There was a regrettable decline in membership of the branch during 2006. At the beginning of 2007 records reflected an enrolment consisting of 14 full members (only 10 of whom were fully paid-up), 8 senior members (7 paid-up), 9 students (6 paid-up), one Honorary Life Member of the Branch and four Honorary Life Members of the Association, as well as two Honorary Members. It was, unfortunately, necessary to remove from the roll the names of several members who had not paid their membership fees for three years or more, or who had lost contact with the branch. This decline in membership and in payment of fees impacted adversely on the finances of the branch and it will be necessary to take steps to address these issues in 2007.

## GENERAL

### Questionnaire

In view of the lack of interest mentioned above, the Branch Executive circulated a questionnaire, requesting members to give input on what they would like the branch to focus on, in order to increase involvement and participation. The sample was too small and the responses too varied to enable us to draw any real conclusions on the main reasons for low attendance and lack of participation by members but the Branch Executive will consider this problem further in 2007.

## IFUW Conference

**Shirley Churms and Phuti Mogase** were successful in having abstracts they submitted in September 2006 accepted by IFUW, and they will attend the forthcoming Conference, to be held in Manchester in August 2007. The title of Shirley's paper is *"Helping on the long walk to academic literacy: The role of a writing consultant in the new*

*South Africa"* (accepted for one of the Education seminars) and Phuti's paper to be presented in the Human Security and Peace section is entitled *"Equality matters: Power, culture and identity"*.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Cape Town Branch Executive gratefully acknowledges the support and co-operation of the National President, Hazel Bowen. This has been all the more appreciated in view of Hazel's illness during 2006, which she overcame with great courage and determination. We are pleased to see her fully recovered and wish her good health in the year to come.

**Phuti Mogase : Cape Town Branch President**

## JOHANNESBURG

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

We continued to hold our monthly luncheon meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at Hofmeyr House at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Once again for the most part we tried to work within the parameters of the IFUW Triennial theme of *Women: Agents for Change* but have called upon speakers when special occasions/anniversaries occurred.

### February

- 14th February (St Valentine's Day)  
Hilary Semple - retired Senior Lecturer University of the Witwatersrand spoke on Shakespeare and Love. In her inimitable way Hilary enlightened and entertained a most appreciative audience.
- Also in February we had our AGM and we do we thank Berna Foden for the use of her home for the occasion.

### March

Pam Quin - member, art teacher and a Johannesburg Art Gallery guide

To celebrate the Picasso exhibition that was running in Johannesburg and drawing huge crowds from all walks of life, Pam spoke to us about Picasso - the man and his work.

### April

Catherine Bell, a member of SAAWG and a member of the IFUW Task Force Team spoke on Quo Vadis IFUW. Catherine had just returned from Geneva where, by invitation, she had attended the IFUW Board meetings. She gave us a hot-off-the-press view of what was happening with and within IFUW

### May

May was a busy month.

Lunch meeting: Else Strivens, a SAAWG member, editor of the Trefoil, a member of the Interfaith Religious Broadcasting Panel and a member of the Academic Board of St Augustine' College, had recently attended a conference in Brazil on An Africa / Brazil dialogue - Racial Equality: A Media Challenge. She

talked to an appreciative group about the discussions and findings of the delegates.

#### 14th National Conference - **Theme - *Women: Agents for Change***

It was a very good and well attended conference with excellent speakers. The illness of our National President was a great concern to all but are pleased that she is making steady progress.

The 15th National AGM was a most productive meeting. Delegates to the AGM from JHB Branch were Catherine Bell, Jocelyn Bell, Doris Ravenhill and Margaret Edwards.

Also in May Margaret Edwards and Jocelyn Bell attended the Graduation Ceremony at the University of the Witwatersrand. Margaret presented awards to the Top Women Graduates in the Science Faculty to **Catherine de Souza** (Natural Sciences) and **Carol Steinberg** (Human Sciences). It is always pleasing to have this sort of 'advertising' for SAAWG.

#### June

Saturday luncheon

Donna Carter, Her Excellency the High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago, has a B of Arts and Science (Gen. Hons.) from the University of the West Indies. She was awarded a Scholarship to study for a Diploma in International Relations and then a Diploma in Education. She later obtained a B.LLB(Hons.) 2006 was the 30th anniversary of the founding of the republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Donna spoke on Women as Agents of Change in the Caribbean. This was a well attended lunch and Donna's warm entertaining style of speaking ensured the success of the occasion.

#### July

Claudia Holgate holds an MSc in Environmental Management with a specialization in Wetland Management. An Environmental Consultant, Claudia also does environmental impact assessments and specialist wetland studies. She is currently reading for her PhD in Climate Change. She spoke on Conserving our Wetlands. This was a well attended luncheon and the presentation was most interesting and informative.

#### August

2006 was the 400th anniversary of the birth of Rembrandt. The Johannesburg Art Gallery was holding an exhibition of 40 etchings of Rembrandt. Pam Quin spoke to an appreciative group about the life of Rembrandt and of his works in the gallery.

#### September

Discussions were held on

- Programme of Action of IFUW and SAAWG for 2006
- Programme for Action in 2007

Unfortunately this was not a well attended meeting but a fruitful discussion was held but few decisions made given the numbers present

#### October

Tanya Swart, a SAAWG Young member and a Lecturer in the Psychology Department of the University of the Witwatersrand, spoke to us about her experiences aboard the Phela Phepa train taking primary health care in many spheres into the rural area. The train is also a training facility for health care students. It was a most enlightening presentation of the good work that is being done in the country.

#### November

Else Strivens, wearing yet another hat, had recently returned from a trip to Russia. She spoke about Religion and the Media in Russia since the fall of the Communist regime in 1991. This was a well attended meeting and the talk elicited a great deal of discussion.

#### December

End of Year Luncheon Party

It was a most delightful, well-attended occasion held at the home of Jocelyn Bell.

Members of the Executive Committee for the Aurora Project were invited to attend and it was good to have the networking between the teachers and the members of SAAWG

#### **PROJECTS**

- Awards and Bursaries

1 Awards made in 2006

**Best Women Graduates at the University of the Witwatersrand in the Science Faculty.** Two prizes of R1500=00 were awarded: Catherine de Souza (Natural Sciences) and Carol Steinberg (Human Sciences).

**Best First Year Women Student at the University of the Witwatersrand** - Haseka Lalla - winner of the Jubilee Book Prize - a prize of R500=00 (B.Acc).

2 Awards and Bursaries in 2007

We hope to award a bursary to a good and deserving 3rd year woman student in the Science Faculty at the University of the Witwatersrand.

#### Aurora Project

This project has gone from strength to strength with four well-attended seminars in the year. There are now 4 schools involved in the project. The teachers have asked us to develop a programme for the Grade 8 girls.

Four seminars were held during the year:

Life after Matric - Grade 12 girls

Balancing My Life - Grade 11

Survival Strategies in Life - Grade 11

Leadership and Management through Technology - Grade 10

The involvement of the members during the year was most heartening and greatly appreciated.

#### Essay Competition

The essay competition was not held in 2006, but the letters have already gone out for the 2007 competition. Professor Rosemary Gray is to be the adjudicator.

#### **Topic:**

In the Special Projects Division of The Star newspaper of the 31 March 2006 Prudence Moabeloa is quoted as saying: "Every girl has a dream, but one thing that she

*needs to prove her capabilities is an opportunity'*  
She added that exposure to opportunities at a young age would inspire girls to be the best they can be.

In the same article Nomsebenzi Tsotsobe, captain of the S A Women's Rugby team is quoted as saying :  
*"Girls are inspired to achieve their dreams whether they be playing rugby or holding positions in the political or corporate worlds."*

Discuss these statements and say how the pressures on young women today empower or hamper / prevent them from realizing their dreams.

We are hoping that this will encourage the girls to express themselves and that we will have several entries. In view of the cost of running such a competition the Executive Committee discussed the possibility of conducting a biennial competition. After some discussion it was decided that this would not be in the best interests of the competition as it needs to maintain a high profile if it is make an impact.

The Prizes: R2000=00, R1000=00 and R500=00 for tertiary education and R500=00 for the winning school.

#### **MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT**

In 2006 we gained some members and we lost some but is essential that we try to build up our numbers. This issue was discussed at great length at the last AGM and we need to follow up these ideas. Our Recruitment Office, Sylvia Shapshak, has worked hard to get women interested with some success. Many thanks to Catherine Bell who is taking care of the database

#### **FUNDS AND FUNDRAISING**

Funding and membership are unfortunately closely linked, for in many ways it costs about the same to run the association for 25 as it does for 50 but the percentage of funds used for capitation is greater if we have lower numbers. This matter will be dealt with more vigorously in 2007.

\* Fundraising

We are thinking about fundraising for various funds for bursaries and a travel fund. An idea mooted is a Bridge Drive as this can be great money spinner and we have an venue.

We are thinking of doing this with Soroptimists or /and NCW.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The 2006 Executive Committee worked very hard to present a varied programme for the members and their guests and to promote the interests of SAAWG. I do want to thank most sincerely:

Sylvia Shapshak - Vice President and Recruitment Secretary

Catherine Bell - Treasurer

Doris Ravenhill - on our Gender desk who has kept us informed

Jocelyn Bell - with all her input and her work on the Aurora Project

They have given most generously of their time and energy, often despite huge demands and difficulties in their lives and we do thank them for this. The members were very supportive during the year. Without them there would be no Johannesburg branch

#### **WAY FORWARD**

It did not appear to be an action filled year but, when we looked back on it, we could see that 2006 was busy and we reached out to many in different ways.

During 2007 we anticipate having a varied programme that will encourage members to attend meetings and hope that they will bring quests. We do need members to be part of the decision-making in what we do.

We have planned a Saturday meeting for 7 or 14 July as Ferial Haffejee has agreed to speak. We are hoping that Hofmeyr House will be open in July.

I hope that with the members' input we can encourage more women to join our ranks this year and that, through our activities, we can make a difference to the lives of women and girls in South Africa in 2007.

**Margaret Edwards: Johannesburg Branch  
President**

## **NATIONAL PROJECTS**

### **BINA ROY MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME**

In 2006 we had hoped to begin our new aspect of the mentorship programme - Self Defence/Fitness Project which was to be arranged in conjunction with a Project Management (Health Sciences) postgraduate student from University of Western Cape. Unfortunately there was a breakdown in communication as a result of staff changes in that department, my illness and the student waiting on details of the participants before he finalized venues and lecturers etc. SAAWG is still in communication with UWC and plans to take the project forward in 2007.

A very interesting report was received from our mentor in Limpopo Province - Mangakane Ramaila who is currently working as an Administrator at the Youth Advisory Centre in Fetakgomo Municipality under the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality. This is an initiative of Umsobomvu Youth Fund, and is a project which is running within 5 municipalities of Greater Sekhukhune District. It is an annually renewable contract based on performance. Each municipality has the following staff members for the project:

- 1 Career Councillor
- 2 Administrator
- 3 Outreach Officer

Her report detailed information on work being done by various projects within her region.

I am hoping to meet with Ms Ramaila and the women working within these projects as soon as it is possible for her to go to Limpopo. Ms Ramaila had made enquiries about coming to Cape Town for the National Annual General Meeting but this proved difficult for her.

In 2006 the Cape Town Branch did not run their Academic Writing Workshops which have been pilot projects for the mentorship programme. Manuals of the course material are to be produced. Copies will then be forwarded to the Johannesburg and Cape Town branches.

It seems that IFUW anticipates receiving less funding for BRPID projects and is, therefore, separating this funding from membership fees. Any funding available and approved for an NFA will be provided separately to that country. The next application date for funding was 28 April 2007.

#### FINANCES

As no project was run during the year, the funds available are R6979.00.

