



NETWORK News

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GENDER EDUCATION AND TRAINING NETWORK

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Back to the drawing board?

A critical analysis of South Africa's National Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality by AMANDA GOUWS (right) suggests that this policy prepared by the Office on the Status of Women is an attempt to provide guidelines for gender mainstreaming and that it does not address itself to the problem of gender inequality in our society.



In analysing any policy one has to understand the purpose of the policy, how it sets out to achieve its aims and if indeed those aims are achieved by the policy. Traditional approaches of policy analysis attempt problem identification or problem definition and then work within a problem-solution model (Bacchi, 1999:20). The underlying assumption of these approaches is that it is possible to separate the problem from the solution. Carol Bacchi (1999), however, argues that it is impossible to separate the solution from the problem as the solution lies in the assumptions about the nature of the problem as constructed within language.

The discourse of a policy determines what type of solution will be found. Objects and subjects become defined in language. Discourse therefore is not just the ideas we talk about but it also implies practices with material consequences (Bacchi, 1999:2). The way a discourse con-

structs problems and issues allow policy formulation to include certain issues and to leave others out.

Bacchi (1999:1) argues that every policy proposal contains within it an explicit or implicit diagnosis of the problems, which she calls its "problem presentation". If we apply a problem presentation approach to the analysis of a policy we can determine what has been left out of the policy. This approach may start with the solution and work backwards to the problem. A policy constructed in this way may have a far more effective solution to a problem than one that starts with a problem definition.

It is my aim to apply a problem-presentation approach to *South Africa's National Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality* to determine to what extent it will achieve its stated goals. It can be argued that this policy has been formulated in a traditional way, by defining a problem and then attempting to find a solution.

The National Gender Policy, as it is commonly known, has been in the making for more than five years and has been the responsibility of the Office on the Status of Women. The document is impressive in that it is encompassing and the policy has clearly been driven by the now commonly accepted notion of "gender mainstreaming".

Yet, an uncritical acceptance of gender mainstreaming has its own problems. As Manicom (2001:8) has argued about using "gender" in a governance discourse – it becomes "... this oversubscribed, formulaic use of 'gender' that turns it into a 'gender script' and renders it amenable to ideological appropriation".

What are the problem definition and goals/objectives?

The problem is defined as follows: South Africans are emerging out of an era of institutional racism; one in

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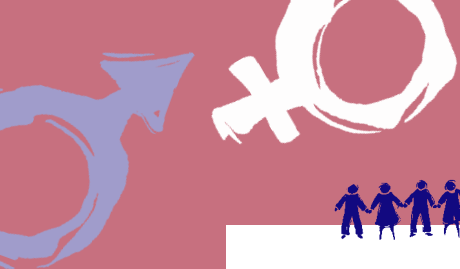
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which a person's worth has been dictated by the colour of their skin. This translates into a reality where the lighter the shade of colour, the greater the value, the darker the hue, the less the value of the individual. Alongside institutional racism has been the issue of gender discrimination. While women in general have been negatively affected by racism, African women have carried a disproportionate burden of the under-development caused by racism.

From this definition follows the following purpose and objectives:

The main purpose of this Gender Policy Framework is to establish a clear vision and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices which will serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government as well as in the workplace, the community and the family.

The main objectives are to:

- Create an enabling policy environment for translating government commitment to gender equality into reality
- Establish policies, programmes, structures and mechanisms to empower women and to transform gender relations in all aspects of work, at all levels of government as well as within the broader society
- Ensure that gender considerations are effectively integrated into all aspects of government policies, activities and programmes
- Establish an institutional

framework for the advancement of the status of women as well as the achievement of gender equality

- Advocate for the promotion of new attitudes, values and behaviour, and a culture of respect for all human beings in line with the new policy.

The scope applies to all government departments, provincial administrations, local structures, parastatals and other public entities.

Gender equality will be achieved through the principles of *equality of opportunity* and *equality of treatment*. Women's empowerment, according to the document, is a means to achieve women's equality, not an end in itself.

The situational analysis of women includes: a legal framework; women and poverty; women and education; women and health; violence against women; women and housing; women and welfare; women, land and agriculture; women and the environment; women and the economy; women, power and decision making; women and information and communication technologies; and women and human rights as well as institutional mechanisms.

Vision and mission

The vision on which this Policy Framework is based is that of a society in which women and men are able to realise their full potential and to participate as equal partners in creating a just and prosperous society for all.

The vision is that of gender equality. Other elements include:

- Recognition of differences and inequalities among women
- Women's rights are human rights

• Customary, cultural and religious practices are subject to the right to equality

- Public and private are not separable spheres of life
- Entitlement to the right of integrity and security of the person
- Affirmative action programmes for women
- Economic empowerment for women
- Mainstreaming gender equality
- Partnership between government and civil society

Chapter 4 discusses the National Machinery for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality that is supposed to implement, monitor and evaluate government policy on women's empowerment and gender equality.

Chapter 5 proposes an integrated co-ordination framework and process for gender mainstreaming. This will be a communication, service delivery and accountability framework through the Management Information System (MIS) which will be "a network of existing structures, mechanisms and processes effecting gender mainstreaming" – the engine of the national policy. The co-ordination framework and gender mainstreaming process will guide and mobilise ministries, provinces and local government toward an integrated programme delivery. The principles of gender mainstreaming must be applied through the "project life cycle" through which a gender analysis will be applied to every project of every state department.

Key players in the co-ordination framework are: the cabinet; the minister in the presidency; premiers; national ministers and MECs; director general in the presidency; directors-general in

‘ An uncritical acceptance of gender mainstreaming has its own problems. ’

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GENDER POLICY

national departments and provinces; Office on the Status of Women (all levels); gender focal points (all levels); and the national co-ordinating committee.

Analysis

When applying a “problem presentation approach” as formulated by Bacchi (1999) to this policy, it becomes clear that gender inequality is not the policy problem being addressed here (although this is stated as the problem definition in a very abstract and vague way) but that gender mainstreaming is the problem. The policy is an attempt to provide guidelines for gender mainstreaming in a way that will network and monitor every sector of the South African society for gender equality. This in itself seems to be the logical consequence of the gender mainstreaming debate, but a very ambitious task in itself.

