# DISTANCE EDUCATION ACCESS/SUCCESS FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Group #2
MDDE651
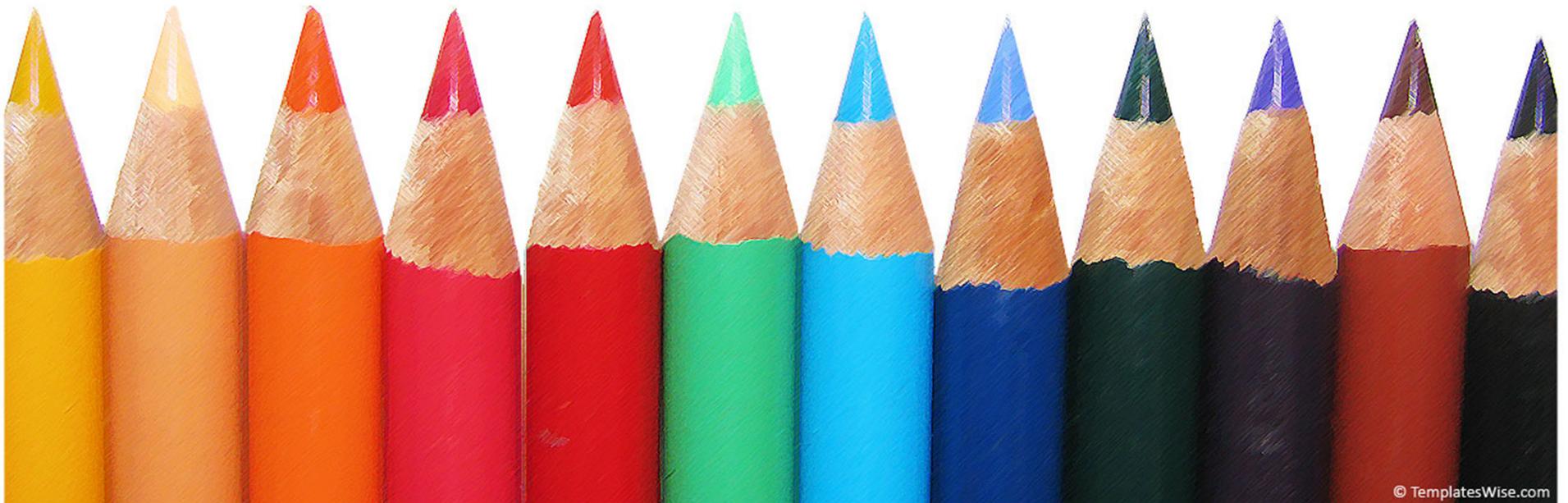
Educating Women
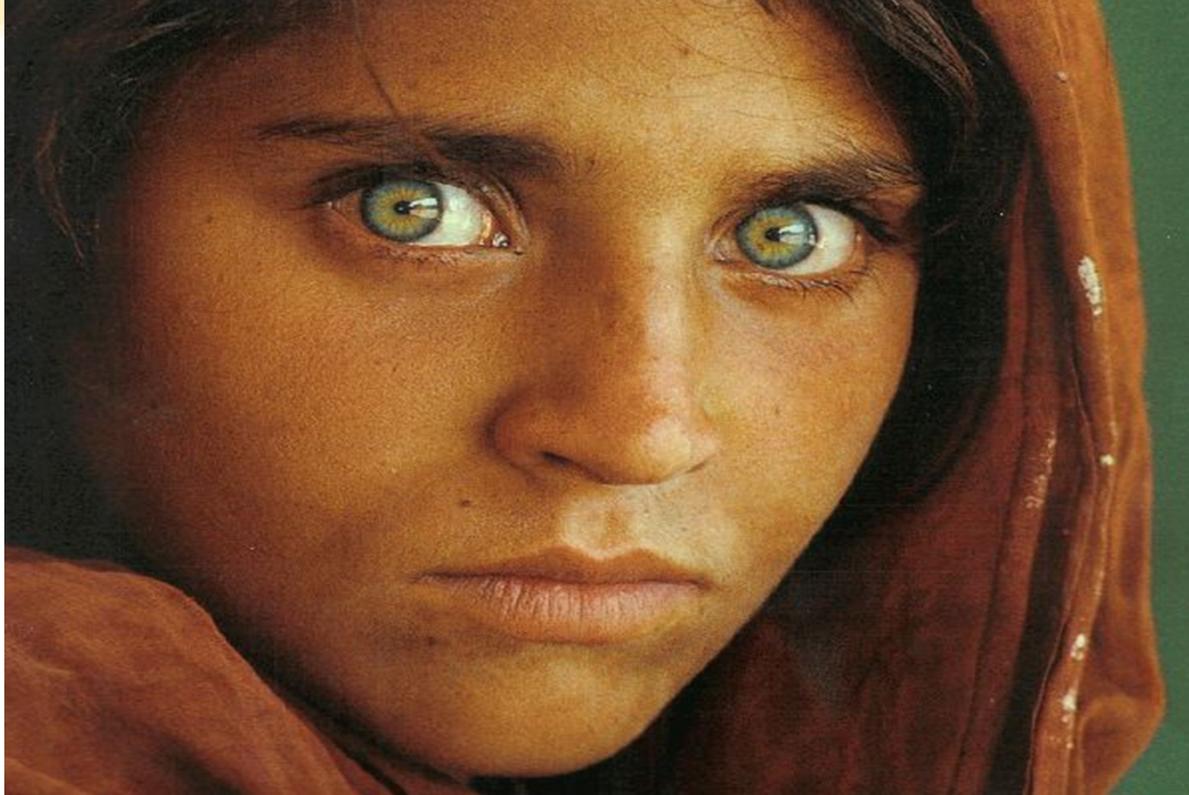
Improves lives, communities, and countries.