**Hazel Bowen: Convener**

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## SAAWG CONFERENCE

Saturday, 24 March 2007

UCT Faculty of Health Sciences, Anzio Road, Observatory, Cape Town

~ Women - Agents for Change ~

### DROP-OUTS AT SCHOOL & TERTIARY LEVEL - WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR GIRLS?



Our Association was honoured this year to have the South African National Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, open our conference. She is a member of the Cape Town Branch as well as a National Honorary member of SAAWG and has always taken an keen interest in the affairs of our Association. This theme, naturally, was of particular interest as it related to the portfolio for which she is responsible.

In her opening address, the Minister explained that due consideration had had to be given to the question of what changes needed to be put in place in education once democracy was achieved in South Africa. Thirteen years down the line, now as the Minister of Education, she was in the process of evaluating the current situation.

It has been identified that retention in schools is very important and would require the implementation of a deliberate policy at national level. The factors leading to school drop-out had to be identified. Furthermore, increased access has to lead to success. Thus the situation must be analyzed, and responses be developed that would militate success. Appropriate workable solutions must be sought.

Research indicates that we have made progress where girls are concerned. Girls constitute 58% of learners in primary schools and outnumber boys in

the secondary schools. In higher education there is also a significant increase in the number of girls.

We must remember that gender issues relate to both sexes.

The worry is that fewer boys are completing secondary school. In the United States there are approximately 2 million more girls than boys at college, and some institutions are beginning to implement "affirmative action". The Republic of South Africa appears to be following the trend with more women at university and more women graduating.

One needs to examine the underlying causes, and ask what is affecting boys. Factors like illiteracy, high crime levels, low skills employment and family pressure to bring in an income play their part.

A difficult question for us is whether our focus on the empowerment of girls and their success has led to the disempowerment of boys. However, boys may be

dropping out but those who stay appear to be achieving better results especially in critical fields. There is no tracking system enabling us to follow the careers of individuals and so there is a lack of accurate data.

**The Minister has, therefore, appointed a commission of experts to trace retention and drop-out over the past 5 years**

Of grave concern is the issue of teenage pregnancy, the negativity displayed as regards sexual abstinence, and the early onset of sexual activity. Furthermore the use of alcohol and frequenting of pubs etc are cause for alarm. The Minister affirmed that parents and the community need to play an active part and take responsibility for the options open to their children.

50% of students in the first year of tertiary study do not continue. 6 out of 10 dropped out of the system in 2000.

**In Africa, 7 out of 10 girls drop out of the educational system.**

**Reasons given are:**

- Financial needs,
- Lack of academic support;

Girls bear the burden of the impact of AIDS; Career choices made.

It would appear as if many young people have a lack of understanding of what constitutes academic requirements. Until the DP (Duly Performed) certificate notice is posted, some have no idea that they will not be able to write their examinations. They appear unaware of the attendance requirements nor that they had not attained the average needed.

The Minister stressed:

- o The need for academic preparedness and preparedness for academic life.
- o Subjects like science, engineering and technology need special attention.
- o Expertise must be channelled to ensure the success of educational projects.
- o Financial support must be given to young people to continue their studies
- o The curricula must change to accommodate needs.
- o The context in which we work must change.

**Thus we need to reshape our institutional framework and our attitudes if retention is to be ensured and learners, students and society are to achieve success.**

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN

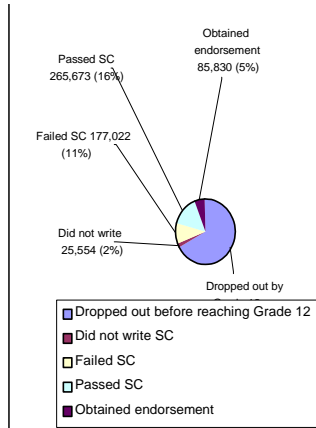
*Keynote address by*

**Dr Nan Yeld**

Dean of CHED (Centre for Higher Education Development)

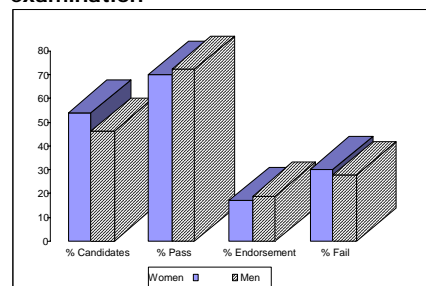
### Schooling

When one examines the Senior Certificate performance of the class of 1995, the so-called "children of the democracy", one finds that although more girls enter for the examinations, fewer pass or get endorsements.



grade 12 and write the exam, proportionally fewer women pass compared with their male counterparts. Also smaller proportions of women than men are taking subjects such as maths and physical science and their pass rate in these subjects is lower than that for men which is highlighted in the following chart:

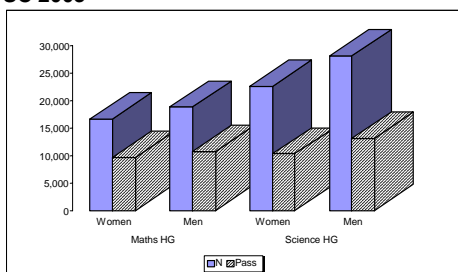
**Performance differences in the 2004 Senior Certificate examination**



These results can be broken down even further to show the differences in pass rates between female and male learners in the field of Maths and Science:

As noted by J Schindler in analyzing the 2004 Senior Certificate Examination (*Edusource* No. 47/April 2005), one area of concern remains the poorer performance in the matriculation examination by women. Although more women than men get to

**Higher Grade Maths and Science passes: SC 2003**



This leads us to the situation pertaining in

**Higher Education.**

The UCT entrance examination - PTEEB - is language-based and conducted through the medium of English. It measures Mathematics achievement and Mathematics comprehension.

Mathematics achievement (measuring maths learned at school) indicates that males are arriving at University better equipped to cope. Mathematics comprehension (indicating potential in Maths) reveals a balance in coping skills.

In terms of language, males and females are on an even level. The following tables show Intake vs Graduation figures per institution and per discipline.

**2000 intake cohort: All first-time entering students**  
(Scott, Yeld and Hendry 2007)

Institutions	Grad within 5 years	Still registered after 5 years	Left without graduating
Universities (excl UNISA)	50%	12%	38%
UNISA	14%	27%	59%
All universities	38%	17%	45%
Technikons (excl TSA)	32%	10%	58%
TSA (Technikon SA)	2%	12%	85%
All technikons	23%	11%	66%
All institutions	30%	14%	56%

**General academic first B-degrees, by CESM group: All first-time entering students including UNISA**

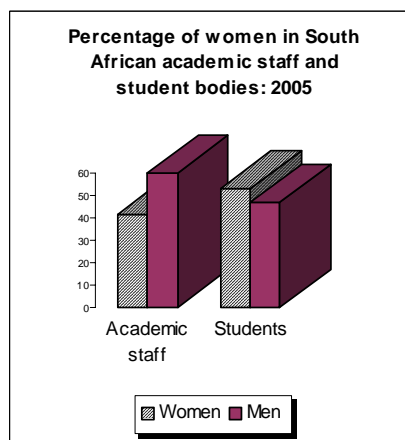
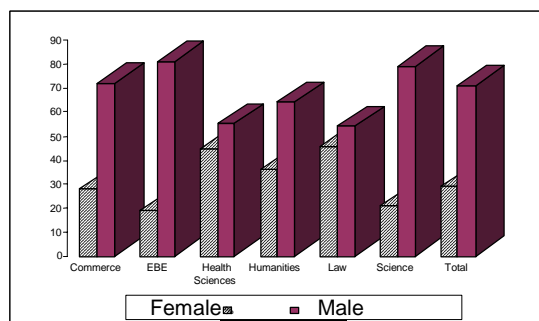
CESM	Graduated within 5 years	Still registered after 5 years
Bus/Management	31 %	15 %
Life and Physical Sciences	44 %	13 %
Mathematical Sciences	50 %	10%
Social Sciences	43 %	10 %
Languages	44 %	8 %

**Particular issues impacting on female student success in Higher Education (HE):**

- Lower numbers taking 'gateway' subjects at school level
- Lower performance levels in these gateway subjects
- Families prioritizing boys' aspirations
- Parents expecting more housework from girls
- Possibly less mentoring by academics
- Is there less of an expectation of continuation to graduate study?

**THERE IS A NEED FOR ROLEMODELS AND MENTORS, AND THE CREATION OF A "FAVOURABLE CLIMATE"**

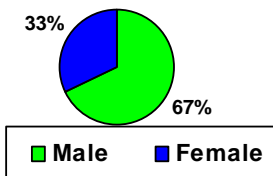
**Academic staff 2005 (UCT)**



**Demographics of SA research output**

When one looks at the gender trends in the demographics of SA Research output, one can see that there has not been much improvement in the output of females from 1990 to 2004.

**Research output: UCT 2002 - 2004 (HEMIS data)**



## Gender trends



### “PIPELINE” OBSTRUCTIONS

Peculiarities are apparent in what is happening in the pipeline as far as girls are concerned.

## AN INITIAL REVIEW OF GIRL DROP-OUTS FROM SCHOOL

*Keynote address by*

**Jennifer Rault-Smith**

Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Director: Curriculum Development

The South African education system has seen many changes and much improvement in the equitable offering of education to all young people in the country. However, as valid data about systems becomes available, it is becoming increasingly clear that while almost universal enrolment has been achieved in the GET (General Education & Training) band (ie to Grade 10), there is a significant problem in terms of learners leaving the system before obtaining the NQF level 4 school leaving certificate, i.e. a Matric certificate.

This paper took only an initial, cursory glance at the problem, as further research needs to be undertaken to determine how many learners avail themselves of alternate educational opportunities after leaving school. Academic schooling must not be considered the only pathway for the education of young people. Indeed, FET colleges and learnerships are designed for learners who prefer an alternate route. It is the matter of that group of young people who, after leaving school without an NQF L4 qualification, do not enter alternative avenues that must be addressed. Certainly, we are regularly informed, the group of young people who struggle the most to find a job are those who left school in Grade 11.

In the light of the limited research into learner drop-out in South Africa it is useful to note the situation in other countries.

### Philippines

In the Philippines, Division supervisor Beth Meneses, as reported in Chua, Y.T., When Classes Open Today, Many Boys Won't be in School, Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism, <http://www.pcij.org>, has been asking the question regarding dropouts for the past several years. On really bad days, she says, as many as one in five of the male students in the city's high school could be anywhere - on the streets, the

There appears to be not so much “drop out” as bias against women. Women academics at universities do not have enough mentoring and they also have to deal with the problem of sexual harassment.

This situation has led to the establishment of an emergency research programme at UCT.

Ed: These figures led to much discussion, and among the questions and comments which arose were:

Are there any statistics available regarding the differences in achievement in Maths and Science between Co-ed and Single Sex schools?  
Women are declined bursaries in the field of mining. Targets in mining equity would change that.  
Perhaps differences arise because of the way one group constructs itself as against that of the other.

canteen, the mall, the computer gaming shop - but **NOT** in the classroom.

Throughout the country, even in Muslim Mindanao where girls have traditionally been kept out of the classroom in public high schools, teachers have been worrying about the boys. Boys have long been more likely to drop out of school than girls in either the primary or high school level. But as more families require more hands to generate income, parents and teachers get busier, and teenage distractions multiply, the ratio of males to females exiting prematurely from high school has worsened.

There are now far more illiterate boys than girls. As a result, more men are jobless and subsequently suffer from low self-esteem. Three out of five unemployed Filipino are now male while nearly 70 percent of today's overseas Filipino workers are female.

### United States

The reasons Latin girls leave high school before graduations are many. One major factor is pregnancy. A third of 9 to 15 year old girls surveyed by the Academy of Educational Development cited pregnancy or marriage as the reason for dropping out of high school. And in 1997, Texas reported 52,728 birth to girls aged 15-19 years.

Other factors cited for the disproportionate high school drop out rate of Latin girls are marriage, gender roles, stereotyping, family demands and economic status. Attitudes of teachers, a lack of proficiency in English; peer pressure, and a lack of role models are also contributing factors to this disturbing trend.