If gender mainstreaming were posed as the policy problem, the existing problems with the National Machinery for Women would have been addressed. Yet, at this point the policy is devoid of context around the machinery. The machinery already exists (albeit in an incomplete way) and gender mainstreaming has proved to be a very difficult problem for the gender focal points (GFPs), as indicated by a substantive body of research that has been done on the GFPs. A lack of understanding of gender, a lumping together of gender with other portfolios, a lack of job descriptions and a lack of budgeting for gender work has greatly hampered the work of the GFPs, especially at provincial level.

The document lumps together all portfolio committees and “other committees”. Nowhere does it mention the important gender monitoring work that has

been done by parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on the Quality of Life and the Status of Women and the role the committee has played in advancing gender issues. Research has indicated that this body of the National Machinery has thus far been pivotal in making a difference on gender issues. It is as though the policy document was drawn up in a complete vacuum with regard to the existing machinery. This lack of context is also reflected in the chapter on resources where the issue of budgeting by the different state departments is not addressed, even though the monitoring process of the different departments over years by the Women’s Budget Project has exposed the problems of gender blind budgeting.

One of the arguments relating to gender mainstreaming has been that the government staff who implement gender monitoring work should be located at a very high level (at least at deputy-director general level – see for example the Report of the Gender Equity Task Team that was located in the Department of Education under Minister Bengu) to ensure the co-operation of ministers. This document, however, gives the responsibility for the implementation of gender mainstreaming to the ministers and to the directors general themselves.

The ministers, for example, must:

- Liaise with the minister in the presidency on gender issues in the different departments
- With the minister in the presidency oversee the translation of national goals into sector specific programmes
- With the minister in the presidency report to cabinet on sector specific programmes
- Provide political leadership in the department

To expect the ministers and directors general to take responsibility for gender in a very active way, without allocating a “gender person” to senior level in every department, is to court resistance from ministers to taking on an added task in their portfolios. By expecting everybody to take responsibility for gender, nobody will take responsibility for it.

Reading the document one gets the impression that the monitoring will be done by the National Management System (MIS) through the National Machinery, yet Chapter 6 states that a national reporting mechanism will be created in the form of an annual meeting to which various stakeholders will be invited to report on progress. This meeting will be organised by the OSW and the CGE (Commission on Gender Equality) according to performance indicators to the following effect:

- Measuring success and impact of programmes that seek to implement gender equality principles
- Measuring the effectiveness and impact of policy and assessing whether, in the long term there has been positive impact for women in particular and for the whole of society in general.

The relationship between the National Machinery and this process is not spelled out at all.

The Discourse

The Gender Policy is drafted in a human rights discourse – drawing inter alia on the Constitution, the Women’s Charter for Effective Equality, Cedaw, and the Beijing Platform of Action.

‘ By expecting everybody to take responsibility for gender, nobody will take responsibility for it. ’

‘ If gender stakeholders have been waiting for strategies to implement gender equality they will have to wait longer for it. ’



Because of the rights discourse it is vague on issues of substantive equality, e.g. in the situational analysis there are three very short paragraphs on violence against women, even though it would be fair to argue that this is the most pervasive problem SA women cope with at present. If women's equality were taken as the policy problem, the solution would have been sought elsewhere with real women and real communities in mind.

Principles based on the "right to equality" are broad, such as "equality between women and men", the recognition of "differences and inequalities among women", "women's rights are human rights" and "customary, cultural and religious practices are subject to the rights to equality". Key performance indicators are: "increased representation of women in all spheres of life in terms of their race, disability, socio-economic class, culture, religion, sexual orientation and geographic location in terms of their proportion in the population" and the "number of policies and programmes in place focusing on women, disabled women, the aged and children, specifically targeting the vulnerable".

What is completely missing from this policy document is the *how*. What are the strategies for implementing this all-encompassing policy that needs to be established at all levels of national, provincial and local government, in civil society, the private sphere and the parastatals, through the National Machinery, the ministers, the directors generals and other government functionaries. Those who have to implement this policy cannot be blamed for becoming despondent even before they have started.

Also missing is the contextualisation of this policy that should have been guided by the National Gender Audit. Yet, this audit is only mentioned once in the document.

The last chapter charts the way forward. In this chapter it is stated that specific, achievable and effective strategies for implementation still needs to be developed, as well as a gender mainstreaming strategy and a five-year gender action plan. It also states that the responsibility for facilitating the process of women's empowerment and gender equality has been placed in the presidency under the leadership of the minister in the presidency. Who will this minister be? Will gender just be added on to the portfolio of the existing minister in the presidency? What will happen to gender will surely depend on the commitment this particular minister shows to gender monitoring.

South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality is an unwieldy document and not easily accessible to people without a gender training. If gender stakeholders have been waiting for strategies to implement gender equality they will have to wait longer for strategies to be developed.

By attempting to be everything to everyone this policy sets itself up for failure.

References

1. Bacchi, Carol (1999) *Women, Policy and Politics*. London: Sage.
2. Manicom, L (2001) "Questioning the Terms of Local Translations" in *Agenda* 48.

Amanda Gouws is Professor of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch and a Board member of Getnet.

Northern Cape OSW makes bold with hearings

By CELESTE FORTUIN

Getnet was contracted by the Northern Cape Office on the Status of Women to assist it in hosting gender policy hearings in the province. The purpose of these hearings was to explain the National Gender Policy framework and the role of the OSW in the province, as well as to give government officials and members of civil society the opportunity to participate in the formulation of a provincial gender policy. The OSW's approach to policy formulation was to incorporate the needs and views of women and men living and working in the province into the policy, in this way making both the process and the policy inclusive and representative.

The Northern Cape is South Africa's largest province and is characterised by far-flung rural communities. The OSW set out to include all regions of the province in the policy-making process, a goal fraught with logistical challenges. Efforts were made to ensure that people from the remote towns also attended the hearings. By the end of February 2002 policy hearings had taken place in Kimberley, De Aar, Postmasburg and Springbok – the central towns in the different regions.