Introduction

This presentation examines distance education in the context of women in developing countries, with a focus on selected countries from South and Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The presentation includes:

•Overview of the readings about distance education for women in developing countries.

•Examination of the barriers/issues of access women face in education.

•Recommendations and strategies for the design and delivery of distance education to women in developing countries.

•Personal experiences of the team members relating to education and women in developing countries.

Introduction

Human development is about ensuring that individuals and societies have the choices and resources to construct the lives they value.

When human rights and gender equality are not ensured, sustainable development is stunted. When women's lives are dictated by rigid gender roles, they have less choices. Tragically, some women internalise unhealthy messages about submission and servility and may not have the legal literacy or community support to get help.

Extremely poor rural women in developing countries are often the most marginalised and are the least likely to receive the educational support they need to learn how to change their lives.

Theory

- Choice of methods and data collection depends on problem studied

- Since DE in not an academic discipline it itself, the research must use social science research methods

- How can DE alter the lives of women and the marginalised in developing countries and bring about social transformation, transcendence of class barriers, and empowerment?

- In line with feminist tradition, we call upon women's subjectivities as researchers participants as we are authorities on our own experience

- We call upon qualitative and quantitative previously existing research in the literature and also share own narratives, experiences, and perspectives in the field

Questions

- What is defined as a developed country?

- What is defined as a developing country?
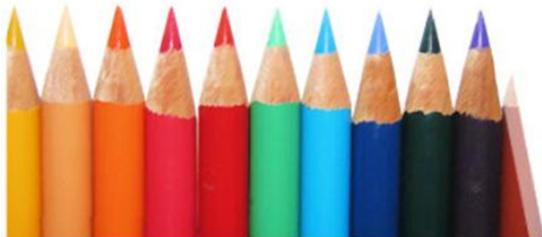
Defining Developed Countries

A country with a relatively high per capita income, where most people have a higher standard of living with access to more goods and services than most people in developing countries.

Developed Countries

G7 countries

(Canada, U.S.A., Germany, France, Italy, U.K., Japan), Australia, New Zealand, Israel

Southern African Customs Union

(Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia) , and

Asian "Tiger" countries

(Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea)

Defining Developing Countries

One agreed-upon definition of "developing" countries **does not exist**. The United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation propose definitions and classification systems.

United Nations and Development

According to UNDP's Human Development Reports:

- human development is about more than income
- it is about choices to lead productive lives in accord with needs and interests
- economic growth is only a means of enlarging people's choices.