Despite the alarming rate of dropouts among Hispanic girls, there is no public outcry and little is being done to remedy this situation. Bilingual services are non-existent or poor at many schools and this leads to disillusionment.

In a recent interview in the Dallas Morning News, a Latin girl gave as a reason for dropping out of high school the fact that her “teachers were not explaining things very well.” She said, “ Kids were making fun of me,” because she was poor

David Stoller, National Centre for Education Studies in the USA, reports (James, E.A. Drop Outs or Early School Leavers: More than a difference of verbiage): of research undertaken into the relationship between poor performance and dropouts:

Data were obtained on 270 students who were poor performers - three “D’s” or “F’s” in high school. The vast majority of these poor performers could be identified early in their academic careers. The areas of critical performance were primarily in the English course and in Mathematics.

After onset of failures during the past 2 years, there is a fairly consistent distribution of failures throughout the academic careers of these students. The further along the poor performers’ academic career, the worse the grades became. Boys tended to drop out through Grades 10 - 12, in contrast to girls who most frequently left in the 12th grade. However, poor early performance was found to be a good indicator of later academic difficulty but not as good an indicator of a student’s dropout potential.

### The United Kingdom

The presumption of the policy makers has been that low levels of education are due to financial constraints. The Department for Education and Skills in the United Kingdom believes that the rate of drop-out is largest for children coming from a poorer socio-economic background. The British government, in fact, provides an Education Maintenance Allowance to families that cannot keep learners in school and believes that the EMA has proved especially effective in plugging the drop-out gap for this vulnerable group. (EMA leaflet: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp>)

### India

Figures put out by the Ministry of Human Resource Development’s Department of School Education and Literacy indicate that as many as two-thirds of those eligible for secondary and senior secondary education remain outside the school systems today.

Shakila Parvin, the mother of 14 year old Shama, one of the students in the class, does not plan to

send her daughter to secondary school. The secondary school is 10km away and there is no transport so she feels that it is not safe for her daughter to travel alone. In the same article, Government stalling sec. school reforms: (<http://www.indiatogether.org>) reference is made to the fact that in Nadu, a Tamil region in India, the transition rate from upper primary to secondary is low for girls. Only about 30 percent of all who enrol in grade 8 reach grade 12. For girls the corresponding figure turns out to be as low as 20 percent.

**Across the world dropping out from school by girls is attributed to pregnancy, and sometimes marriage, family demands, economic status, language and safety. It is fair to assume that the reasons for girls dropping out of school in South Africa are very similar.**

**Statistics from the Western Cape Department of Education** give an early indication of trends, although the newly established learner tracking system will give very specific data for analysis in the near future. Current data suggests that there are nearly 10% more boy learners in Grade 1 than girl learners. Either more boys than girls enter Grade 1, or more boys than girls repeat Grade 1. On entry to high school, there are over a thousand more girls than boys in Grade 8. Again, the impact of failures has to be taken into account. However, over 4,000 more girls than boys write the Grade 12 Senior Certificate Examination. This certainly suggests that, in the Western Cape, although there is a disconcertingly high reduction in the number of learners from Grades 10 to 12, more boys are dropping out than girls.

Similarly the pass rate in Grade 10 and in the Senior Certificate is higher for girls than for boys. However, the numbers of girls entering and succeeding in gateway subjects such as Mathematics and Physical Science does not present such a rosy picture and girls lag well behind the boys in this arena.

In summary, the drop-out rate for girls in the Western Cape and in South Africa, is unacceptably high, although it is overshadowed by the problems experienced with drop-out rates for boys. This paper merely raises some of the issues regarding girl drop-outs from school and suggests that it may be a complex issue intertwined with cultural and socio-economic factors, but that there is a need for extensive research that will provide the data necessary to put measures into place to prevent this phenomenon of drop-outs from the system.



**Dr Nan Yield**



**Jennifer Raul-Smith**

## Keynote Speakers

# Some preliminary thoughts on why young women drop out from higher education institutions in the Western Cape

**Beverley Thaver**

Chief Researcher, Centre for the Study of Higher Education,  
University of the Western Cape



The main aim of this presentation is to begin to map a way towards a research agenda around the topic, mainly in terms of establishing some of the conditions that either favour or impede young women's success and progression into higher education institutions in the Western Cape.

## 1 Some statistical background to the research problem

### 1.1 Enrolments and graduations

In just under a decade, from 1993 until 2002, the total number of enrolments in the higher education system increased from 473 000 to 675 000; in 2002 just over half (54%) of these enrolments were women. This shows an increase in the number of women entering the system, but this figure would need to be matched with the total number of graduates to demonstrate the proportion of successful women students.

While the enrolment figures for women at the systemic level are increasing they do not form as high a proportion of graduates as they do of enrolments. Although, if one takes a systemic look at the statistics, it appears that there are more women than men graduating with first degrees, this is not the case at the higher levels, and the proportions may vary in terms of specific fields of study.

With regard to the racial breakdown, there are some interesting patterns.

(Black) African student graduation rates have fluctuated, while those of Indian and white students

first declined and then improved, and graduation rates of coloured students have declined steadily. It may be worthwhile to note (especially for the purpose of this research) that while there has been a decline in the number of university graduates from the coloured group, there has been an increase in the number of coloured students graduating at the level of Universities of Technology.

### 1.2 Comments on these statistics

The HE system is not very efficient. Graduation rates are very low with a similar figure (15 - 20%) posited for students who drop out from the system. Generally, not enough students are getting through the system, which in turn impacts on the labour market. An analysis of these statistics requires more time. For now, the purpose is to consider speculatively the drop out factors of women in particular - although I must add that the drop out figure is not disaggregated in terms of gender and race - and therefore everything remains speculative.

## 2 Developing a framework for understanding the phenomenon

There are a variety of ways to begin to address the topic. One is to think of a "shopping list" of why young women drop out: pregnancy, behavioural / affective factors (such as adjustment to adulthood; substance abuse etc, insufficient cultural / academic capital, limits to academic and social integration); the failure of institutions to be receptive to women's issues (treatment factors); a mismatch between courses/degree taken and career realities. But this approach, while valuable, starts from effects as such, with limited reference to the historical and sociological ways in which women are constructed as subordinate subjects which limit or shape the extent to which they integrate into and subsequently remain in the system.

More specifically, we need to discover how young women in SA grapple with the journey of success, high performance, and of making their mark on society not only as social nannies but as shapers of a different and more equitable HE system that is not driven by ascription (the group one was born into) but by a more flexible notion of achievement that gives credence to the myriad forms of contested knowledge that is beginning to shape (and in fact, deepen) our democratic project.

First, I want to map very briefly the theoretical approach to thinking about the construction of women in society which I think can give some insights into the reasons for women withdrawing (dropping out) from the system. Here I draw on an economic framework around notions of social reproduction.

Social reproduction is about what happens in daily life, ie about how the social relations and the practices that are necessary for a particular economic and political system are ordered and re-produced towards production.

This production and reproduction of the labour force brings into play a range of cultural practices that are historically specific, including those linked to learning and knowledge. From this angle, social reproduction also has a cultural component to it which is about reproducing the knowledge and attitudes that serve the purpose of differentiating the classes and, in SA, establishing a hierarchy of racial differences. These cultural and learning habits do not occur only in the workplace but also in other sectors (schools, higher education).

From the macro (public) domain one moves into the private (household) domain where the gendered division of labour is stark, where women's roles of social maintenance are reinforced, constructed and re-created. The ensemble of the relations organized around production results in the inculcation of certain norms and values for particular social groups of which one then becomes a 'member'. This is a rather crude and quick overview of the concept. In a nutshell, I am advancing aspects of Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

### **3 The conditions of women in the Western Cape**

In considering the position of women in the Western Cape in particular I focus on the construction of the coloured lower and upper working class women as labour subjects. My argument is that this becomes the defining line/ reference point (role-modelling) for subsequent generations of young women. Of course, over time, there is class mobility. For now, I raise a few caveats before I proceed.

First, I want to clear the ground around the implication of essentializing this category. I do not wish to marshal any arguments for a biological/naturalist position around 'race' and in this instance the social category of 'coloured'. This brings me to my second caveat, which is that I shall for the moment suspend the immoral aspect of race and approach the category as being socially constructed over time. This means that today we are confronted with a reality forged through material practices. Yet, there is a paucity of research in this domain. Why? Clearly there are fairly sensitive, political reasons. Much of the debate on the category 'coloured' is approached as follows:

First, using deviant theory there is a tendency to exoticize the phenomenon (with the identity issue

being cloaked by shame, legitimacy and racial stereotypes); then (second) there is an approach whereby the coloured middle class does not really want to talk much about the identity issue (again, linked to the shame and perceived stereotypes); or (third) for some of us who recognize the hierarchy of privileges under apartheid, we feel compromised to talk about some of the realities. What has happened over time is that we have not been able to overcome this and openly address some of the material and cultural practices that either obstruct or facilitate advancement in the system.

So, this is my task today. I shall try to navigate my way around the earlier statistic (decline of 5% over 4 years in the graduation rate of the coloured category) that I regard as rather troubling.

#### *3.1 Historical development of this category*

There is much to say about this social category; for the present purpose it will suffice to sketch briefly the early stages of formation of the category on the basis of a political economy logic. In the early stages of segregation in the Cape the main forms of labour were agricultural (wine and fruit farms); domestic /farm labour; municipal workers; service industries; manufacturing (textile industry); factory workers; cottage industry (dressmakers etc); shop assistants; clerks; artisans. At the same time, there was a group who were teachers (with a fairly low level of qualification such as PL1 - 3); nurses, and then, of course, a small number of doctors/lawyers. Of course, there were crucial distinctions around rural and urban cultural sensibilities.

These were the economic and cultural boundaries within which women, including in some cases our mothers, operated. The construction of women was around the "servicer", the nanny, with very limited intellectual roles and, moreover, ones that fit with the stereotype of social reproduction at menial level. These were then the role models for most of my generation: women who directly articulated with the economic system as a pool of labour (on the farms, in the factories).

So, what were the levels of education? One has to look at this in terms of pockets: illiteracy was (and continues to be) quite high; then there was a fairly large pocket of individuals with secondary educational qualifications but these were mainly at the low and middle levels, with between eight and ten years of schooling being seen as the ideal. Your prize was attaining a junior certificate (JC), equivalent to the present Grade 10.

This type of economic relation was then reinforced in the next period. What were the markers for women during this period? I want to make two points:

a) The labour-based architecture (both publicly and privately) of women's existence under the apartheid period became (I think) a defining marker, as it managed and navigated its way towards meeting not only basic social needs (food and shelter) but also the reproductive needs of the economy. This would hold for African women as well.

b) A word about the political position of women under apartheid: as we know, not all women had the freedom of movement which was determined by voting laws.

What is interesting is how the differential policies resulted in women's beings and bodies asserting and exercising control over public spaces in tumultuous ways. We should remember that African women in the Western Cape bore the brunt of the pass system while coloured women were relatively protected by the coloured labour preference policy; nonetheless, they had their subject positions determined which, in turn, limited movement and mobility (or, in other words, the boundaries for what could / could not happen were then defined).

Clearly, this was also economically determined through employment opportunities and the extent to which the economy had been able to absorb the pool of labour. This labour relationship is crucial, I think, given that the major section of this category had initially been concentrated at the cutting edge of the economy (take, for example, the artisan class) in the Western Cape, with no recourse to other forms of subsidy (for example, there were restrictions on land).

**The point of my argument is that, when the economy falls, this then determines the fate of a section of the working class that over time had been displaced and only had its labour to offer:**

Such vulnerability effectively leads to a condition of being pauperized. This unstable economic relation has been exacerbated in the post- apartheid period. A few instances will suffice. The decline in the contribution of certain sectors to the provincial economy has certainly taken its toll: there is a decline in agriculture; we all know what has been happening to the textile industry.