With these hearings the Northern Cape OSW introduced their approach of gaining greater visibility within communities. Up till now their operational focus has been limited to work within government departments. This was welcomed at community level, where people have limited knowledge of the

Those who have to implement this policy cannot be blamed for becoming despondent even before they have started. »



An OSW official addresses a group at one of the public hearings

OSW and its work. Through the hearings it became apparent that a key challenge facing women in this province was limited access to information regarding their human rights, as well as the legislation that protect women's rights and advance women's empowerment.

The OSW's draft gender policy is based on the National Gender Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. Although most of the participants only learnt about the policy framework at the hearings, they had definite views on what women's empowerment and gender equality means to them, and ideas on how to achieve this. Through the submissions of various commissions, the OSW could get clear guidelines on what the women and men of the province need in order to ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality is achieved within their province¹.

The Northern Cape province is made up largely of farming communities. Submissions at the hearings stressed the poor conditions of women living and working on farms, revealing various forms of human rights

abuse, poverty and gender-based violence. These inputs highlighted the fact that this province faces very specific challenges to women's empowerment that are related to life styles and living conditions.

The Northern Cape is also characterised by poor infrastructure and a lack of resources, human and otherwise. For example, there are no offices of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) or Human Rights Commission (HRC) here; NGOs that work for women's empowerment are also few, and in this context the provincial OSW appears to be the only structure that can lobby and monitor strategies for empowering women.

According to the Gender Policy Framework, provincial gender policies are needed to:

- Develop an institutional framework in the province that facilitate equal access to goods and services within the province
- To place gender equality at the centre of transformation in structures, institutions, procedures and practices
- To create an enabling environment for women to access, own, control and use basic resources

- To ensure that women and men achieve equitable benefit from service delivery

- To develop an action plan for addressing gender issues.

At the hearings it was stressed that government departments in the province need to develop an integrated approach to engendering service delivery. Such an integrated approach might prevent duplication of services and resources in a province that cannot afford this.

The draft policy places emphasis on the provincial machinery that must form part of the institutional framework creating an enabling environment for women's empowerment. In the Northern Cape this machinery currently consists of: the OSW, departmental gender units and/or Gender Focal Persons and, in the provincial legislature, the standing committee on gender and the women's caucus. The OSW has the mandate to monitor government departments' implementation of women's empowerment and gender equality. However, in the absence of institutions such as the HRC and the CGE, it remains to be seen how the OSW can effectively monitor practices in the province that might hinder women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality.

In section 1.3² of the National Gender Policy Framework, it is emphasised that the framework is not prescriptive, but rather proposes central objectives, defines key indicators for attaining these objectives, and identifies expectations of key national structures that are mandated to implement the programme. The framework also presupposes the

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What the 2002/3 provincial budgets mean for women and poor people

The national budget catches the media headlines, but it is the provinces that in reality are responsible for the delivery of most services that affect the well-being of women and poor people. This article looks at how Gauteng fares on the issues of gender and poverty in 2002/3 and it provides pointers for tracking the performances of other provincial budgets in this regard.



By DEBBIE BUDLENDER

At budget time, the media focus far more attention on the national budget than on the budgets of the provinces. Yet the provinces are responsible for the delivery of many services that are extremely important for the well-being of the poor. In particular, the provinces are responsible for delivery of most health, education and welfare services.

A further problem with media reports on budgets, both national and provincial, is that they draw their information mainly from the budget speech. The last few years have seen a big improvement in the budget documents produced by government. The documents provide a wealth of information. But production of documents is of little use if they are not read. It is important that members of the legislatures and civil society read that information, and interrogate it.

This short piece shows some of the things that we can learn from provincial budget documents. It focuses on the Gauteng budget for 2002/03. In some ways, this presents a biased picture because Gauteng is one of the wealthiest provinces. From a gender perspective, Gauteng is also the only

province where there is a (slightly) smaller female than male population. However, Gauteng contains about one-fifth of the country's population, and nearly one-half of its population is female. Furthermore, its budget documents mention gender (or "women") relatively often – a very different situation from the national budget. By looking at a wealthier province, and one that has paid some attention to gender, we can see what other provinces can aim at.

The framework for looking at gender and budgets

Sex refers to the biological differences between women and men, girls and boys – the facts that their bodies are biologically different. *Gender* refers to the way that society teaches women and men, girls and boys that they should behave – their roles and responsibilities, and their relationships to each other. Sex does not change over time or between countries and cultures. Gender can change over time as society and cultures change.

Government policies and budgets must address the needs that arise from both sex and gender differences between women and men. For example, with HIV/Aids, women are biologically more likely than men to

contract the virus because of how their bodies are constructed. They are also sociologically more likely than men to contract the virus because they have less power in relationships, are less able to say "no" to sex, are less able to force partners to use condoms, are sometimes reliant on sex to get income, often enter into relationships at a younger age, and so on. Policies to address HIV/Aids must address both the sex and gender reasons if they are to be effective.

Government policies must also address both *practical* and *strategic* gender needs. Practical needs relate to the roles and functions which people are assigned in society. For example, women are usually responsible for child-care and for fetching water. So, providing crèches and taps on site will address the practical needs of women. Strategic needs are related to changing the unequal power relations between women and men. So, providing opportunities for women to advance economically, to have full ownership of land, or to occupy public decision-making positions can address strategic gender needs.

Some people argue that the government should focus only on strategic gender needs. They say that addressing practical needs is reformist as it accepts the status quo. But both

‘ In looking at budgets from a gender-responsive perspective, we don't start with the money. ’



categories of need are important. Firstly, if practical gender needs are addressed, this will free women to address their strategic needs. Secondly, it will take a long time to address all the strategic needs and change the structure of society. In the mean time, programmes to address practical needs can make a real difference in the lives of women.

When we look at government expenditure, we can divide it into *three categories* as follows:

- *Gender-specific* expenditure is money that is explicitly targeted to address women's or gender issues. One example in the Gauteng budget is expenditure on women's health. Another is the women in housing project. A third is money for gender units or focal points.

- Expenditure to promote *equal opportunity for civil servants*. This would include a programme on sexual harassment, parental leave, and special training for women to occupy male-dominated positions.