Developing Countries

Issues and themes central to human development:

- Social progress

- Economics

- Efficiency

- Equity

- Participation and freedom

- Sustainability

- Human security

(http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/)

The UNDP Human Development Index calculates gender inequality according to:

1- participation in the labour force

2- educational attainment

3- parliamentary representation

4- adolescent fertility

5- maternal mortality.

Developing Countries

One possible definition of developing country

A nation where the average income is much lower than in industrial nations, where the economy relies on a few export crops, and where farming is conducted by primitive methods. In many developing nations, rapid population growth threatens the supply of food. Developing nations have also been called underdeveloped nations. Most of them are in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Questions

How does a developing country become a developed country?

What keeps a developing country from becoming a developed country?
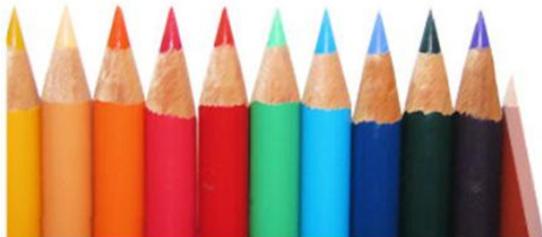
Developing Countries

World Trade Organization – 2010 List

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Angola
- Antigua
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Barbuda
- Belarus
- Belize
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- Colombia
- Comoros Islands
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Czech Rep
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- East Timor
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Ethiopia
- Fiji Islands
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Grenada
- Guatemala

- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Hungary
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ivory Coast
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Lithuania
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Marshall Islands
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mexico
- Micronesia, Fed. Sts
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- North Korea
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay

- People's Republic of Benin
- People's Republic of China
- People's Republic of Congo
- Peru
- Philippines
- Poland
- Republic of Cape Verde
- Republic of Georgia
- Republic of Kosovo
- Republic of Macedonia
- Republic of Yemen
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Kitts
- Saint Vincent
- Saint Lucia
- Sao Tome & Principe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Slovak Rep
- South Africa
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- Sri-Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Swaziland
- Syria
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Togo
- Tonga
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- Uruguay
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- West Samoa
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Presentation Countries

Afghanistan

After decades of conflict, military intervention and civil war, Afghanistan's economy remains severely underdeveloped. Poverty and despair are part of the everyday lives of most Afghanis. Aside from the enormous foreign aid it receives, the Afghan government still has very few resources at its disposal. In contrast, some 90 percent of all heroin produced around the globe originates in Afghanistan.

- Illiteracy among adults is 57% for men, 87% for women
- Afghan women have few rights
- Low wages and low levels of education negatively impact the social and economic situation of most families and the country as a whole
- There are significant obstacles to education in Afghanistan
- Obstacles to education are numerous for Afghan women and girls

Presentation Countries

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the least developed countries in the world and education is essential to its development. In the past few years, enrolment rates have increased and gender imbalances have improved, nonetheless education is still a major challenge.

- 30% of Bangladeshi children do not have a primary education
- Drop out rates are high, especially for rural children living in poverty; many children never make it past the second grade
- The student/teacher ratio is 60 to 1 and average student/teacher contact time is 2.5 hours per day, one of the lowest rates in the world
- Teachers are poorly paid and trained
- Teaching material and methods are substandard
- The school system is autocratic, corrupt and lacks innovation

Presentation Countries

India

Despite pressing problems such as significant overpopulation, environmental degradation, extensive poverty, and widespread corruption, rapid economic development is fuelling India's economic activity. During the late 2000s, India's economic growth averaged 7.5% per year.

- Over the past decade, hourly wage rates in India have more than doubled

- Despite India's impressive economic growth over recent decades, the country continues to face various socio-economic challenges.

- Despite the percentage of people living below the World Bank's international poverty line of $1.25/day decreased from 60% in 1981 to 42% in 2005, India still contains the largest concentration of poor people in the world

- India has increased primary education and expanded literacy to approximately two thirds of the population

- India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India

Presentation Countries

Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the world's poorest economies in terms of per capita income; however, Tanzania average 7% GDP growth per year between 2000 and 2008 on strong gold production and tourism.