### *3.2 Impacts on higher education of young women*

**So, how does all of this impact on young women either inside the higher education system, or unable to actually get in? What are the research questions?**

First, we would need to analytically unpack and disaggregate the historical construction of women

within a social reproductive framework, but one that specifically takes account of their articulation with different political and economic geographies. One wants to consider the contours of the different struggles. My feeling here is that the boundary for coloured women historically is one circumscribed by being an object of labour subject to all the economic vulnerabilities that come with it.

*From this perspective I would argue that culturally, therefore, the knowledge and learning practices of women are bound by the imperatives of manual labour (along with the traditional sexual reproductive function). Historically, this has placed a ceiling on what women can accomplish intellectually. I am wondering whether this could explain some of the career decisions which have resulted in training in a technical university being preferred over a university-based education, as seems to be suggested by the recent statistics. But this is very, very speculative!*

At no point do I want to pigeon-hole this category of women as several young women, despite the cultural and class limits, have successfully pursued careers and become dynamic role models. But there may be space to consider the phenomenon, drawing on generational studies.

For example, with regard to the current increase in the number of enrolments of coloured women at Western Cape universities (proportions in 2004 : University of Western Cape (UWC), 52%; University of Cape Town (UCT) and University of Stellenbosch (US) 15%), one of the key questions concerns the relationship between the family / cultural backgrounds of the young women and their levels of integration into academic life. How different is this generation of young women students from previous ones? Are they faced with the same challenges? Is it a question of youth, class, residual effects of a racialized legacy, dislocation, identity conflicts, culture, single parenting, strong matriarchal relations? Clearly, there is scope for much more research.

**To conclude, as we together imagine practical responses around the morass of challenges, our key moral function is to protect and defend our young vibrant women, as they will become the critical and participatory citizens that will anchor our democracy.**

# “WALKING TO THE LIBRARY AT NIGHT: GENDER AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES”



**Dr Teresa Barnes**

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Despite the fact that higher education has a long, long history in Africa, the current universities of the continent, including those of South Africa, owe nothing to the traditions of the ancient library of Alexandria or the dusty manuscripts of Timbuktu.

Today's public universities in Africa are, almost without exception, colonial-era imports. The traditional European distinctions between labour of the mind and labour of the body were transmitted directly to Africa. Accordingly, the identification of males with the labour of the mind and females with that of the body was also transmitted to Africa, along with the Senates, the vice-chancellors, the graduation robes, those funny flat hats and the rituals of examination. Further ideas transmitted to Africa were that learning is a combative and aggressive process; that the worthy candidate is one who survives attackers and bests his foes, and that the experience of intellectual combat is intrinsic to intellectual life and production. Thus universities are transnational institutions, and a professor from Bellville or Cape Town can find a familiar home at Oxford or Melbourne University or Tübingen or Delhi or Utrecht or Michigan State.

Higher education has been and continues to be construed as what I would call a masculinist process - one that privileges confrontation, and the strong, dismembering the weak.

There are, of course, other methods of conducting the core business of higher education: teaching and learning, conducting research and disseminating results, and examination. For example, intrinsic to the culture of modern higher education is the figure of the examination candidate, a lone individual on a hill, waiting to be beset by his detractors and pursuers.

Should he prevail and beat them all back, he is worthy of a degree. Should he not prevail, he fails and simply becomes a bad throughput statistic. According to the logic of the system, failure is a perfectly acceptable alternative - for those who have been found to be unworthy.

Thus, institutional cultures in modern, Western, African/South African universities maintain the ability to produce and reproduce ways of knowing that are gendered, that privilege certain kinds of maleness,

and sideline and marginalize other ways of knowing and other methods of knowledge production.

To me, this is the most fundamental aspect of gender and institutional culture in higher education. We bemoan low throughput statistics while still overtly and covertly supporting educational systems that consider it acceptable for a number of obstacles to be placed in the paths of the potentially worthy, so that they can, in overcoming those obstacles, prove that they do in fact deserve to be among the chosen.

I have begun to think of this process as “**Survivor: University**” - in order to get a degree, we expect students to outwit, outlast and outplay the systems that are supposedly there to educate them.

As institutions continue to be marked by signifiers of places of masculine experience: man-as-thinker (like the pensive statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the mountainside below University of Cape Town (UCT)), man-as-aggressive-debater, man-as-athlete, boys-becoming-men, etc - so the intellectual contributions of women continue to be belittled and debased. Take, for example, this description of gendered micropolitics for women staff in the Nigerian academy - and ask yourself if anything sounds familiar?

Charmaine Pereira, “A gender analysis of the Nigerian university system,” has identified some of the micropolitical behaviours that are used at various times by various parties to marginalize women in the academy. These are, *‘jokes, snide remarks, insinuations, comments in class to students, comments in the office of the Dean/head of department/other, comments on the faculty board, comments in the staff club, laughter when women speak at meetings, selective monitoring of female (but not male) academics by heads of departments.’*

When women speak at meetings or academic fora, the following behaviours can be used to get similar messages across: *‘heckling, continual background noise/movement during a woman’s presentation, men begin to leave when women are scheduled to speak, irrelevant questions being asked at the end, advice offered that imply the woman lacks experience/basic understanding, etc.’*

Although I work at UWC, I am associated with a project we call **GICAU (Gender and Institutional Culture in African Universities)**. It is funded by the Association of African Universities and housed at the African Gender Institute at UCT.

Let me share **some of the ways that our researchers have found that women students at universities in various African countries are held to impossible**

**standards simply because they are not men.** For this reason, it is doubly difficult for them to learn, outwit, outlast and outplay the system and not become low throughput statistics. True, what I mention below are practices of individuals, but they are not aberrant in the sense of being alien to the fundamental culture of masculinist education. These practices force women into particular genderized norms, and if in the process they drop out of the system - as the logic runs, so be it.

#### **Ghana:**

- Women students are heckled when they speak in class. The men sit behind the women, so that they can see and police who speaks.
- Transactional sex, which can be rampant, is mediated by systems in the residences, where albums with photographs of women students are shown to potential clients.

#### **Nigeria:**

- Women students are expelled by the university authorities for having sexual relations but the men are not punished.
- Christian fundamentalist student societies (there are many, and they are popular and powerful) discourage women from running for student leadership positions: "*the Bible says it's not done, for a woman to be a president.*"

#### **Zimbabwe:**

- Christian fundamentalists who do not believe in premarital sex prick holes in condoms accessible on campus.
- During campus demonstrations by male students women students are attacked for wearing miniskirts.

#### **Ethiopia:**

- In a situation where it is very taboo to speak of sexual violence, women students are afraid of being propositioned by male lecturers and of rape on the way to the library after dark; these things function to deprive women students of intellectual sustenance, as they have limited access to it.
- Women who do well in courses, are accused of having had sex with lecturers to increase their marks. There is, therefore, an incentive for women not to do well, for fear of being labelled as whores.

Each of these practices serves to isolate and weaken women academics as scholars and to mark women students as those unfit to claim full citizenship of the university community, thus denying them full access to institutional resources of teaching and learning.

As women continue to be identified in the academy with the politics of the body rather than of the mind, so their bodies are used as battlegrounds for the reproduction of heterosexual norms, and sexual harassment continues to affect them disproportionately.

In a survey of research on sexual harassment in Southern African institutions of higher education, Jane Bennett (AGI) has noted **six concerns around sexual harassment:**

- The hierarchical aspects of university life are reinforced by practices of male dominance. Those defined as 'junior' are consistently vulnerable to unwanted sexualization from senior men.
- Practices of transactional sex can increasingly become the norm (in order to gain access to better marks, financial support, housing, etc).
- Women can then be blamed by men for their perceived sexual power.
- Discourses of culture and tradition are invoked repeatedly to reinforce patterns of male dominance.
- Survivors experience difficulties in reporting instances of sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- From a different angle, Bennett also acknowledges the interventionist power of research into these problems on campuses, as the un-namable and unspeakable are brought more out into the open.

From all the examples I have given above, I hope it is clear that the point of my argument is simply this: when the throughput rates at institutions of higher education are exceptionally low, especially for women, we must investigate the ways in which these institutions specifically support the erection and maintenance of social and cultural barriers to retention, learning and graduation.

**Why do I say that these barriers are supported and maintained? Because they function as long, elaborate and often murky rituals of educational initiation, and they separate the women from the men.**

I would argue that these are not merely practices amounting to some kind of benign and gender-neutral apprenticeship, but they are deliberately obstructive practices which amount to initiation of women into (and out of) masculinist spaces.

In concluding, I should like to say something about one of the traditional ways of knowing about women and men in the academy, and that is headcounting.

**Headcounting** is a very important activity. It gives quantitative data, numbers and statistics: about how many women there are, what the gaps in their salaries are, what low levels of employment they are trapped in, how many extra hours they work, how few women professors there are, etc. Headcounting shows that, throughout the African continent, the number of female students has been growing and in some countries, women - even though they remain in the professional minority - have seized academic life and carved out important spaces for themselves. However, the hidden structures and traditions of masculinist knowledge production are not necessarily threatened when the headcount figures improve.

Often, in the literature on gender and institutional culture of higher education, one finds the phrase, “*chilly climate*.”

This does not refer to Cape Town winters, but to the atmosphere that generally surrounds female academics in the academy - not welcoming, and something against which one always has to brace oneself. This little phrase neatly sums up the all-encompassing ways in which the transformative potential of engendered knowledge is, in the modern academy, generally deflected and sidelined in favour

of masculinist ways of knowing. It also speaks of the existence of multiple practices which force women students out of university simply because they are not men.

**I would argue that, until these structural barriers are named, investigated and dismantled, all the policy in the world meant to address this or that aspect of low throughput rates, in South Africa as well as on the rest of the African continent, will be ineffective.**

## CHALLENGES OF CONTRACEPTIVE USE BY ADOLESCENTS IN TSHWANE, GAUTENG PROVINCE



**Dr Todd Maja**

### INTRODUCTION

Young people are vulnerable to risky behaviour that causes major health problems such as sexual behaviour resulting in early, unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Adolescent pregnancies have far-reaching socio-economic and health implications for the individual, her family and ultimately communities. Reported implications include: isolation by friends and family members; “dropping out of school”; parental care of the baby; lack of income and perpetuation of poverty if families have no income (Ehlers, Maja, Sellers & Gololo 2000:53). Health-related problems of adolescent pregnancies may be cephalo-pelvic disproportion; prolonged or premature labour.

The World Health Organization (1998:6) estimates that globally, close to 17million girls under the age of 20 years give birth annually and a further 4,4 million abortions are sought by adolescents each year. In the RSA, recent reports indicate a disturbing increase of high school teenage girls who are pregnant with one school having 70 pregnant girls during March 2007. In another province in the RSA, 23 of the 253 babies born on Christmas Day, were from mothers who are between the ages 13 and 17 years.

These adolescent pregnancies and their accompanying complications could be averted if contraceptives are used consistently and effectively. A Research Project was therefore undertaken :

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Determine the knowledge and perceptions of youth regarding sexuality education/contraception.  
Ascertain youth’s knowledge and their perceptions of early motherhood.  
Describe challenges faced by youth in utilizing contraceptives effectively.

### RESEARCH METHODS

- 1 An exploratory, descriptive and qualitative design.
- 2 Two focus group discussions with young girls aged between 15-20 years.
- 3 One group comprised 8 girls who consulted at the health care centre for contraceptives.
- 4 Second group were 14 girls who came for termination of pregnancy.
- 5 An experienced counsellor facilitated the discussions.
- 6 Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the study.
- 7 Data was tape recorded and field notes were made.