- *Mainstream* expenditure. This covers all other expenditure. The gender aspect emerges when we ask who will benefit from particular expenditures. For example, if government spends money on early childhood development (ECD) or the child support grant (CSG), women tend to benefit more than men as they are more often responsible for young children. On the other hand, expenditure on the Gautrain project is likely to benefit men more than women in terms of the jobs that are created.

In looking at budgets from a gender-responsive perspective, we don't start with the money. Gender analysis of budgets involves five steps, and we only get to the money in the third step:

- The first step is to *describe the situation* of women and men,

girls and boys in relation to the particular government department and its functions. In this description, we look not only at gender differences, but also at other differences, such as race, location, age and class.

- The second step is to *examine the policy and programmes* of the department, to see if they address the situation – and the gender and other gaps – described in step one.

- The third step is to see whether *sufficient money and other resources are allocated* to implement the policy and programmes that promote gender equality. (This is called “inputs” in budget jargon.)

- The fourth step is to see whether the allocated *money is spent*, as well as *who it reaches* in terms of beneficiaries. (This is called “output” in budget jargon.)

- The fifth step is to see whether the expenditure *improves the situation* described in step one as expected. (This is called “outcomes” in budget jargon.)

These questions fit in well with the new budget format being introduced in Gauteng and elsewhere. The overview, objectives and policy development sections should cover Steps 1 and 2. The budget tables cover Step 3. The budget tables also cover Step 4 in terms of amounts spent. The key outputs and service delivery trends should help with the beneficiary question. The review of the previous year should also help with Steps 4 and 5.

The new format has potential, but is not yet as helpful as it could be. In particular, the outputs and service delivery parts are weak. Often they only give figures on what is planned for the future, and do not show what was achieved in past years. Further, the indicators are usually not disaggregated by

gender or anything else. And some programmes have not yet developed indicators at all.

The sections on the different departments are also not equally developed. The health section is strong, with a lot of useful detail. Education has a long section, but it is not as useful as health in terms of what it says. The social services, which are particularly important for poor people, have produced a relatively short section.

The budget speech

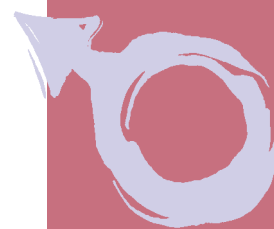
The budget speech of the Gauteng MEC of Finance promised a lot of good things. In terms of poverty, it was good to see the emphasis on employment creation and, in particular, on public works (or “workfare”). This is something that is hardly mentioned these days in the national documents.

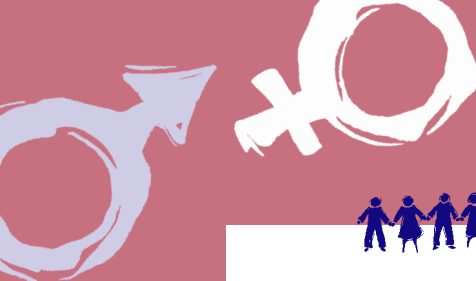
The speech does not mention gender in talking about public works. The budget documents do this, both implicitly and explicitly. Firstly, the documents include a list of projects for public works that include a number of crèches, a home for disabled children, and local access roads. All of these should help poor people, and particularly women.

Secondly, the budget documents include indicators for women's participation in the public works in terms of contracts, employment and training. One weakness is that the percentage targets for contracts for women are low, at 10 percent to 15 percent. Another weakness is that the number targets for

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New era in men's gender awareness

In April Getnet celebrated the publication of its new guidebook for gender trainers with a public launch. UWC vice-chancellor Brian O'Connell was the guest speaker and an edited version of this important address appears overleaf. The launch of the book – *Masculinities in the Making of Gendered Identities* – also signals the start of Getnet's new masculinities programme.

At the launch Getnet's consultancy manager, Peter Jordaan, announced that the pilot workshop of a new reorganised Men & Masculinities Programme would be held in May. He traced the history of Getnet's work with men and contextualised the publication of the "rather thin-looking" guidebook.

The first men's gender awareness workshops were held in 1996. At the time the decision to create a focus on men raised eyebrows: some stakeholders felt that gender equality should be addressed in society in general, not with special programmes for men. Getnet, however, believed that its work with men was a strategic entry point for addressing the essence of the problem.

What strikes me most ... is the non-threatening way in which issues of men, their relationships to themselves and other men, as well as women, are tackled. ♀

Some 400 men have participated in the men's gender awareness workshops. Substantial numbers of men of course also participate in Getnet's other training programmes, such as the gender coordinators' programme and the policy makers programmes.

In light of Getnet's experience of the men's awareness workshops and the issues that have surfaced at these trainings, the men's programme was revised and reshaped during last year, also to incorporate the important shifts that have occurred in the areas of HIV/Aids and gender-based violence. The guidebook was produced as part of the research and materials development of this revision process. Although more academic works on masculinities are being produced, there still isn't much available for gender trainers specifically.



Masculinities in the Making of Gendered Identities, published by Getnet 2001, sells at R100 and can be ordered from Getnet. Contact details appear on the back page of this newsletter.

Magnificent effort at raising an explosive topic

By KEITH RUITERS

Congratulations to the people at Getnet for producing *Masculinities In the Making of Gendered Identities*. Although written as a guidebook for trainers, it also appeals to those who simply have an interest in the area of gender and gender relations. It not only offers us conceptual tools for thinking about men and their identities as men, but also suggests practical avenues for attempting to change those aspects of our male identities that are troublesome to us and others.

The people responsible for the guidebook showed their sensitivity to those readers that are unfamiliar with the field in general. Concepts are well explained. A range of perspectives is presented to give readers an opportunity to make up their own minds about the issues that are presented. The issues addressed are of contemporary significance and are presented in a way that is stimulating and thought-provoking.

What strikes me most about the guidebook is the non-threatening way in which issues of men, their relationships to themselves and other men, as well as women, are tackled. Talk about men and their relationships toward women and themselves anywhere and you instantly provoke an uncomfortable silence or threatening glares. The topic is a minefield!

Yet *Masculinities in the Making of Gendered Identities* recognises this and, without downplaying the topic's explosive potential, embraces men as partners (not enemies) in a process of reflection and change that, as painful as it is, is potentially empowering and liberating to themselves and everyone else.