- Literacy rate Tanzania is estimated to be 72%
- For children the opportunity of education is increasing
- Education is compulsory for seven years, until children reach the age of 15 years, but most children do not attend school until this age and many do not attend at all
- In 2000, 57% of children age 5–14 years were attending school
- As of 2006, 87.2% of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5

Presentation Countries

Vietnam

Compared to other developing countries Vietnam's education system is relatively good. In 1917 the Confucian style education system was replaced by one based on a French model. Until the 1970, the education system was elitist and did not provide access to aboriginal students. Today, the Ministry of Education ensures all children have access to education and 97% of school age children attend schools; nonetheless, the education system in Vietnam faces many challenges, such as:

• poor infrastructure

• lack of equipment and teaching materials

• low wages which leads to a shortage of skilled teachers and academic staff

• poor relationship and connectivity between higher education, research, production and employment

Questions

What common factors exist for women in developing countries?

What impact can education have on the lives of women in developing countries?
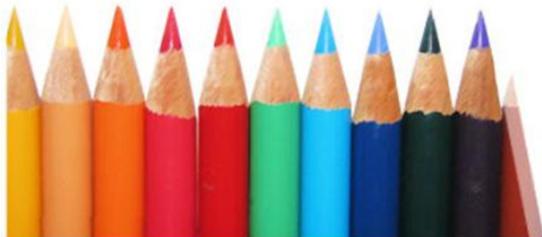
From the Readings

Article: Using Learning Technologies: A Synthesis of Challenges and Guidelines.

Elizabeth J. Burge defines vital guidelines for institutions to consider when developing and delivering distance education:

•Challenge and critique educational provisions that makes too many demands on a learner's own resources.

•Show respect for the realities of learner's lives, for the strength and pervasiveness of the barriers faced by many learners and would-be learners, for the heroic efforts some make to stay in courses and gain access to technologies. Pay attention to adult learners' needs for time-and-effort efficiencies, for self-esteem and embodied identities, and their diversity of learning styles and learning-to-learn skill levels.

•Be relevant in course design and technology application means providing a mix of learning technologies that are relevant to different learning styles (Burge, 2001, p.153).

From the Readings

Article: Naming the Learning Technology Issues in Developing Countries

Barbara Spronk states, defining distance education issues is a difficult task, perhaps impossible, given the complex, diverse, and multi-layered realities of women's lives. (Spronk, 2001, p.15).

She also stated when integrating the technologies available today to provide education to women in developing countries, there are some considerations to incorporate for the process to be effective:

•Many women subsist on less than a dollar a day

•Women are often politically in the minority

•Women have little access or control over resources to sustain their lives and those of their children (Spronk, 2001, p.16).

From the Readings

Article: Confronting Barriers to Distance Study in Tanzania.

Edith Mhehe states that to encourage women students to enrol in education, we need to:

- Ensure that the pedagogical system is supportive of women's circumstances.
- Provide bursaries and other options to overcome financial barriers to education.
- Address the discrimination embedded in pedagogical and financial systems, with a desire to provide equal educational opportunities by adopting a different standard for women's participation in its activities (Mhehe, 2001, p.108).

From the Readings

Article: Cyberella in the Classroom.

In Cyberella in the Classroom, Sophia Huyer addresses the reasons why women and girls in developing countries enrol less frequently in ICT/math and science programs and claims they are more successful when the 'narrow technology focus of computers' is presented from a more integrated perspective.

The relevance of purposefulness is significant for women in developing countries and reminds us of the importance of culturally appropriate learning. She also touches on the importance of teacher training, issues of access, collaboration, flexibility and economic benefits of DE (Huyer, 2006, p.95-115).

From the Readings

Article: The Non-traditional Undergrad and DE.

In The non-traditional undergrad and DE: is higher DE providing a portal or just a key hole to social and economic mobility, Nancy Carriuolo questions whether even if poor women gain equitable access to DE they will be able to overcome socio-economic barriers. She stresses the importance of interactivity and support (Carriuolo, 2002, p.62).

From the Readings

Article: Supporting Women DE learners in Tanzania.