8 Trustworthiness was ensured - credibility, consistency, dependability and confirmability.

## RESULTS

Data was analyzed using content thematic analysis according to Tesch (In Cresswell, 1994:154-155):

### Knowledge and perceptions about sexuality Education/contraception

Almost all participants who had consulted for contraceptives claimed to have information about the Pill, injections and condoms although they indicated that more information was essential on sexuality education as stated:

*"We need to be more informed about other methods of contraception and sexuality issues. As it is, we have scanty information about these issues."*

One participant from the group that had terminated a pregnancy said:

*"I wish I knew about the method used in emergency contraception before falling pregnant and terminating my pregnancy. I only heard about it now when in the waiting room before the procedure. I went through hell having taken concoctions to terminate, I had to, because my boyfriend left me after telling him of the pregnancy. I am now having guilt feelings, regret and feel ashamed even going back to school... I am not sure if I'll go back..."*

### Knowledge and perceptions about early motherhood

Most participants indicated that they were looking forward to becoming mothers, but stated that they were not ready yet as they lacked information on how to care for their babies. One participant who already had a baby at 17 years put it this way:

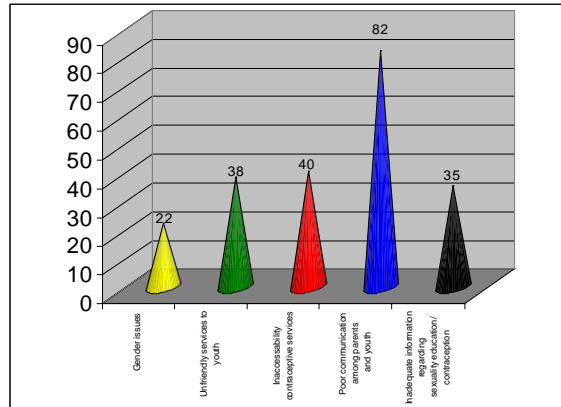
*"I was treated like a "doormat" by everybody at home...neglected, had nothing for my baby and cried all the time with my baby. I left school because my mother is a domestic worker and cannot afford to buy food for me and my baby...now life is tough...the grant is not enough because the cost of living is rising every day. I must look for a job and forget about school. "*

### Challenges faced by youth in utilizing contraceptives and contraceptive services effectively

Five major themes emerged:

- Inadequate information about sexuality education and contraception
- Poor communication among parents and children
- Inaccessibility of health care services
- Unfriendly services to youth
- Gender issues

**Figure 1: Challenges of Contraceptive use among youth**



### Poor communication regarding sexuality issues among youth and their parents

Lack of communication among youth and their parents about sexuality issues including contraception was reported by youth as a major stumbling block which resulted in unplanned adolescent pregnancies. One participant stated:

*"It's not always easy to discuss sexuality issues and contraception with your parents ... my mother is more approachable than my father....but I don't just have the guts to start these topics with her because they always think that we are children who do not have sexual needs as long as you are dependent on them. When these young girls and boys appear on TV, maybe in soapies as lovers, then the comments you'd hear from my parents are actually directed at me and my sister ... such as ... these soapies are teaching our children wrong things ... and at times you'll just be told about homework to get you away from TV."*

### Inaccessibility of contraceptive care services

Although health care services, mainly clinics, are within reasonable reach in communities, they are often not used effectively by youth due to various barriers as evidenced in the following statement:

*"We have services at our neighbouring clinic, but it is not easy to get supplies of condoms at this clinic, especially if you are still young like 'me'.... I mean I am 19 years, sexually active and have a steady boyfriend. I want us to use condoms regularly to protect ourselves against HIV/AIDS and pregnancy. Every time you go to the clinic, you are told that there's no stock.... we can't afford buying condoms from the pharmacy nor afford traveling to other clinics as they are too far."*

### Gender Issues

The group that came for TOP felt betrayed by their boyfriends who were not supportive in preventing unplanned pregnancies as expressed:

*"All along we were in good terms with my boyfriend....the problem came when I told him that I was pregnant. He became very angry with me when I explained that I did not have any pills the night I fell pregnant and could not tell him to use a condom because he would not listen to me. After eight weeks of pregnancy, he insisted that I should terminate my pregnancy. When I told him that the foetus was grown*

*up already he disappeared.... that's why I decided to terminate because I will have nobody to help me with the baby."*

Sexual coercion and gender inequalities are tolerated within communities. Women are often disempowered and have little bargaining powers to negotiate the use of condoms. Young girls are even more vulnerable (Maforah, Jewkes & Wood, 1997: 80; Tabi & Frimpong 2003: 244). In addressing this concern, Karim (1995:154). urged that women need to be equipped with negotiating skills to enable them to discuss sexual and other issues with their partners.

### **Unfriendly services to youth**

Health care providers may contribute positively or negatively to patients/clients' utilization of health care services. Patients/clients regard the overall quality of care, including the manner in which they are treated as being the most important aspect of contraceptive service. Research indicates that most health care services are not attuned to the services of adolescents ( Jaganis 1999:78; Heunis, Van Rensberg & Ngwena 2000: 54; Wood et al 1998:26). One participant stated

*"I knew that I could obtain contraceptives from the clinic to prevent unplanned pregnancy as I was still at school. I was very scared to go to our neighbouring clinic because the atmosphere there is not good...I am 17 years and went to this clinic twice to ask for contraceptives. I could not get the injection I requested, instead the nurse said I know too much because I even prescribe for myself. I pleaded that I did not want my parents to know that I have a boyfriend and was using contraceptives...that is why I preferred an injection as nobody would know except the nurse....but my*

*efforts failed and I am forced to take the pill against my will..."*

Youth have also reported feeling uncomfortable expressing their feelings and health care needs in the presence of elder persons. Their most important concerns when seeking contraception from state clinics were the attitudes of nursing staff towards them. Wood et al (1998:26) reported in their study conducted in the Northern province, that adolescents were harassed by nurses who were rude, short-tempered and arrogant. In the same study, nurses acknowledged that the effects of their comments were usually to make a teenager shy and embarrassed. The duty of confidentiality to a sixteen year old is exactly the same as it is to an adult. Yet Donovan, Mellanby and Jacobson (1997:716), noted that 25-50% of teenagers are worried that a request for contraception will be disclosed to their parents. Health care providers should listen to each client's needs and establish open, interactive communication to succeed in specific interventions.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It has become apparent from this study that young girls still experience barriers/challenges in obtaining and utilizing contraceptives effectively. One of the greatest needs of the youth, was information which was lacking from homes, schools and health services. Their communication with parents regarding sexuality issues was limited or non-existent, owing to cultural barriers, respect and fear of elders.

Furthermore, young girls could not exercise their sexual rights as some could not suggest the use of condoms or refuse having sex with boyfriends. **Their early engagement in sex resulted in teenage/adolescent pregnancies and early parenthood FORCING THEM TO "DROP OUT OF SCHOOL."**

## **THREE CASE HISTORIES OF THE "GIRL CHILD" IN NORTH TSHWANE, GAUTENG PROVINCE.**

**KE NKODIMA, SEABELO ATEMLAC AND DR TMM MAJA**

### **BACKGROUND**

At the Soshanguve campus of Tshwane University of Technology, the Wellness centre is playing a significant role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The staff comprises the manager, two counsellors, a health promoter and one registered nurse. Student peer educators who volunteer are trained annually and also show commitment in promoting the mission of the centre. The centre further collaborates with the health services of the institution as well as the neighbouring clinics in Soshanguve. Staff and students consult at the centre providing counselling and voluntary testing. In addition, staff extend their services to communities offering home based visits, campaigns and referrals etc. It was during the home visits that families directly affected by HIV/AIDS were identified and family histories taken for analysis and intervention.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Identify families directly affected by HIV/AIDS  
Describe socio-economic factors of such families  
Describe the impact of HIV/AIDS on families with particular reference to the girl child  
Determine health care needs of these families

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Design, Population And Sampling**

Case studies were the method of choice for the project.

- The population of families directly affected by HIV/AIDS were identified in the area
- Purposive sampling was used to study families

- Selection criteria were:

Families having parent(s) very ill with HIV/AIDS or related illnesses.  
 Families having children taking care of the sick  
 Child-headed families as a result of deaths of parents from HIV/AIDS.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

Preparation for data collection commenced in 2006

Specific families were visited by the counsellor and health promoter to establish rapport

Ethical principles were adhered to by obtaining permission and consent from family members

Qualitative data was obtained by using observation, in-depth discussions with family members such as aunts, grandparents or other available next of kin.

Data was noted during discussions.

Records were kept for analysis.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The Researcher assisted in transcribing raw data and analyzing content.

## **REPORTS OF CASES:**

### **CASE STUDY 1**

A mother of three was diagnosed HIV-positive during her third pregnancy. Her health deteriorated when she was six months pregnant and continued until the baby was born when the mother died. The eldest daughter aged 12 years was taking care of her two brothers (9, 7 years) and the little baby aged 2 months at the last visit of the study in February 2007.

The little baby was placed in a place of safety run by the Suid Afrikaanse Vrouens Federasie (SAVF) in Arcadia and the girl child is taking care of her two brothers. A non-governmental organization in the area which is a support group for the infected and affected baby is giving support in the form of counselling. The girl child had to drop out of school in order to be there for her family.

### **CASE 2**

At an informal settlement in Tshwane, a woman had visited the neighbouring health care centre for voluntary counselling and testing. She tested positive and denied the validity of the results. She was angry at the nurse stating that the results were not hers as she was only having sexual relations with her husband who was "faithful to me" she said. The nurse offered counselling but the woman left the clinic shouting and pointing fingers at the clinic staff stating that they were incompetent and just scaring people. She arrived home and when her husband

came back from work she related the story to him. Her husband became angry and went to the clinic the next day. The nurses were calm and explained every detail to him. The nurse then counselled him and tested him after a lengthy argument. He also tested positive and refused post-counselling. At home he accused his wife of cheating on him when he went to work. Although he had extramarital affairs, he blamed his wife for having brought shame to the family. He chased his wife from home and remained behind with his two daughters. He lost weight drastically, refused medical and home-based care by the local care-givers. One of his daughters followed her mother who stayed with her parents and the younger girl child who was in Grade 9 left school after having been absent from school for more than two months taking care of her ailing father.

### **CASE 3**

After divorcing his first wife, a 66 year old man married a younger wife. They had five children altogether from their previous marriages; the wife had two daughters aged 8 and 11 years and the husband had three sons, who had their own families and lived with their families.

The husband abused the two girls sexually for almost a year without the wife noticing. The girls could not report this to their mother as he threatened to kill them if they said anything to anybody including their mother. When the younger girl became ill and after debating with her husband who was against her idea of taking the girl child to the clinic, she finally took her for a medical check up.

On examination the doctor found that the child had a vaginal fistula and ordered the nurse to take an in-depth history from the girl child and her mother. The girl child revealed that their father was sexually abusing both of them and had threatened to kill them if they told anybody. The two girls were then admitted to hospital for treatment where they stayed for a period of two months, leaving them with no schooling for that period. This investigation also led to the second divorce. On follow-up, it was reported that the man was a psychopath who tortured young girls within and around his families.

