

June 1985

U.N. DECADE FOR WOMEN CONFERENCE  
Forward Looking Strategies  
Education

POSITION PAPER

This Position Paper submitted by the Agency for International Development (AID) is reflective of international sectoral policies and is not to be confused with domestic sectoral policies.

PROBLEM:

The strategy presents an overview of issues in education that affect women and girls. The recommendations are not new. The discussion could offer ways to maximize the effectiveness of education through innovative approaches.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S.:

Education for women and girls is a significant issue for the U.S. Increased education of girls is important to lowered birth rates and to greater productivity, particularly in the modern sector. This Conference is an opportunity for the U.S. to emphasize the importance of this issue and to offer innovative ways to increase access and equity in education.

UNITED STATES POSITION:

The following would increase the impact of education efforts for women.

1. Governments should be encouraged to employ innovative strategies, such as instructional radio or programmed educational materials to increase the effectiveness of formal schooling. These strategies can provide access to education for women and girls isolated from opportunities for schooling, whether for geographic or sociocultural reasons. Both instructional radio and programmed materials can be used to teach women and girls in their homes.
2. Instructional radio and programmed materials can provide literacy education, and support literacy training so that women achieve functional literacy. Achieving functional literacy means being able to understand what is read, not merely say the words.

It also means being able to write simple sentences not just write a name. Functional literacy allows a person to read and use the information in health and agriculture pamphlets, newspapers, voting materials and so forth.

3. Vocational and technical training should be provided to increase job skills for women in both modern and traditional jobs. It should include instruction in subjects (accounting, production) that strengthen economically viable employment traditionally carried out by women, such as trading, crafts production, agricultural production and processing.

BACKGROUND:

Women and girls traditionally have had less access to education for economic as well as socio-cultural reasons. Also, vocational education often has been directed to modern sectors, ignoring or even destroying the employment traditionally carried out by women in production and marketing. Increasing women's education for achieving social and economic improvement goals has demonstrated importance. By using innovative approaches, with sensitivity toward tradition, education can contribute to overall development without creating social and cultural disruption.

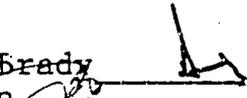
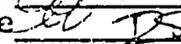
BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS:

The innovations suggested have been demonstrated to be cost-effective for large populations.

STATEMENT:

- The delegation may, at its discretion, support any of the proposed strategy;
- The delegation may wish to stress that innovative basic and vocational education strategies can provide cost effective expansion of education to achieve social and economic development.

Clearance:

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