In Supporting Women DE learners in Tanzania, Eustella Bhalalusesa, states the DE is 'woman friendly' Ed because it doesn't require attendance, is independent and is flexible, but she goes on to outline the challenges women still face to separate academic and regular life, overcome hostile family member who want to sabotages their studies. She echoes the idea of collaborative peer and student/teacher relationships being key to success and claim autonomous learning is negative for women.

(Bhalalusesa, 2001, p. 155-168)

From the Readings

Article: Gender Differences in Traditional Economy of Vietnam

Despite improvement in access to education, healthcare, and work, gender gaps still exist in both economic and social spheres with an apparent huge discrepancy between urban and rural areas which could be summarized by the following:

- In rural areas, accessibility to education and healthcare is lower for women although access to labour, because it is predominantly agricultural, is equal to that of men.

- In urban areas, accessibility to education and healthcare is somewhat equal for women and for men.

However, "in wage work, Women's wages are lower than men's, even within the same sector." (FAO/UNDP: 2002)

Poverty and inequalities are still high among ethnic minorities.

"This calls for gender sensitive policy to accelerate the process of transforming the social norms and economic conditions for gender equality for the advancement of women, particular of rural women in Vietnam." (FAO/UNDP: 2002)

From the Readings

Article: A Context for Technology Constrains

In developing course materials: a context for technology constraints Kamau discusses how the lack of faculty/facilities/telecommunications structures inhibit the utilization (Kamau, 2001, p.48).

From the Readings

Article: Strategic Intervention of ODL in Diploma in Youth Development Works in Bangladesh.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme's Diploma is Youth Development has been implemented in Bangladesh through the Bangladesh Open University.

The drop-out rate is very high; reasons for attrition might be related to language difficulty, competitiveness in finding a related job, and lack of financial support and government service incentives.

The programme objectives include training youth to work in development.

The programme is self-directed, tutor-supported, and practice-oriented.

Urban students outweigh rural students. Male students represent 87% of student body; hence, women's participation is very low (perhaps due to lack of education).

(Rashid, B. & Sarker, A. 2008)

From the Readings

Article: The Relationship Between National Culture and the Usability of an E-Learning System.

A-Technology and cultural differences - Web design and interaction is perceived differently in different cultures. The following features of national cultures were examine in relation to e-Learning usability:

1. power distance (toleration of inequality)
2. individualist or collectivist
3. masculinity or femininity,
4. Uncertainty avoidance

In power-centric cultures, learners might prefer:

1. greater leadership and guidance from instructors
2. more collaborative and socially oriented work

Learners from other countries might prefer:

1. more student-centred instruction
2. greater freedom for creative, expression, and alternative assessment
3. competitive learning environment

B- Gender - Femininity cultures defined as:

1. society in which social roles overlap
2. both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life"

- Masculinity culture applies to society with very distinct expectations of male and female social roles.
- Research identified as "feminine" cultures:
- Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand.
- And as masculine cultures: Canada, China, India, Italy, Libya, Malaysia, Pakistan, USA, Zimbabwe.

    (Adeoye et al. 2007, p. 871-878)

From the Readings

Article: Empowering Women through Distance Learning in India .

Providing education to the most impoverished, the most isolated, the most abused classes/castes/communities is exciting.

In conjunction with providing transcending education, efforts (including education efforts) must be made to reduce and eliminate class/caste prejudice.

"Women empowerment is a global issue. Empowerment is an active multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life."

Women's enrolment is strong but female leadership in terms of number of teachers is significantly low in comparison to men.

70% of the women were highly motivated by self interest, friends, members of the family, the changing environment in the society, media etc., and 30% of the respondents replied that their motivation level was low. The highly motivated group mostly belonged to urban and working sector, while the less motivated group belonged to rural areas and were less educated group with poor sociopath economic background. (Janaki, 2006, p.23)

From the Readings

Article: **Empowering Women through Distance Learning in India.**

Impact of Distance Education on women learners

- They gained confidence
- Improved their career opportunities
- Attained more degrees for satisfaction
- Updated their skills
- Second chance of learning for disadvantaged or compelled dropout
- Acquisition of knowledge
- Change in socialization pattern of children
- Better decision making capacity
- Respect in family and community
- More opportunities for networking and communicating
- Vision broadened
- Flexibility in time and space
- Gives more freedom to the learner and extends the campus into the people's home and work places.
- Assists in facing the challenges in life of women
- Increased the literacy rate of the country and State
- Leads to empowerment of women. (Janaki, 2006)

Distance Education and Practice

Barriers to Access

What barriers do women in developing countries face?

