

WOMEN IN CULTURAL POLICIES
FRAUEN IN DER KULTURPOLITIK
LES FEMMES DANS LES POLITIQUES CULTURELLES

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Report No. 3

Women, Equality and Cultural Policies

Frauen, Gleichberechtigung und Kulturpolitik

Les femmes, l'égalité et les politiques culturelles

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Table of Contents

1. Back-ground.....	4
1.1 Purpose of the paper	
1.2 Cultural policy - a definition	
2 Main policy principles for assessing gender issues.....	5
3 Overview of international efforts.....	6
3.1 Conferences	
3.2 International treaties and policies	
3.3 International networking	
4 Global trends and their influence on gender issues.....	10
5 Women's specific needs in cultural policies.....	12
5.1 Cultural pluralism - a gender issue	
5.2 Cultural rights and women's rights	
5.3 Cultural creativity and heritage - the status of women artists	
5.4 Mobilising resources for women in the arts, culture and media	
5.5 Research on gender issues in culture and cultural policy	
5.6 A "spice generation"? challenges to education	
5.7 The media - a productive agent of change?	
5.8 New technologies - challenge for women	
6 Policy recommendations.....	29

1 Background

1.1 Purpose of the paper

In preparation for the UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, Stockholm Sweden, 30th March to 2nd April 1998, the Culture and Development Unit of UNESCO commissioned several background papers to elaborate global issues for each of the key themes to be discussed. Following the submission of these background papers, the issue of gender relations in the arts, media and cultural development required further elaboration, in view of the fact that it was taken up as a subject of key importance in the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development. The European Research Institute for Comparative Cultural Policy and the Arts (ERICArts) prepared a contribution which adds a gender dimension to each of the UNESCO chosen themes and made recommendations for the development of cultural policies.

This is both a simple and difficult task. Women are, on the one hand, slowly achieving recognition for their talents and gaining access to the economic and political decision making processes which had, up to now, framed and restricted their rights and means to expression. To reflect these struggles on a few pages as well as finding a balance between the daily positive actions and deterrent messages is not easy, on the other hand.

Volumes have been written about women and their fight for equality. More and more texts exist about the relationship of women to science, technologies and the media. Little research or policy attention, however, has been given to women in cultural policies and the arts. Few of those that do exist, present sufficient empirical evidence that could be used for the further development or improvement of cultural policies. While this paper identifies some contemporary issues regarding the relationship between women and cultural policies, it is only a first step. A more in-depth and representative investigation is required which will help steer policy makers toward facilitating change.

The authors would like to thank Dr. Patricia Adkins Chiti, President, Donne in Musica, Italy and Dr. Margaret Gallagher, Director, Media and Gender, Paris for their ideas and specific contributions to this text.

1.2 Cultural policy - a definition

According to the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, culture is generally defined as "ways of living together", which includes foundations of legal and economical systems, language or social systems. This extensive definition is of high importance for sensitive intercultural comparisons especially on a North-South axis. It has also proved its viability on a regional level and is now ruling the cultural discourse in Europe as well as in North America and Australia.

One has to be aware, however, that "culture policies" do not exist (and may not be desirable). In this text, we refer to "cultural policies". In order to avoid utopian discussions, it is important to employ a definition which is influenced by the areas reached by actual policy measures or dealt with in policy reflections. This does not mean, however, that we have to traditionalise or confine ourselves to dealing only with the arts in the narrow sense. A modern definition of cultural policies could, rather than compartmentalise or officially define the arts, culture or media sectors, focus on creative expressions of all groups or individuals in society including the dynamic functions of artists. Such a definition would include all means of artistic expression - whether through sound, written form or physical movement. - as well as participation in cultural life as a whole.

Traditional arts sectors such as drama, music or fine arts as well as design, media and multimedia activity, oral history or architecture, should all be considered as areas for action in a definition of cultural policies. Through activities in these and more fields, arts and culture are indivisibly connected with all aspects in society be they in the fields of economy, social organisation law or education processes - therefore we can speak of cultural policy as a set of "inter-sectoral" tasks with high political potential. Equality and participation of all groups in a society fit well into that definition and must therefore be of great concern to cultural policy makers.

Above all, we should not forget that the question of gender relations and equality in the arts, the media and in cultural dissemination is not so much a "technical" or juridical problem to be solved by politicians or cultural policy makers. In fact, culture remains in a vulnerable position in present public policy agendas. Rather, gender equality is a matter of respecting human dignity, of enjoying the talents available in all strata of a society, and of making use of the full spectrum of views, works and challenges to achieve a truly "cultured" life - which will then also be imaginative and vivid, implying sensitivity as much as passion.