I'm already planning to integrate some of the material into my undergraduate coursework.

Dr Ruiters is a lecturer/clinical psychologist, University of the Western Cape and a member of Getnet's men & masculinities reference group.





Getnet director Pethu Serote and board members Moses Cloete and Jeremy Daphne



Shirley Walters and Celeste Fortuin

Understanding masculinities

By KOPANO RATELE

In the last decade especially, many societies and communities around the world have turned to concern themselves with questions of men and masculinities. This concern is not uniform nor are its goals always radical or even progressive. The motivations are also varied, the reasons uneven from one society to the next, and often, different parts of one society do not agree about the nature of the problem of men and masculinity, even about whether there is a problem.

There is a little doubt though about the major historical source of this concern with men and what they are and do: women's struggles and feminism. To understand masculinity, thus, we must understand gender relations. Much research and theoretical work, some of it very good, and some of it from local intellectuals, is available to help us in this regard. To this we must add that to continue to deepen our understanding of gender we should try and grasp the character of masculinities and men. Again, there is a welcome increase of good original work from around the world aimed at doing this. The big gap is, as we say, in spreading the word, without falling into the trap of the Mars and Venus pop-stuff. This is precisely what *Masculinities in the Making of Gendered Identities: A Getnet Guidebook for Trainers* attempts to do for us. And right from there, in that title, is the first signal of what we shall learn. Masculinity, we shall learn, is not a single "thing", but rather a multiplicity of objects. These objects, attached to men's bodies and social relations, are in fact contested, complex, and always subject to change.

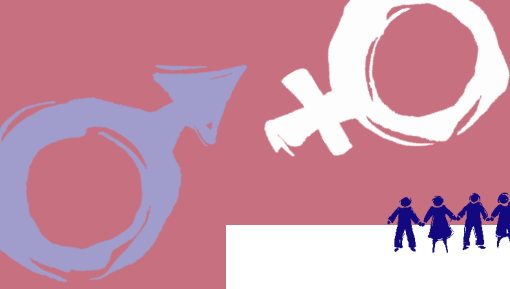
But the book is made up of four, user-friendly chapters. The chapters are wedged between a concise introduction that functions as a roadmap, and a bibliography for those who may want to read further. The first chapter offers five different sets of readings that are useful for thinking about gender and which I think not only adult learners but also even younger ones may find quite useful. The second chapter presents ethnographic cases, underlining how masculinities are embedded in politics, define institutions, and play out in social relationships. Chapter three points the ways to changing masculinities. And the last chapter, especially when read with the first two, is the thankless task of attempting to make of us cultural critics. There are four interlocking objectives to the *Guidebook*. First, it is aimed at helping users appreciate the character of social relations and identities from a gender perspective. Second, to offer concepts and theories to think about the societies we live in and the relationships we're involved in. Third, to show how gender identities are formed, performed, and thus changeable. Last, to contribute to integrating men in the struggle for gender equality and *freedom*, for all.

Dr Ratele teaches in the Department of Psychology and the Women and Gender Studies Programme, University of Western Cape.



Top: Charmaine Fortuin, Kopano Ratele, Elizabeth Schutter and Glenise Leven-dal. Above: Peter Jordaana. Below: Getnet board chair-person, Dr Ngoate Takalo.





The choices that challenge men

South African men are in trouble, says UWC vice-chancellor Brian O’Connell*, because much of what our society is experiencing so destructively is the consequence of choices being made by males.

There is perhaps no more important thing that we can be doing in South Africa today but to speak about maleness – about masculinities and relationships. I want to approach the matter of maleness and the role of men in the reconstruction and development of our country from a perspective of choices.

There is a deceptively simple poem that speaks to the matter of choice. It is called: The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost. He writes:

*“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other.”*

Implicit to this poem is the notion of the unknown, of change, of critical decisions to be made, of seeking signs that suggest danger or tell of good prospects, of using your knowledge and your understanding to read those signs, of making choices with the understanding that choices have consequences.

In 1992 I participated in what we called the Mont Fleur scenarios. This was an attempt by those in opposition to the apartheid state to reflect on possible scenarios for a good future

for South Africa politically, economically and socially; on the choices we could make and what the possible consequences of those choices might be.

I argued that there could be no successful future for South Africa if we did not empower our women, and this argument was eventually supported. I was led to this understanding by my experiences in education and in community: the men were absent. The men could perhaps be found at the political rallies shouting Amandla and at the big marches and other conspicuous gatherings, but when it came to community, to family work, they were more often than not absent. The women, I concluded, as a group, were holding our fragile communities together. If this was true, then our best chance for success, I reasoned, was to empower them to do this well.

When you look at the trouble our communities are in currently, we see (especially in the Western Cape):

- one of the highest murder rates in the world
- one of the highest rape rates in the world
- endemic domestic violence and other violent crimes
- rapid growth in the incidence of HIV/Aids in South Africa

- growing alcohol and substance abuse
- one of highest TB rates in the world
- alienated youth attracted to gangs

One realises that not one of these horrors is ordained, they are all the consequences of people making choices – choosing to rape and to murder and to be promiscuous, and to use drugs and to be violent.

And what emerges so starkly is that men are the chief perpetrators of these destructive acts. One realises that our men are in trouble, because much of what we are experiencing so destructively is the consequence of choices being made by males. This is the same phenomenon that is hurting African-American communities in the United States. As the president of Lincoln University stated to me a few years ago: “Our men are in trouble, with 60 percent of African-American males sometime or other being in trouble with the law.” It was for this reason, she added, that they had organised the Million Men March to mobilise African-American men for the choice of development as opposed to the choices of destruction.

So why are so many South African men making choices

‘ The men could perhaps be found at the political rallies shouting Amandla ... but when it came to community, to family work, they were more often than not absent. ’

* This is an edited version of a speech made by Professor O’Connell at the launch of Getnet’s guidebook for gender trainers, *Masculinities in the Making of Gendered Identities*.