Social contexts (stereotypical attitudes)
- education is more important for males than females
- women are expected to raise children and fulfil domestic responsibilities in the home
- family member sabotage learning opportunities

Lack of financial support
- financially and emotional dependent on male family members
- high tuition fees

Inability to access transportation
- distance or cultural taboos prevent women from traveling to schools

Distance
- schools are too far to reach
- many women are at risk when they travel alone

Distance Education and Practice

Barriers to Access (continued)

Inappropriate curricula
- women are not taught the skills necessary to enter the local economy
- inequitable pedagogical approaches

Unfriendly learning environment
- sexual harassment
- inadequate gender awareness training for teachers and students

Fear about technologies
- lack ability or confidence to utilize technology due to the masculinization of technology
- less access to ICT

Lack of female role models
- disproportionate ratio of female to male teachers
- few examples of women in professional careers

Distance Education and Practice

Barriers to Access (continued)

According to Janaki, women face the following barriers:

Psychological which includes low career aspirations, devaluing of personal skills and capabilities and feeling inferior to male competitors.

Institutional which involves inequitable recruitment and promotion regulations, few opportunities for women in leadership roles, omission of women centred curriculum and course books.

Situational which involves socialization processes (patriarchy), cultural biases, family responsibilities, lack of financial or emotional support from family, not being taken seriously, inhospitable campus environment, lack of network support for coping, difficulties managing time commitments, and lack of mobility.

Distance Education and Practice

Appropriate Learning Environments

What are appropriate learning environments for women?

Bhalalusesa (2001) argues that distance education is a woman-friendly way of acquiring education and formal qualifications (17). Distance education is well suited to meet women's learning needs because it provides the flexibility to manage time and because classroom attendance is not required, they are allowed more time to attend to household commitments.

- Women prefer cooperative and supportive environments where they can discuss personal experiences
- Women benefit from study groups and social interaction (intrapersonal learning)
- Women retain knowledge better if they can apply it to their lived experiences and society in general (interperson learning)
- Strong, personal relationships with teachers and peers fosters positive learning experiences
- Women need a supportive home environment that is conducive to studying
- Women prefer student-centred classrooms over autonomous learning environment
- Women benefit from self-assessments and need time to reflect on their learning process
- Clear outcomes, expectation, and feedback help women succeed in education
- Women participate more in collaborative learning environments

Distance Education and Practice

Technology

How is technology making education more accessible to women?

The following technologies are currently being used in developing countries for the instructional delivery of distance education:

1. Video technologies: Two-way video with two-way audio (also referred to as two-way interactive video).
2. Audio technologies: Two-way audio transmission
3. Internet-based technologies: Internet courses using synchronous (i.e. simultaneous or `real time') computer-based instruction (e.g. interactive computer conferencing or Interactive Relay Chat), and Internet course using asynchronous (i.e. not simultaneous) computer-based instruction (e.g. email, list-serves, and most World Wide Web-based courses).

Other technologies: CD-ROM, mixed mode packages (i.e. a mix of technologies that cannot be assigned to a primary mode) and an open-ended `other, specify' category. (Janaki, 2006, **p ?**).

Distance Education and Practice

Technology (continued)

What are the limitations of distance education technologies?

1. Even though an array of educational technologies exists, they may not be compatible with the countries infrastructure or available to the school.
2. In order to facilitate successful distance education programs schools need to have the following:

- Reliable facilities
- Consistent power supply
- Trained personal
- Capital to invest in telecommunication systems

If distance education does not utilize good instructional design, it may reinforce passive learning habits prevalent in many Asian counties. For countries with logistical or geographical complications, telecommunication systems may become too costly. English is the dominant language used in technology, therefore, education professional in developing countries must become competent in the language.

Distance Education and Practice

Successes

How does distance education improve the lives of women in developing countries?

Studies have shown that the ratio of female to male students is higher in distance education programs than at traditional universities, indicating that online learning is allowing more women to access education. When women receive education and become income generators, their status increases, their children receive more education and they are empowered.