**The questions arising from these scenarios are:**

**What's happening to our girls?**

**How can we play a meaningful role in affected families?**

**What about the futures of our girls?**

**THIS IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS. AFTER ANALYSIS OF ALL DATA COLLECTED, FINDINGS WILL BE DISCUSSED AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS.**

## THE PURSUIT OF EDUCATION:

# IS EDUCATION A PRIORITY FOR MUSLIM WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA?

## A Case Study of Indian Muslim girls at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

**Shaista Rasool**

Student : University of Natal



*This paper offers a framework for analyzing why South African Muslim girls have not prioritized education. There appears to be a greater importance for Muslims girls to be married than to be educated. The background of this paper presents itself in how this particular belief system is rooted in patriarchal traditions that masquerade as Islamic beliefs. The existence of these patriarchal traditions relies on women remaining ignorant in general, and therefore education is indirectly discouraged. Muslims girls are conditioned to believe that marriage, and the care of the home and the children, is their religious obligation. This is against true Islamic beliefs and the teachings of Muhammad which elevate receiving an education. Yet, it is a convenient tool to use for men who want to subjugate women. The majority of the Islamic literature available to Muslim women and that taught to young girls at Islamic classes does nothing to change this belief system. This is because, even though education is emphasized in the literature, it is specifically Islamic and Quranic education that is encouraged. This is done in a way that suggests that a woman who is knowledgeable of Islamic and Quranic teachings will be able to raise her children well; the available Islamic literature is therefore used to assert that a woman's role is to remain at home and tend to the children. The woman who then pursues an education and actively seeks subsequent financial independence is a threat to this patriarchal manipulation of Islamic teachings.*

### INTRODUCTION

The paper focuses on the subjugation of Muslim girls of Indian descent in the name of the Islamic religion. It is a tradition of patriarchy, rather than the teachings of the Quran and Muhammad, that is responsible for such subjugation. This paper aims to investigate the extent to which such patriarchal conditioning has affected the pursuit of education among young Indian Muslim women.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The religion of Islam has afforded equal rights to both men and women. This includes the right to education. In the context of a democratic South Africa, Indian Muslim women are then placed in a highly advantageous position; they have both constitutional and religious rights to pursue education. However, despite the multitude of rights afforded to Indian Muslim girls in South Africa, there are two phenomena that are occurring within the Muslim community at present. Firstly, there is the situation whereby Indian Muslim girls leave university before completing their education. Secondly, there are Indian Muslim girls who do complete their education but choose to marry instead of utilizing their education. Either way, many of these girls have to rely on their husbands for financial support. The problem arises when these women are unhappy in their marriages for any reason.

Fatima Seedat (Domingo, W. A., (2005), Marriage and divorce: opportunities and challenges facing South African Muslim women with the recognition of Muslim Personal Law, in *Agenda Special Focus 2005: Gender, Culture and Rights*, 68-77) (2005: 71) states that “[w]omen who spend their lives cooking, cleaning and looking after the children, are often left destitute at the end of the marriage. Those who find themselves financially dependent on their husbands, are unable to secure their own economic development, and are less likely to leave an unhappy or abusive marital relationship.”

Evidence of patriarchy is apparent here as it places the male in the dominant role. In fact, Islam in South Africa has been propagated by organizations such as the Jamiatul Ulama and the Muslim Judicial Council, who use these platforms to promote the superiority of men. Mufti Muhammad Aashiq Elahi Buland Shahri, one of the prescribed authors on the Jamiatul Ulama's recommended reading list believes that pursuing education is the reason why people are delaying marriage. In his opinion, women especially do not need to be educated. He makes the following claim:

*“...marry off children when they attain puberty. These days this advice is ignored to allow children to continue with their education. Even girls do not marry although they reach the age of thirty years and more. First, it is because they may pursue their education*

and then it is because they do not find a match (equally educated)...Women do not need to obtain education to the level of B.A., M.A., Ph. D., or Doctors of medicine. In Islam the husband is responsible for the household expenses. It is not necessary for a girl to go to college. She must study the Qura'n, religious teachings, and what is necessary of accounts in the seclusion of her home" (471-2).

An individual with no knowledge of Islamic teachings would assume from the above paragraph that Islam is a misogynistic and patriarchal religion. This is incorrect. Islam has afforded men and women equal rights. It is the implementation of Islamic practices by individuals intent on male domination that leads to the subjugation of Indian Muslim women in South Africa.

### INDIAN MUSLIM GIRLS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Against the above backdrop, it was proposed that a study be done to assess the extent to which patriarchal traditions affect the pursuit of education among Indian Muslims girls. Due to accessibility, 16 thirty-minute interviews were conducted with Indian Muslim girls from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Howard College and Westville campuses. The girls were selected on the basis of their wearing the Islamic headscarf. This allowed for the easy recognition of an Indian Muslim girl. However, whether the girl was in fact Muslim was verified. No further criteria was utilized for selecting participants. The conducting of the interviews was subject to the participants' permission. All participants approached agreed to be interviewed on condition of anonymity.

Of the girls interviewed, five of the 16 indicated that they did not see the point of finishing their education if they were ready to be married. A further six participants stated that their plans were to get married once they had completed their education. When asked if they would utilize their education to pursue careers, five of the participants answered in the negative.

In addition to the interviews, two hundred surveys were emailed to Indian Muslim girls via the university's internal email system. Only 19 surveys were completed and returned. All the interview and survey participants had indicated that being a Muslim female restricted them in terms of movement, dressing and education. In fact, three of the five participants who had stated that they would not want to complete their education if they were ready for marriage, were unhappy with the choice of their degrees.

### PATRIARCHAL CONDITIONING AMONG INDIAN MUSLIM GIRLS

There was much evidence of a deeply rooted patriarchal belief system during the interviews and surveys. Many of the girls interviewed were not even fully aware that they had rights under Islamic

law. Nazeera (Ally, N., 2007, *Student*, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Interviewed on 15 February 2007 (name of participant has been changed) stated that she would have liked to work as a pharmacist after she completed her education. However, her parents had said that she had known her boyfriend for too long and that she had to get married (Ally, 2006). Nazeera's case typifies the argument of this paper. It shows how coercing young girls to be married disempowers them as women, and fuels the existing patriarchal system.

What is disappointing is that this behaviour is not advocated by Islam. "*Allah spoke of the two sexes in terms of total equality as believers, that is, as members of the community. God identifies those who are part of his kingdom, those who have a right to his "vast reward."* And it is not sex that determines who earns his grace; it is faith and the desire to serve and obey him" (Buland Shahri, M. A. E, (year unknown), *A Gift for Women*, Kutub Khana Ishayat-Ul-Islam, India as quoted by F Mernissi, 1991: 118-9).

Unfortunately, the 16 Indian Muslim girls who participated in the study appeared to believe that their behaviour was meant to be different from Indian Muslim boys of their age. Even though admitting feeling restricted by being Muslim females, they still believed that they had no escape from such feelings.

### ISLAMIC LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR SUBJUGATION

Unlike Buland Shahri, not all Islamic authors outrightly state that young females should obtain an education. One such author is M S Chaudry. In his book, *Women's Rights in Islam (1991)*, he dedicates an entire chapter to "women and education". He appears to support the need for women to be educated. However, what he is specifically supporting is a woman's right to acquire knowledge, not education. The following is an excerpt of his book:

*"The history of Islam tells us that the wives of the Prophet [Muhammad] did acquire sound learning of the Qura'n and the Traditions in the company of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and they played indeed an admirable role in popularising the teachings of the Qur'an and the [traditional sayings] of he Prophet of Islam.*

*Indirectly this injunction of the Holy Qur'an may also be taken to applicable to the Muslim women in general. The role of the mothers in training and educating the future generations is well known and thus the Qur'an impresses upon them to [receive] education and thus educate in turn the future of the [Muslim population]" (121-2).*

While knowledge of the Qur'an and the teachings of Muhammad is a noble activity to any Muslim, there is a distinct difference between acquiring knowledge and acquiring an education. Also, one must consider the context in which the wives of Muhammad pursued such knowledge. Education was not institutionalized as it is now. Much of the activity of Mecca, Muhammad's place of birth, was centred on trading and the majority of its inhabitants were merchants and business people. (Mernissi, 1991: 27). Therefore one cannot merely select a situation that occurred at any point in time and take it to mean that similar

behaviour should be followed till eternity. Such instances are often too subjective and contextualized to actually make sense in any other position but the original one, a fact which can be exploited when trying to elevate one group of people over another.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Mernissi further claims the following: *“When I finished writing this book I had come to understand one thing: if women's rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because the Koran nor the Prophet [Muhammad], nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite. The elite faction is trying to convince us that their egotistic, highly subjective, and*

*mediocre view of culture and society has a sacred basis”*

As a result, it is imperative that Muslim women realize that such patriarchal beliefs do exist and learn to recognize them. Within the Indian Muslim community, it is the girls who have the ability to change this mindset. Education provides them with opportunities to be autonomous individuals. This is not taking them away from their Islamic obligations.

**Rather, pursuing an education allows Indian Muslim girls to network with other subjugated women, of all races, and be forces for positive change.**

## Gender Equality in Education in Rwanda: What is happening to our Girls?

Allison Huggins and Shirley K Randell



#### INTRODUCTION

Rwanda has made a firm commitment to gender empowerment which is most clearly laid out in its 2003 Constitution, Organic Education Law, Higher Education Law and the Vision 2020 development plan, adopted in 2000. Education for all, achieving gender parity in higher education, and practising a policy of affirmative action to promote women's educational and social advancement are designated as policy priorities. Substantial progress toward gender empowerment has been made, most notably with the achievement of 48.8 percent female representation in Parliament and similar high levels of female representation at all levels of governance, which is supported by strong institutional measures, including policy and budgetary commitments. These achievements are particularly significant given Rwanda's tragic past, as its infrastructure for social service delivery was virtually destroyed during the 1994 genocide.

Yet a good policy framework is not in itself sufficient to achieve gender parity in education, and girls continue to trail behind boys in educational attainment, a fact which becomes increasingly exaggerated at the secondary and tertiary levels. A number of socially constructed barriers and entrenched social practices continue to prevent girls from accessing education and from performing equally in their national examinations.

The country's vision for its economic future lies in shifting from a heavy dependence on agricultural production to a service-based economy. This entails developing the science and technology industries, specifically information and communication technologies (ICT). The country's educational objectives, laid out in the 2003 Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), aim to

promote growth within this sector and to meet the country's demand for a skilled ICT labour force.

A strategy, to be approved in 2007, is building on the successes and shortcomings of previous policies. Gender concerns will be mainstreamed at each level of education policy, not just tacked on at the end of the policy-making process and the Government has developed a fully-costed budget to ensure that these educational goals are met.

Education spending has increased over the last five years; priorities have shifted to reduce the overall percentage of expenditure on higher education, and to increase the proportion spent at the primary level. Gender was given strong attention throughout the budgeting process. However, according to the 2006 EDPRS Education Sector Self-Evaluation, the execution of gender issues within the budget remains poor. In 2005, only 36 percent of the budget earmarked for girls' educational equality was spent because decentralization efforts prevented the completion of facilities in needy schools.

The most recent education policy, which covers the period from 2006-2010, is based on six fundamental principles, which include **results-based management**, particularly with respect to the performance of girls in schools and to women's access to education; and a **special emphasis on gender issues**. Policy measures to promote girls' education largely focus on gender sensitization campaigns and providing female role models within schools. Specific activities are also planned to increase the participation of girls in science and technology courses, including opening girls-only schools specializing in science and technology fields. Specific outcome-related objectives are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Proposed ESSP Indicators for Promoting Girls Involvement in Science and Technology Fields, Rwanda, 2004, 2008 and 2010**

ESSP indicator	2004 baseline level	2008	2010
% girls enrolled in maths courses at secondary level	22	26	33
% girls enrolled in chemistry courses at secondary level	35	40	45
% girls enrolled in first year science and technology courses at tertiary level	20	25	30

It could be argued that these projections are far too low. Political will for positive discrimination in political representation is clear in Rwanda's Constitution, but this same political will does not seem to extend to affirmative action in education. Evaluations have stressed that there needs to be a stronger relationship between budget inputs, outputs, and educational results.

### A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS: HOW ARE RWANDA'S GIRLS PERFORMING?

#### Primary and Secondary Education

With an enabling policy environment in place, Rwanda has moved from a position near the bottom to become one of the regional leaders in achieving universal primary education and demonstrating continued improvement in secondary enrolment rates (see Table 2).

Primary net enrolment rates have been steadily rising in the past decade. With the elimination of primary school fees in 2003, enrolment rates for 2005 exceeded the policy goals which sought to reach 90 percent enrolment for both girls and boys by 2008.

**Table 2: Primary Attendance and Secondary Enrolment, Eastern Africa, 2000-2005**

Country	Primary School Net Attendance Ratio (2000-2005)		Secondary School Gross Enrolment Rates (2000-2005)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kenya	79	79	50	46
Tanzania	71	75	6	5
Uganda	87	87	18	14
Rwanda	75	75	15	14

Despite significant progress in increasing primary enrolment, completion rates continue to be low.