Brian O'Connell at the launch of the masculinities guidebook

against community, against development, against respect and responsibility, against justice, against peace and harmony? Why are they choosing to direct their energies negatively and not for South Africa and its good future? What causes us to have gangs, why is it that gangleader Rashaad Staggie can say: "Well, gangs is part of what the Western Cape is ... it is the way we are."

It is the task of our universities to help us to understand this phenomenon so that we might find the ways to change our behaviour but we do know that it has a lot to do with hope and allegiance and alignment and self-confidence.

I recently read a quite horrifying book called *Angela's Ashes* (by Frank McCourt), which deals with McCourt's impoverished childhood in Ireland. The book is essentially about the absence of hope, and how people come to accept this hopelessness as their normal state. Herein lies the danger: once you come to accept certain things as the normal state of affairs. For example, gangs are normal, and taxis that make a noise with 132-decibel ghetto-blasters and wake up children and deprive their tired mothers of rest are normal. We don't care, that's how we are ... we accept this kind of thing and we go on. We tolerate so much –

and that is part of our difficulty in this country.

But to return to the book: it is about the feeling of being trapped in something and people seeing no possibility of escape through their own agency.

It's about a place where the women bear their babies resignedly and bury them as they die of TB or other diseases of the poor and then bear some more babies resignedly.

It's about a place:

- where the women sit and drink their weak tea when they have some, and rejoice when there is a bit of fat to put on the stale bread, when they have some, to fill partially their hungry children's tummies;

- where the women sit late at night and wait for the men to come home praying to God that there is a penny or two of the week's wages that has not been left in the bar, and praying that the mood is not one of such anger that violence is inevitable;

- where the women "haul the complaining children off to school to face the wrath of the principal for one or other misdemeanour, or, with the baby on the arm, struggle to pick up lumps of coal that have fallen off the trucks near the docks to make the fire to dry the clothes;

- where the women stand in queues for the Salvation Army or the St Vincent de Paul or the

government handouts, and have to swallow the abuse of the officials who have forgotten what it is to be poor;

- a place where the men down pint after pint of beer, using the wages, or the gift sent for the newborn baby or the dole money, or the rent money or the money for the coal to light the fire for a bit of tea and a bit of warmth to chase away the wetness;

- where the men, with raised glasses and tearful eyes sing about their determination to be free, but even as their drunken voices are raised to proclaim this to the heavens they themselves are so dominated by their context of hopelessness that they are being destroyed in their spirits.

We know from our historians and sociologists, social workers and psychologists and our great literature that extreme poverty can destroy hope, and that when hope is absent, when vision is absent what almost inevitably follows is the death of spirit ...

What is the source of our hope? Who holds the other picture, the picture of what might be up to us? Who points to the ways that help us to see the picture from other angles, other possibilities that help us to break the frames that hold us?

In my recent inaugural speech I argued that there are potentially many sources of hope, spaces for dreaming, for creating a shared vision, for escaping from the grip of lethargy or dogma and beginning a vibrant discourse about our desired future: family, club, church, community organisations, NGOs, school, university

‘ Not one of these horrors is ordained – choosing to rape and to murder and to be promiscuous, and to use drugs and to be violent. ’

‘ So why are so many SA men making choices against community, against development, against respect and responsibility, against justice, against peace and harmony? ’



Opportunities and challenges in ICTs

By PETHU SEROTE, DIRECTOR OF GETNET

There is no doubt that new technologies in information and communication have opened up many opportunities for connecting at a different level than we have done in the past. It is easier now to hold lengthy conversations across the continents with multiple recipients. On the other hand technologies and access to these systems pose many challenges for women all over the world.

Women'sNet has been an important initiative in providing



Pethu Serote has been appointed as a commissioner of the presidential national commission on Information Society and Development

women's organisations and organisations interested in working towards gender equality in this country with an ICT vehicle for networking and communication. It has provided valuable information and training as well as linked some of its constituencies to international events such as the Beijing+5 preparations

and the UN Racism Conference. Other women on the African continent have also identified ICTs as a crucial tool for networking and lobbying. Mottin-Sylla writes at some length about the how access to ICTs has enabled women in francophone Africa to connect and share information. She also mentions the challenges that they have faced, including the high costs of technology, high illiteracy levels among women and the fact that cyberspace is a male domain. On the whole there is no doubt that if women want to be players in



Choices that challenge men

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are all social structures that present themselves for this conversation, a conversation that as a country we have not yet had, but which we must have. But for this to happen, the role of leadership is crucial.

Here then lies the big South African challenge and – some would argue – the biggest challenge for the world. How do we inculcate the knowledge and understanding that helps us to turn our hope into active virtue.

How do we create a world based on a set of visions, such as:

1. Living in harmony with nature
2. A just and fair democracy
3. From dominance to partnership in social relations
4. From a war to a peace economy

5. A decent living for the poor of the world
6. Celebrates democracy
7. Work for all – newly defined
8. Use of technology for human growth
9. From standardisation to creativity

In this time of dramatic change where truth and principles and values have been rejected in favour of extreme forms of relativism, in this time of rampant materialism and instant gratification, we require leaders who can help us restore our humanity, our love and respect for ourselves and our neighbour.

It is the task of the leader to help every individual member of the group to work out what they hope for in life. And then to assist them to live inside that hope. Not as a spectator or a victim awaiting the great act from outside that will bring about transformation (what I call the Cinderella syndrome) but as a confident agent acting on their own lives and on the life of the community.

The collapse of the social fabric, including our social insti-

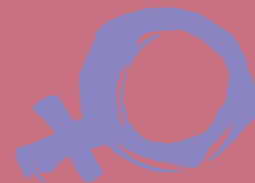
tutions, presents us with a challenge second to none. The crude understanding of Marx, the notion that structures determine human history has led to an assault on those structures deemed to be part of the ideological apparatus of the oppressor, like the family and the school and the church. We now see clearly the havoc that such misguided arrogance has wrought. We must reconstruct our social system on the basis of a shared set of core values that we can all subscribe to as a nation working together for the general good.

Our men must take their place in the life of the community with vigour. We must again capture the minds and the hearts of our youth and win them for virtuous action. Without this we will fail as a nation.

The work that Getnet does is crucial for the life chances of our country. Please double and redouble your efforts to bring peace and confidence to our country through the efforts of peaceful and confident men.