Distance Education and Practice

Successes (continued)

How do women from developing countries benefit from distance education?

- Woman do not have to leave home so they can spend more time with their children and fulfils household responsibilities
- Family benefits economically
- Communities benefit from more educated members
- Women's lives improve materially and emotionally
- Children benefit from positive role-models and receive better educational opportunities and increased access to health care
- Women become more confident and empowered to act as change agents in their communities
- Women become aware of their rights and are not exploited
- Women support other women and share experience
- More career choices become available
- Women become engaged citizen and participate more actively in social change

Distance Education and Practice

Achieving Gender Parity

How can we increase girls' and women's access to education?

When female primary school teacher are equal to male teachers the ratio of female students to male students rises proportionally. For example, in countries where only 20% of teachers are female boys outnumber girls. "Increasing proportions of educated women emerging from the schools will affect the number of women available to work as teachers, as well as household demand for girls' schooling" (UNESCO, 2003).

- Gender equality in education requires:
- Equitable educational opportunities
- Gender bias free classroom and curriculum
- Training in new technologies
- Increased enrollment in math and science
- Access to counseling and academic support that is specific to women's academic and personal needs
- Equality in outcomes to ensure that academic qualifications and diplomas are recognized and warrant equal pay regardless of employees gender
- Transformation of sociocultural attitudes about what is appropriate knowledge for women

Questions

For distance education to be accessible to women in developing countries, what considerations need to be incorporated into the design and delivery?
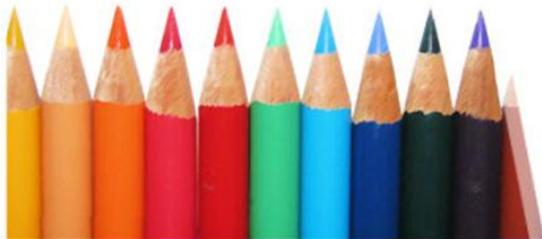
Distance Education and Practice

Recommendations

How can the learning needs of women in developing countries be better met?

- Women living in rural and tribal areas need to know about educational facilities and programs.
- Distance education courses should be orientated to empower women socially and economically.
- Course work should be accessible and in the regional language.
- Learning Institutes should provide orientation programs and improve student support services.
- The curriculum should be gender specific and meet the learning needs of women.
- Tuition fees should be affordable and scholarships and bursaries provided for students with insufficient financial resources.
- Learners and teachers should receive gender sensitisation courses.
- More female teachers need to be trained to increase gender parity in enrolment levels.
- Women should have access to courses and counselling the fosters confidence and helps them overcome learning barriers

Distance Education and Practice

Recommendations (continued)

- Women should be have access to technology and be trained in its application.
- Local T.V. and radio station should introduce programs that help promote education for women.
- Rural communities should have regional study center with libraries and Internet access.
- Distance education should be flexible to accommodate the learning needs mothers and working women.
- There should be mass media campaigns to increase awareness about educational rights and gender equality.
- There should be bridge programs that help women gain the literacy skills to pursue post-secondary school.
- More female teachers need to be certified and competent using ICT.

Access and Success

Without education being

aligned to

the life of the student,

can there be success?

Questions

How can women (and men) in developed countries show solidarity and support education and DE projects for women in developing countries?

Is Westernised education desirable in developing countries?

Why or why not?
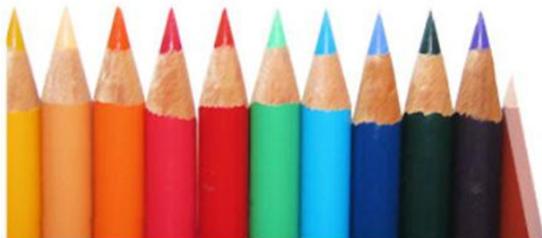
Narratives

The Dhaka Project

Narratives

Camaroon Research Project

Narratives

Afghan Project

Narratives

India Experience

Narratives

Morocco Research Project

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Conclusion

Accessible distance education has the potential to provide

women in developing countries

with the tools and strategies to

make positive changes to

their lives, families, communities,

and countries.