Although specific gender-disaggregated data on completion rates are not available, it is well recognized that completion rates for girls are lower than those for boys at all educational levels.

Some interesting pilot programs to address the drop-out problem should be monitored for possible replication. For example, a program to ameliorate child labour, sponsored by World Vision Rwanda in collaboration with the Ministries of Education (MINEDUC), Gender and Family Promotion, and Public Service and Labour, assists many girl drop-outs. This catch-up programme is linked to a special curriculum that facilitates those girls and boys to finish their primary school in three years instead of six years giving them the competencies to go on to secondary school and beyond.

Educating girls beyond primary school empowers them in a way that primary education alone cannot; it strengthens economies, decreases HIV/AIDS rates and builds healthier societies. Yet at secondary school level, gender disparities widen. In sub-Saharan Africa, 17 percent of girls are enrolled in secondary school, but in Rwanda the net secondary enrolment figure is only 10 percent, and there are significant differences between rural and urban areas.

Secondary school admission in Rwanda is largely based on a student's performance in the primary school leaving exam. Boys consistently outperform girls in examinations at all levels. As a result, boys comprise a higher percentage of students in government secondary schools which tend to be of higher quality and less expensive than private schools.

An added barrier to gender equality at the secondary school level is the prevalence of seminary schools, which only admit boys. These schools, though private, attract the highest quality teachers and consistently rank near the top in terms of performance. Thus, the total number of secondary positions available is higher for boys than for girls. The quality of other private secondary schools, where most girls are enrolled, is generally very low.

A number of social factors, including traditional gender roles such as domestic chores and family care, entrench girls' underperformance throughout their schooling. This has a cyclical effect, as low performance in the primary leaving exam results in girls being admitted to lower quality secondary schools, and ultimately into higher education institutions (HIEs) in lower numbers.

In order to encourage girls to perform better, the First Lady and many women parliamentarians, through the Protection and Care of Families against HIV/Aids (PACFA) project give awards and prizes to the girls who receive the top marks in examinations and this is accompanied by considerable publicity.

#### Tertiary Education

A recent Women's Competence Profile Report by MIGEPROF gave some alarming figures about tertiary education outcomes in Rwanda. The National University of Rwanda had enrolled 3,002 women over the last 40 years, ULK: 3,969 in 10 years. There were

only 13,119 women with bachelors degree and at least 30 percent of women failed to finish their degrees. Although total enrolment rates have been steadily increasing over the past five years, women continue to be under-represented in HEIs.

The Rwanda 2003/04 pass rate for the 'A' level was 74.5 percent of all those who sat for the examination: 48.31 percent of those passing were girls and 51.69 percent boys, so the gap was only 4 percent. Only 19.1 percent of those who passed were admitted into government HEIs. While 15.16 percent of boys who passed were admitted into government HEIs, only 8.18 percent of all girls who passed were admitted. What are the factors that do not allow for gender parity?

Another aspect of HEIs is that they are overwhelmingly staffed by men, which works to further exclude female students. There is no male Rector and only two female Vice Rectors - one at the Kigali Health Institute and one at KIE. Most academic staff are men. At KIE there are only 22 female academic staff out of 143. The majority of women are tutorial assistants and the most senior are three lecturers. The system for sending academic staff abroad to take postgraduate qualifications also discriminates against women who feel less free than the male staff to leave their families for up to four years to study for a PhD. There is at present little in-country provision for postgraduate studies.

## **Prioritization of Science and Technology Subjects**

It is essential that the country's education system be tailored to produce an adequate number of graduates with relevant qualifications to meet the demand of the labour market as defined by the country's development objectives. Yet, in the interest of gender empowerment, both the HEIs and the school system need to be reformed - young women are not qualified in the subjects that the Government has decided the country needs, and HEIs are not providing remedial courses that would assist women to catch up to the standards needed for entry to formal programs.

Poor performance in mathematics and science at the secondary level is not confined to girls and probably relates to the low number of qualified mathematics and science teachers and the poor facilities in schools. The very low salaries of school teachers makes it difficult for schools to recruit and retain teachers of all subjects at all levels, particularly mathematics and science teachers.

Nevertheless, statistics show that boys systematically outnumber girls in science and technology courses at the secondary level, and thus gain privileged access to positions at government schools specializing in teaching these disciplines.

Many girls have been socialized to see social sciences or arts as more appropriate subjects for them to study, and science and technology as subjects reserved for boys.

A lack of female teacher role models within these disciplines further discourages girls from pursuing science and technology courses. Within science and mathematics faculties at secondary schools, only 5 percent of teachers are women. Girls may experience intimidation or harassment in classrooms which are dominated by male students and teachers.

To remedy this problem, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Rwanda has established a girls-only secondary school, focused on science and mathematics education. The school has seen remarkable success in encouraging girls to excel in these subjects: in 2005, 80 students were accepted to science courses at the University level.

At the level of higher education, young women's representation in science and technology fields is even weaker. For the year 2005, only 19 percent of students studying agriculture and 16 percent of science and technology students at the National University of Rwanda were women; of students studying science and technology fields at KIST, only 20 percent were women; and at the Institut Supérieur de Agriculture et Elevage (ISAE), only 23 percent of students were women. Rwanda's policy of favouring science and technology courses in offering tertiary scholarships therefore disadvantages young women who are not equipped in this field.

To counteract this problem, KIST put in place a special women's empowerment program (EP) in 2006, which enrolled 200 young women who had applied to do science and technology courses, but had narrowly failed to get the grades necessary for admission to KIST. 93 students passed, and in 2007 they are enrolled in academic programs within KIST faculties.

Women admitted to science programmes under the empowerment programme constitute 3.6 percent of all students admitted in engineering disciplines and 23.3 percent of those admitted in science disciplines. With this single intervention, some programmes have nearly bridged the gender imbalance, increasing the proportion of women enrolled in certain subjects from under 30 percent to near parity. Unfortunately the programme has been halted.

It should also be noted that the departments that admitted more young women from the empowerment programme had also admitted relatively more young women directly. Since admissions are based on preferences as well as performance, is it possible that within the science and engineering disciplines gender stereotyping continues to be a problem?

## **CHALLENGES**

Challenges remain at all levels.

**Drop-out rates** remain higher for girl students than for boy students throughout the educational system, and completion rates are lower for girls.

**Girls' performance** in school consistently trails that of boys.

A number of **social and institutional barriers** remain, which impair girls' performance in school, and combine to prevent girls from completing secondary

school in equal numbers to boys or young women from reaching university in equal numbers to young men.

**Attendance rates** for girl students are generally lower, which translates into lower scores on national examinations.

**Historic marginalization** - Girls' schools were introduced a full 40 years after boys'. Initially, girls' education focused on developing skills which reinforced their socialized roles, such as secretarial skills, home economics and general hygiene, while boys were prepared to become co-partners in administration activities and other development fields. Young men also enjoyed favoured access to education at higher levels and in different fields, including administration, science and technology.

**Socialized roles and stereotypes** continue to prioritize boys' education and access to employment.

**Poverty** : Although the elimination of school fees at the primary level is thought to be the primary factor in raising overall enrolment rates and in reaching gender parity at the primary level, according to a 2005 Citizen Report Card survey, 42 percent of households report that the costs associated with primary education, such as books, uniforms, and school lunches were too high. These costs, combined with the lost opportunity cost of having children participate in household labour, have resulted in 35 percent of Rwandan families saying that they withdraw their children before they complete primary schooling

Many adolescent young women must stay home from school during their monthly periods as the family cannot afford sanitary napkins, causing higher rates of absenteeism. Particular disadvantaged groups, such as orphan-headed households or street children, generally are prevented from accessing education at any level.

**High school fees** prevent children from poor families from accessing secondary school. Sons are often chosen over daughters, both out of patriarchal social traditions, and because boys are likely to find more employment opportunities and higher average wages in the future.

**Traditional Gender Roles** : Particularly in rural areas, girls continue to be responsible for household tasks, such as fetching water and gathering firewood. They also care for younger siblings or aged and sick relatives, particularly those suffering from HIV/Aids. These responsibilities may prevent girls from attending school, or may limit the time which they can devote to their studies.

**Gender-biased Curriculum and Teaching Methods:** The curriculum, classroom buildings, assessment methods, etc. are all consistently tailored to male students. Moreover, there is a lack of female teachers or role models for girls.

**Lack of Facilities** : Many schools do not have adequate sanitary and dormitory facilities, and many do not have separate facilities for boys and girls.

### **Discrimination in Public Institutions:**

Entrance to public institutions, which provide higher quality and lower cost education, is determined on the basis of performance in primary school leaving examinations. Using examination scores as the criteria discriminates against girls. At the university level, this bias is even more exaggerated. Across the board, boys are granted entrance to public universities in higher numbers, and are the recipients of highly coveted government scholarships.

### **Gender-Based Violence in Schools**

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a widespread problem in Rwanda and the region. Girls who experience abuse within their homes, at their schools or in their communities suffer from trauma, causing them to perform significantly worse in their studies or be afraid to attend school and to abandon their studies.

### **Conclusion**

The Ministry of Education, with the support of UNESCO, has initiated a Child Friendly School Policy which aims to make schools places where children will want to stay and especially making schools friendly places for girls. Priorities include renovating buildings and improving sanitation facilities, combating sexual harassment, and engendering the curriculum.

However, there is a need for more gender-disaggregated data collection at all levels. There is also a need to ensure that gender mainstreaming efforts reach the decentralized level, and are incorporated into educational policies at the district and local levels, and within both urban and rural schools. School administrators and teachers must embrace principles of gender equality, and promote girls' educational attainment within their classrooms.

**The Code of Practice for Higher Education** will be launched by the Minister of Education (MoE) in April 2007. **A Code of Practice for School Teachers**, including sexual conduct, is currently being drafted. Other relevant projects are fighting against GBV in school and out of school.

The number of female teachers should be increased, which would raise consequent expectations for girls' independence and success. Additionally, there is a need to develop student-centred teaching, a gender equitable learning environment and teaching practices, and to ensure that classes are relevant to girls.

### **Biographical Note**

**Allison Huggins** is a consultant currently working on gender and human rights issues in Rwanda.

**Dr Shirley Kaye Randell AM, FACE, FAIM, FAICD** is Senior Adviser, SNV Rwanda in the East and Southern African region. Following a distinguished career in education and in Australia, she has provided advisory services in education, gender mainstreaming and public sector reform for governments in the Pacific, Asia and Africa since 1997. Dr Randell is Secretary General of the Rwanda Association of University Women and Convener of the IFUW Projects Development Committee.

# At Conference & National AGM



Margaret Lindsay Memorial Lecture : 2006  
Cape Town Branch

## Improving Student Learning in Science

Bette Davidowitz  
University of Cape Town

Bette Davidowitz, an Associate Professor in the UCT Department of Chemistry since January 2007, has a PhD in organic chemistry and is the convener of the GEPS programme which forms part of Academic Development in the Centre for Higher Education Development at UCT. She is also the convener of the GEPS chemistry course and is responsible for most of the teaching activities. Her research interests focus on improving learning in chemistry and adjustment of first years to higher education.

South Africa needs skilled scientists and engineers. Yet, despite opportunities for training in higher education, there are not sufficient school leavers with a background in mathematics and physical sciences to fill the available places. The **General Entry Programme for Sciences (GEPS)** is an alternative, one-year access route for students to register for the B.Sc degree at the University of Cape Town. It is designed in particular for students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

GEPS provides an entry route into all the programmes offered by the Science Faculty, with a curriculum that takes into account poor preparation at school, particularly in mathematics and science, as well as the fact that the majority of the target group of students do not speak English as their first language. The aim, over the year, is to identify, select and prepare students with the potential to succeed in one of the programmes offered by the Science Faculty. The primary target groups for GEPS are Black (African) students from across South Africa, and Coloured students from the Western Cape. However, GEPS courses are also available to students who have started on the mainstream degree route but encounter serious difficulties during their first year. Similar programmes are available in the Engineering and Commerce faculties.