‘ In this time of dramatic and persistent change ... we require leaders who can help us restore our humanity, our love and respect for ourselves and our neighbour. ’



any of the spheres and spaces of the world nowadays, it is crucial to master technologies.

The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality developed by the Office on the Status of Women identifies the area of information and communication technologies as an important area of development for women's empowerment. It echoes the UN's Beijing +5 report that science and technology are *fundamental components of development, are transforming patterns of production, contributing to the creation of jobs and new ways of working, and promoting the establishment of a knowledge-based society.*

Identifying this as an area of women's empowerment puts a responsibility on the country to ensure that women have the necessary access. It is important to realise that the fact that the policy framework identifies it as important will not necessarily give immediate technological access to women. It is just another front where women must ensure that they are not left out, and therefore it becomes another front for the struggle for gender equality.

The New Partnership for African Development (Nepad) spearheaded by, among others, President Thabo Mbeki, has identified the area of technology as an imperative for development in Africa in this millennium. The government has taken up the issue with a lot of energy and is developing policies that have far-reaching consequences for information technologies in our society. It is important that women should not be left behind by this development. It is important too that women themselves should also ensure that they are not left behind in the unfolding process. ♀



Getnet trainer Celeste Fortuin with participants at one of the Northern Cape public hearings on gender policy

OSW public hearings

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centralisation of policy development within the Office on the Status of Women.

The Northern Cape OSW recognised the need for a provincial gender policy that would not only be aimed at government departments, but also extend to other institutions and organisations in the province. In the hearings this need was confirmed by communities, who also requested that the OSW become more visible in the regions, and that a provincial plan of action be drawn up to advance women's empowerment and gender equality throughout the province.

As such, it is a good approach that the national framework merely recommends, and does not prescribe any particular course of action. The Northern Cape experience suggests that each province in South Africa will have its own specific needs and challenges with regard to advancing women's empowerment and gender equality, and that a provincial gender policy should be reflective of this.

Although the framework

merely recommends, it is important for policymakers to guard against what Gouws³ refers to as "... this oversubscribed, formulaic use of gender (in a governance discourse) that turns it into a gender script". Government policymakers might feel urged to adhere strictly to the recommendations of the framework, and this could lead to a churning out of policies that are mere adaptations of the National Gender Policy, and do not reflect critical thinking about the needs and challenges that are central to a particular province or sector.

References

1. *Commission Reports available from OSW Northern Cape*
2. *National Gender Policy Framework, p iii*
3. *Gouws, A. Critical Analysis of SA's National Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality*

Celeste Fortuin is a Getnet trainer.





2002/3 provincial budgets

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employment and training do not give the numbers for men. Without these for comparison, it is impossible to judge whether the numbers for women are equitable.

While public works is important, a far larger proportion of the Gauteng budget is allocated to special projects. These, too, aim at increasing employment. They are, however, less likely than the public works to be women-friendly as the focus is on areas such as automobile manufacturing, manufacturing advice centres and the Gautrain. All these are male-dominated unless special efforts are made to involve women.

The MEC said, in his budget speech, that the budget would ensure that no child in the province went hungry. This is not really true. The child support grant covers children only up to the age of six years and the nutrition programmes focus on pre-school. Providing for children of this age is important, as lack of nutrition during these years has permanent effects on a person's development. Nevertheless, the constitution defines childhood as stretching until a person reaches 18 years. The Gauteng budget is not addressing the older children's nutrition needs directly.

Some sectoral issues

The *education* section of the budget says virtually nothing on gender, even though it is very easy to disaggregate education statistics. It is particularly surprising that there is no mention of different pass rates, differential enrolment in science and

maths, and gender violence in schools. All of these are widely acknowledged as gender issues in South African education.

There is also very little discussion of ECD, even though the province has since last year received a special conditional grant from national government to develop this level of schooling. This is the second time that pilot ECD programmes have been introduced. It seems that the previous round, introduced in the mid-1990s, was not successful. The silence in the second year of the new grant suggests that there is not enough energy going into this round.

The *health* section of the budget is one of the strongest. The department has allocated money to support NGOs that are helping with home-based care. This is an important variation of public-private partnerships (PPP). It recognises the added value of NGOs in assisting government to fulfil its mandates. The money will also, indirectly, assist women as usually it is they who are responsible for caring for household members who are ill. More generally, the Gauteng budget must be praised for its open acknowledgement of the HIV/Aids challenge in the discussion, indicators and allocations.

The social services section of the budget document is "thinner" than desirable given its importance in terms of poverty alleviation. The section records a decrease in the allocation for the CSG in 2004/05. No explanation for this decrease is given. On the other hand, the document records a large increase in the allocation for the department's "women strategy". However, no description of this strategy is given.

In terms of indicators, the social services department is aiming at a rate of one recipi-

ent per minute for handing out of old age pensions, CSGs and other grants. Recipients will appreciate the department's efforts if it means that they do not need to wait in long queues each month. However, one minute per recipient does not seem enough for a user-friendly and considerate service. A better solution would be to employ more staff and take a little longer with each recipient.

Under the Department of Safety and Liaison there is welcome attention to workshops and trauma centres to address violence against women. Less welcome is the decrease in the money allocated for addressing social crimes. Research both in South Africa and elsewhere reveals that women are more concerned about social and personal crimes, such as violence, while men are more concerned about property crimes, such as theft.

In conclusion ...

Gender equality is not about seeing that there are equal numbers of women and men, girls and boys everywhere. It is not about seeing that there are equal numbers of male and female lion, rhinoceros and hippos in the new Dinokeng project. Gender equality is about seeing that the government budget and related policies address the different needs of women and men, girls and boys. It is, in particular, about addressing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged who are least able to provide for themselves.



