

EDUCATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF YOUNG WOMEN'S LIVES: COMMONWEALTH PERSPECTIVES

12.00 -18.30 28th October 2011

10.00-12.30 29th October, 2011

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge,
Donald McIntyre Building 184 Hills Road, Cambridge

The Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC), the Faculty of Education at Cambridge and the Social Transformations Programme Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat are delighted to announce a two-part regional meeting. Drawing on the CEC theme for the year, *Educating Women, Transforming Society*, and given the high profile of the Commonwealth and Gender Studies in education at Cambridge, the meeting will focus on the implications of education for young women approaching adulthood, aged 15-25.

The first day will thematically explore experiences and policy implications of young women's education. After an introduction which frames Commonwealth commitment to education for girls and women, participants will be given the opportunity to contribute to a range of plenary and small group discussions. The programme will conclude by taking a Commonwealth perspective on how the issues and initiatives that have emerged during the day might be addressed more widely, to enable young women to overcome the difficulties they face and develop their own education and later opportunities. The second day is aimed at post-graduate students and will take the format of a panel discussion focusing on *Research in the Global South: Educational Researchers' Experience*.

The regional meeting brings together policy perspectives of the CEC and Commonwealth Secretariat, research in the Cambridge Centres for Commonwealth Education and Education and International Development, and accounts of educational initiatives for girls in the Commonwealth, currently promoted by organisations in the Cambridge area.

Founded in 1959 and accredited to the Commonwealth, the Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) uses policy advocacy to promote education and training for adults and children, across the 54 states of the Commonwealth of Nations. CEC has played a significant role in framing Commonwealth-wide educational strategy, not least through its work with UK parliamentarians, Commonwealth Heads of Government and Ministerial Meetings.

Within the Faculty of Education at Cambridge, the Centre for Commonwealth Education (CCE) has been established by the Commonwealth Education Trust and the University to make a long-term contribution to primary and secondary education, and to initial and continuing teacher education, throughout the Commonwealth. The Centre for Education and International Development (CEID) seeks to explain patterns of access, quality and outcomes of education in developing countries, and to demonstrate how they can be improved. The focus for its work over the last five years has been investigating how education affects the lives and livelihoods of people living in poorer communities in the developing world, and the policy interventions that might best support them.

At the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Education Section of the Commonwealth Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD), in partnership with Commonwealth governments, aims for the development of just, democratic and progressive societies in which every individual benefits from high quality education, regardless of gender, age, socio-economic status, or ethnicity. In our role as advocates, brokers and catalysts, we promote the expansion of access to education, improved retention and increased completion rates. We focus on disadvantaged groups, including girls and women, children in poor communities, the disabled, the nomadic and those who may be learning in environments suffering conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies. We work closely with our Gender Section which has four priorities: Gender, democracy, peace and conflict; Gender, human rights and law; Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment; Gender and HIV/AIDS.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Aims

The conference will bring together representatives of the UK research community, international, national and non-government organisations, and graduate students to reflect on contemporary educational initiatives which promote opportunities for the well-being of young adult women in the Commonwealth.

The meeting will seek to develop a post-2011 agenda to empower girls through research, policy development and action, in respect of innovative educational and related social interventions.

It will begin by drawing on recent studies of gender equalities in selected African countries before examining their implications for the wider Commonwealth. It will highlight ways in which the interaction between schooling, poverty and other inequalities affect young women's opportunities and subsequent empowerment.

Conference Programme	
Session 1. Friday, 28 th October 2011	
11.30	Registration (Donald McIntyre Building)
12.00-12.15	Welcome Mike Younger (Centre for Commonwealth Education) and Rosemary Preston (Council for Education in the Commonwealth)
12.20-13.10	Lunch (Homerton College)
13.15-13.45	Opening Session: Key issues in the Commonwealth: gender and educational policy and practice Chris Colclough (University of Cambridge) and Pauline Greaves (Commonwealth Secretariat) to respond.
13.45-14.45	Young Women and Gender Relations as Policy Focus Elaine Unterhalter (London Institute of Education) and Joan Thomas Edwards (Deputy High Commissioner for Jamaica) to respond Young Women as Citizens Madeleine Arnot (University of Cambridge) and Auxilia Ponga (UNDP) to respond
14.45-15.15	Discussion in small groups on young women/gender relations as Policy Focus with questions raised by speakers.
15.15-15.30	Tea DMB
15.30-16.30	Education and Women with Disabilities Nidhi Singal (University of Cambridge) with Elspeth Page (CBM UK) and Elizabeth Nicol (High Commission for Ghana) to respond Education, Empowerment and Sexuality Colleen McLaughlin (University of Cambridge) with Lucy Lake (CAMFED) and Molly Brech (Cecily's Fund) to respond
16.30-17.00	Discussion in small groups on pedagogic challenges with questions from speakers.
17.00-17.30	Chair: Fatima Kelleher (CEC)

	<i>Gender Policy Directions: Plenary discussion</i> Closure: Alan Evans (CEC) and Mike Younger (CCE)
17.30	Drinks Reception (Donald McIntyre Building)
	Poster displays in lobby of CEC, EPID, CIED, and graduate projects
Session 2. Saturday, 29th October	
09.45-10.15	Registration and Coffee
10.15-12.30	<i>Research in the Global South: Methodological Reflections</i> Trigger presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female Education: Risks and challenges in researching sexuality (Colleen McLaughlin, Centre for Commonwealth Education) • Researching Disability and Gender in Poverty Contexts (Nidhi Singal and Madeleine Arnot, Faculty of Education) • Raising Achievement in the Caribbean: researching in diverse cultures (Mike Younger, Centre for Commonwealth Education) Group discussions: doctoral research results, experiences and practice – 1 hour Plenary chaired by Shailaja Fennell (Department of Land Economy)