During their first year, GEPS students register for intensive half-courses in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. Their fourth subject is a choice of Computer Science, Biology or Earth Science. The GEPS courses offer students the opportunity to establish a sound educational foundation before proceeding in their second year to one of the Science programmes. The minimum time for a GEPS student to complete the BSc degree is four years.

GEPS courses have the same contact time as full-year mainstream courses. Their aim is twofold, namely to cover about half of the content of the first year curriculum while at the same time building a deep understanding of the concepts through the inclusion of foundational material. Thus, lecturers

are forward-looking with respect to aspects of the particular discipline which are the key to both understanding the nature of the discipline and engaging with the discipline at higher levels. **Students are encouraged to understand concepts rather than depending on rote learning, a strategy that is prevalent at secondary level.** Teaching activities include formal lectures, tutorials and practical sessions.

Given that adjustment issues can have a major impact on student performance, the **Skills for Success in Science module, S3**, was introduced for GEPS students in 2005. This is an example of what is broadly termed a 'life skills development' programme.

**The programme rests on the premise that the capacity for life skills - adjustment, coping, managing stress and personal development - constitute affective, and thus 'underlying factors' which can significantly impact on the academic functioning of students at tertiary educational institutions.**

In particular, the affective factors the programme aims to develop are: improved adjustment to the tertiary environment, improved ability to cope and manage stress and academic workload, and social and personal development. Positive feedback has been received from students, who felt that the programme had facilitated their adjustment to UCT and helped them to cope with the daily stress of being a first-year student. In addition they had learned useful skills such as time and stress management.

Programmes such as GEPS are costly due to the high level of support provided for students yet are essential to redress the lack of preparedness of students who would otherwise not be able to graduate from UCT.

The table below shows data based on the graduation at the end of 2005.

BSc programme	Total number of graduates in 2005	Number of graduates from GEPS
Computer science	94	22 (23%)

Earth & life science	81	2 (2%)
Chemical & molecular science	115	15 (13%)
Maths & Physics	48	2 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>41 (12%)</b>
2004 numbers	306	32 (10%)

**About one-third of the GEPS graduates have proceeded to postgraduate studies at UCT.**

Focus group discussions held with GEPS students during their second academic year have revealed that they develop a strong identity with the programme. Students said that they were satisfied with being placed in the GEPS programme instead of the mainstream programme as they felt that they

would not have succeeded in the latter because they lacked the necessary academic foundation and were not prepared for the demanding workload of the mainstream. The first year of GEPS gave them the opportunity to adjust to university before going on to their second year. Factors contributing to their academic success included the support, assistance and encouragement they had received from their lecturers, tutors, course convener and peers, which had provided them with the necessary academic foundation without which they may not have passed the first year.

**Until the playing fields in secondary education have been levelled, GEPS will provide entry into higher education for those students who do not meet the academic requirements for acceptance into the mainstream programmes in science.**



## Mdumbi Education Centre in association with Transcape

**My name is Kathryn Nurse** and I am a graduate of the University of Cape Town. I completed my Post Graduate Certificate in Education in 2005. I am writing, although very belatedly, to thank SAAWG for awarding me the **Marie Grant Memorial Book Award in 2005**. I went to Exclusive Books almost immediately and bought myself a few good fiction books. I feel privileged to receive an award in the honour of such an amazing and dedicated woman. I hope that as I go into the profession of teaching I remember her philosophy and commitment.

Transcape is the NPO for which I am now working. We are a Non Profit Organization working in the rural Eastern Cape in the area formerly known as the Transkei. The NPO is involved with the various communities in the area as they work together on a number of projects, including HIV/ AIDS Education, water projects and numerous medical services.

One project that, until now has been running unofficially is an Education Project. Informal English and Computer Classes have been running out of Mdumbi Backpackers (the Backpackers associated with Transcape). We are currently in the process of building a permanent classroom rondawel (mud hut) structure in order to have an organized space from which to teach and learn.

The classroom space will be equipped with 20 computers, writing desks and a small library. Our long term goal is to become an accredited institution that has the capability, through the Dept of Labour, to provide Learnership Programmes for the men and women of the local impoverished community. This will enable learners to obtain a job with their developed skill.

Our short term goals and current practice include providing assistance and tuition to current and past Matric learners (those currently writing and those who were not able to obtain their certificate). Many of these learners are ill-equipped to write the English Additional Language Paper. With individual and small group attention we hope to help current learners with obtaining their Certificate. We also are planning to reach past learners who didn't pass the English exam and were therefore unable to pass Matric.

We will also be providing a place for other school children to do their homework and receive special attention and help with difficult subjects such as

Mathematics and English. They will also have allocated and supervised time in which they can experience computers and learn necessary computer skills. The afternoons will be the time for school children to enjoy storytime when myself or other volunteers will read books to them as well as quiet reading. With the classroom books we will develop a library system for children to take books home to share with their families in the village.

I thought I would just share this brief introduction with your organization so that you are at least aware of our activities and plans. At the moment I am giving lessons to a number of community members and organizing funding for the various needs of the project. If you would like to know more about what we are doing and receive our official proposal then please email me. If you know of any other organization that might be interested in hearing what we are doing in the Transkei then please let me know.

Best of luck with all the work you continue to do at  
SAAWG



**Katherine Nurse**  
**Winner of Marie Grant**  
**Book Award 2005**

### QUALIFICATIONS:

BA Cultural and  
Literary Studies  
Post Graduate Certificate in Education

### AWARDS:

Deans Merit List 2001  
Entrance Merit Scholarship 1999, 2000, 2001  
De Hoop Award 1999, 2000, 2001  
Head of Education Department Book Award for  
Academic Excellence

"mailto:kathrynnurse@webmail.co.za"

## Acceptance of Honorary Membership Rhoda Kadalie

Date: Sat, 21 Apr 2007

Sent: Thursday, March 08, 2007 10:58 PM

Dear Hazel

Thanks for your letter and kind gesture. It is an honour to accept honorary membership and I hope that I live up to the values that SAAWG espouses. Please keep me posted re any future events. For all you know I might be able to attend.

Best regards  
Rhoda Kadalie

**PS. Attached is my column that appeared in Business Day today.**

**Some points raised by Rhoda Kadalie**, human rights activist based in Cape Town – taken from an article published in Business Day -

### **Tax collection in itself really nothing to crow about**

I HATE 2010. Its motto seems to be: if soccer be the food of development, kick on! In many ways this attitude symbolises what the national treasury stands for: "If government wants to, it can."

When key departments such as home affairs, safety and security, justice and some other ministries are allowed to fall apart, when our national treasury and revenue services are equipped with state-of-the-art human and capital resources, we need to ask why those same rigorous standards are not applied to other ministries. Is it because they are essentially service departments, where the needs of the citizen are central, as opposed to the treasury, where the generation of revenue is the main priority? In the same vein, if the treasury can so easily provide money for 2010, why not also set up effective institutional mechanisms that will ensure the efficient delivery of services to the poor?

What we need is political will. If government wants to, it can, but its most important priority seems to be extracting revenue from its ultra-exploitable citizenry, which gets very little back.

No sooner had Manuel announced his 2007 budget, which made everybody gaga - shouting, "Trevvie for Prezzie" - than it was revealed that the Groote Schuur and Tygerberg hospitals' budgets would be cut by R30m. When sterilisation processes at Tygerberg can no longer be trusted and when Groote Schuur is set to lose 33 doctors, 116 nurses, 38 social workers, physiotherapists, pharmacists and 100 beds, then we taxpayers should take government to task and begin to ask the difficult questions...

The finance minister has a duty to account to citizens for the gross underspending in departments, the constant wastage, the endemic corruption and

the failure to deliver, instead of being lauded and nauseated for the surplus it has generated.

We ... should be raising our voices against empowerment, which is nothing but wealth by stealth; the intricate and crooked networks between government officials and business; and the vast sums of money taken from the Land Bank and Industrial Development Corporation to enrich a few.

Clearly the provision of basic services is of least importance to a cabinet that claims the right to stuff itself on our largesse, if the proposed salary increases of MPs, (and) the president and the R90m security wall for our beleaguered president are anything to go by.

The rationale that salaries be increased to attract quality makes no sense when quality is emigrating from our shores at a rapid rate - and not because salaries are poor but because the skilled and talented are not wanted.

The ubiquitous "lack of capacity" is the fruit of the seeds of affirmative action, when redress should be happening elsewhere ... it is responsible for the mess in the public service.

It is a constitutional violation when surplus revenue is generated and the public enjoys no or few benefits from it. The roads are in disrepair, public toilets are either absent or in a mess, crime is out of control, public parks are few and far between and the shacks along the N2 are still there.

Our so-called upbeat economy is not doing that well, as brought to our attention by a recent Sunday Times report that foreign direct investment in SA is under threat because of concerns about SA's ability to maintain electricity supplies and the national transport infrastructure.

**POSTGRADUATE AWARDS  
(MASTERS AND HIGHER)**

**MARY AGAR POCOCK AWARD** (set up in her memory by Grahamstown Branch) – for postgraduate study in Botany and related studies by a female. Annual.

Application deadline: 31 October

**BERTHA STONEMAN AWARD** (in memory of Bertha Stoneman) – for Botany and related studies e.g. environmental studies by a female. Annual but with option for renewal.

Application deadline: 31 October

**ISIE SMUTS AWARD** – for postgraduate study in any field by a female. Annual but with option for renewal. Application deadline: 31 October

**SAAWG FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL AWARD** – awarded to a foreign female student who is enrolled with a South African University for at least one year of postgraduate research.

(R2 500). Paid triennially.

Application deadline: 31 August

**Contact: SAAWG Fellowship Secretariat:  
National Office Suite 329, P Bag x18,  
RONDEBOSCH 7701  
E-mail: hbowen@mail.ngo.za**

**UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS - administered by  
SAAWG  
but applicants chosen by relevant tertiary  
institutions**

**STUDENT AID GRANTS** – awarded to women who have successfully completed at least the first year of a degree course.

Annual but with option for renewal

**EDNA MACHANICK AWARD** (in memory of Edna Machanick) – awarded to women who have successfully completed at least the first year of any course leading to a diploma at a university, technikon or FET college.

Different geographical area each year.

**BRANCH AWARDS  
(no applications required)**

**CAPE TOWN BRANCH: MARIE GRANT BOOK AWARD** offered to a top female graduate who has shown strong teaching ability and commitment. Nominated by the Education Faculties at UCT, UWC and University of Stellenbosch.

**JOHANNESBURG BRANCH: TOP WOMAN GRADUATE** of University of Johannesburg and the University of the Witwatersrand, for either a first or second degree.

South African members wishing to study overseas may apply for these awards through **SAAWG National Office**. 16 –25 Fellowships available. **2008/9 Competition Deadline: 10 September 2007.**

**FAY HENLEY BEQUEST  
LORIS P MARTIN SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

A female scholar who wishes to study for a Nursing Diploma, Diploma in Occupational Therapy or Diploma in Dressmaking and Tailoring

Annual

**AUDREY WARTON HENLEY SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

A female scholar who wishes to study for a Diploma or Degree in Fine Arts or Speech and Drama

Annual

**Contact National Office –  
Deadline: 31 October**

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

**HANSI POLLAK SCHOLARSHIP** (set up through a bequest from Hansi Pollak) – awarded for postgraduate research directed towards bettering social conditions in South Africa. The recipient is required to spend at least two years in South Africa after completing the degree, implementing the results of the research.

(R3 000 per year for two years).

**Contact: Jocelyn Bell : P O Box 6638,  
JOHANNESBURG 2000**

**JOAN WHITMORE INCENTIVE AWARD** (set up by longstanding member, Joan Whitmore) – awarded annually to the most suitable post-Honours woman candidate in the broad field of environmental management.

**Administered by the University of  
Pretoria**