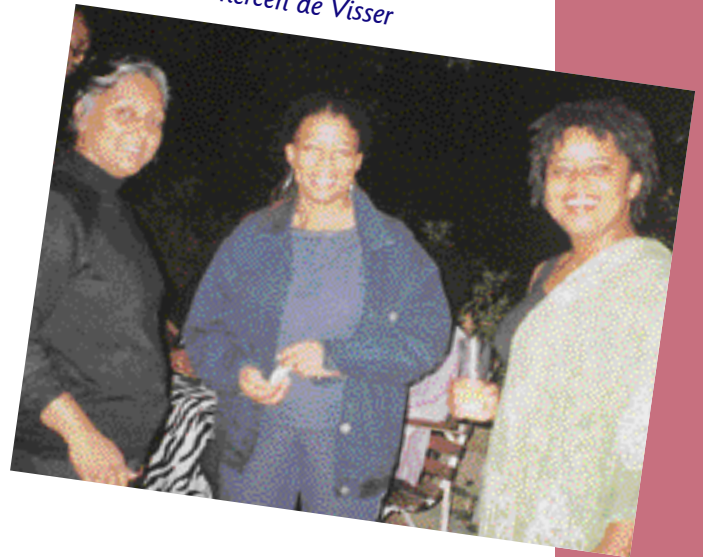
Debbie Budlender is a researcher with the Community Agency for Social Enquiry.



Alison Lazarus, Kamogelo Lekubu-Wilderson, Shereen de Visser



Maryna Matthee, Elaine Salo, Pethu Serote and Angela Craig



Bosberaading with Getnetters

By SUSAN HOLLAND-MUTER
TRAINING MANAGER

There comes a time in every organisation's history for it to ask some important questions: how good is the work we do? Should we be doing things differently? Seven years down the line from establishment, Getnetters thought it was time to stop the bus and review our training programmes, to look at all of our accumulated training experience and at the issues that have come up in the different programmes. The main challenge was to put aside our old ways of doing and seeing things and to put our heads together and begin the arduous task of evaluating and improving our training programmes.

A constant review and adjustment of Getnet's training programme content are important steps in ensuring high quality indigenous training materials and frameworks that speak directly to our reality and life experiences.

With this in mind, Getnet staff, panelists, board members

and some past participants set off for Franschhoek in March this year to review its five training programmes – Men and Masculinities; Local Government and Policy Makers; Gender Co-ordinators; Training of Trainers and Panel Training Programme.

We looked at who attended the courses and which sectors and groupings of people we would like to encourage to attend future courses through an improved marketing and recruitment strategy. Each of the programme teams analysed and made recommendations for improvements to the content and methodology of the courses, resulting in tighter, more relevant and cutting edge programmes. This is especially so for our Men and Masculinities Programme, which to date is the only training course of its kind in South Africa.

A challenge that was central to each of the programme discussions was how to more systematically integrate content related to the gendered dynamics of HIV/Aids, violence against women and poverty. This is

mainly in response to some of the feedback that Getnet has been receiving about its course content and Getnet seeing these as being some of the burning issues facing South Africa and women's struggles for gender justice and equality.

A participant's comment of "no stone was left unturned, even if those stones were our heads" captures how seriously Getnetters took the task of our programme review. The good news is that Getnet now has new and improved training courses and programmes, which it will be launching from May this year. So, if you are wondering who to call for your next gender training course, who could help with the development or implementation of your gender policy, who could assist in addressing issues of men and masculinities in the work place/organisation and/or programme delivery, how to integrate gender in the IDP ... there is only one answer – Getnet!

Getnet now has new and improved training courses and programmes which it will be launching from May. ♀



GETNET TRAINING EVENTS – APRIL TO DECEMBER 2002

The Policy Makers Programme (Local Government)

- **Workshop Block 1: 6–8 May**
Block 2: 20–21 June

Aimed at councillors and officials working in local government structures. It is a two-phase programme, consisting of two workshops of three days each. The programme aims to enhance competence among policy makers and change agents in local government to develop and implement gender-sensitive policies in strategic sectors. Participants get access to information and resources related to institutional transformation.

Key focus areas of the programme include integrated development planning (IDP), gender-sensitive key performance indicators (KPIs) and the integration of gender into municipal budgets.

Men and Masculinities Programme

- **Workshop 15–17 July**
- **Seminar (date to be confirmed)**

Aimed at male gender practitioners, managers and programme co-ordinators in all sectors. The men-only workshop provides education and information on the importance of gender equality, forms of masculinity and the roles of men in organisational change. The programme aims to contribute to building partnerships between women and men in mainstreaming gender equality in institutions and organisations.

Key focus areas of the programme include the social construction of gender, the role of power in gender relations and strategies for addressing gender-based violence.

National Gender Co-ordinators Programme

- **Workshop Block 1: 3–5 June**
Block 2: 30–31 July

SADC Gender Co-ordinators Programme

- **Workshop: 7–16 October**

Aimed at gender co-ordinators and focal persons in NGOs, CBOs, trade unions and other civil society structures. Provides

education and information resources and skills training on how to formulate, implement and monitor gender policies. Aims to enhance competence among gender co-ordinators/change agents to develop and implement gender-sensitive policies. Enables participants to assess the gender-sensitivity of existing policies.

Key focus areas of the programme include gender planning frameworks and tools of analysis, national and international instruments for mainstreaming gender, as well as developing gendered strategies for the prevention of HIV/Aids and violence against women.

Training of Trainers Programme

(date to be confirmed)

Aimed at educators, training officers, employment equity officers, diversity programme staff, human resources personnel, southern African based trade unionists responsible for gender education and training. Provides knowledge, skills and resources to design, co-ordinate and facilitate effective gender education and training programmes in diverse settings.

Consultancy Services

Consultancy services are offered in specialised areas, including gender training, gender analysis of policy, gender and organisational change, national and international instruments and strategies for gender equality. Services available on request.

Costs and contracts are negotiated with individual clients. Training programmes are grounded in the specific institutional/organisational realities of clients. The training takes the form of participatory, group-based training workshops. The duration of programmes varies and each programme comprises a combination of modules to fit the needs of clients.

The Policy Makers, Gender Co-ordinators and Masculinities Programmes are also offered on a consultancy basis.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
ELIZABETH SCHUTTER AT GETNET**

A newsletter issued by Getnet
17 Garlandale Crescent
P O Box 333 Athlone
Cape Town 7760 South Africa
Tel 27 21 697-5355 Fax 27 21 697-5560
E-mail: info@getnet.org.za
Website: www.getnet.org.za