2 Main policy principles for assessing gender issues

The following five main principles reflect the values and goals important in the development of this text and refer not only to the past, but to current aspirations of women in 90's. They have been derived from and con

fer with those which appear in many international treaties and political declarations. They should be used as guides or indicators for the evaluation of culture and media policies in reference to gender equality as well as to the promotion of other marginalised groups in society.

- **equality:** In decision-making positions in the arts, culture and media, in remuneration and social conditions (which does not rule out specific measures for women such as child care), further education and training, opportunities;
- **diversity:** Freedom of expression, including those with differing values and opinions; acknowledging the differences among women rather than treating them as a homogeneous group; support for the existence of specific institutions, rights, rites and rituals of women;
- **recognition:** Refers to both the cognitive realisation and the emotive respect of women's rights as human rights; of women's achievements through funding, prizes, continued training, prestige; portrayal of women in the media;
- **transparency:** In political processes, production and dissemination of information (including research), nomination and decision-making processes;
- **productivity:** With a strong relationship to economic development, but to be reconciled with societal needs, emphasis on individual creativity/talents as opposed to pure market demands. Principles of equality and diversity are essential but without productivity, sustainable development will not be achieved.

3 Overview of international efforts

3.1 Conferences

In the past eighty years great progress has been made to raise awareness of gender equality. An enormous amount of advocacy work by women's groups has, however, only recently begun to bear fruit. Arguments such as those demonstrating women's economic contribution to society, "Women are good business", or facts such as "discriminatory practises leading to underdevelopment", have begun to turn the heads of those with economic and political power which has facilitated change at the international level. As stated in the report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, "the most pervasive denial of human potential is found in the discrimination that women suffer world wide. Society benefits hugely from the economic contributions of women, although this is seldom recognised".¹

An overview of the World's Women by the United Nations in 1995² demonstrates that it was only since the beginning of the 1990's that women rights and issues of equality have been finally enshrined in international

¹ Report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*. Oxford University Press, UK, 1995, p.143.

² *The World's Women 1995: trends and statistics*. United Nations, New York, 1995.

l legislation. Considering that the first UN World conference on women took place in 1975 in Mexico City, it is difficult to believe that women's rights were only internationally recognised as human rights in 1993 at a World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna! If it took the international community so long to act upon the myriad of recommendations made over the years, how could national governments be motivated or even forced to make changes and place women, alongside men, at the centre of economic, political and social change and development?

While this delay is striking, an even greater lack of attention is given to women in the arts, culture and media spheres. It was not until September 1995, when the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace held in Beijing, China, that, (at least) the question of media as well as related topics in the field of human rights were taken up at this level. Two major events - one designed for official government delegations and the other for non governmental organisations - were held during this two week conference. The result was a Platform of Action and Declaration – to be carried out by the year 2000. It is interesting to note that the majority of reservations made by delegates concerned cultural and social factors in their respective countries which would pose difficulties in translating the principles and recommendations into action.

In 1995, the report of the UNESCO World Commission for Culture and Development identified the relationship between gender and culture as an important contribution to sustainable development and as a priority area for exploration. It claimed that gender - as a societal rather than sexual construct - is one of the most sensitive issues within periods of economic and cultural transformation. More specifically, women are most closely linked with notions of cultural distinctiveness and are generally identified as the "bearers and signifiers of their culture". Action toward gender equality is inextricably linked to questions of identity and power.³

3.2 International treaties and policies

Undoubtedly, a supportive legal environment is an important stepping stone on the road towards gender equality:

- One of the first European laws to declare equal opportunities between men and women was the Treaty of Rome, 1957, Article 119 which declares that all signatories guarantee equality of remuneration between men and women.
- The second, to follow only in 1976, was a European Commission directive on equal treatment between men and women promoting equality of access to education, employment of opportunities and conditions.
- This directive was followed by a 1984 recommendation promoting positive action policies for women.

³ Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*. UNESCO Publishing, France, 1995, p.131.

- A treaty adopted by the United Nations on 3 September 1981 on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, was considered as an important international bill of rights for women.
- In 1995 the European Union and the European Broadcasting Union published a Charter for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting, one of the first culture or media specific regional policies directed specifically toward women.

This short list demonstrates that legislative achievements towards equality at international and regional levels have been made, in some cases resulting in national action and examples of good practise in this field. However, due to the lack of continuous empirical monitoring of these instruments, it is difficult to assess the success of such efforts properly and adjust legislation or equality programmes accordingly. As a rule, one can still say that in many countries there may exist policies about women or cultural policies, but not policies about women in culture.

In recent years, two alternative avenues of policy action have been followed in different countries. On a more informal level, in some cases to compensate for a lack of official legislative action, concepts such as "mainstreaming" (all sectors of society to bring women's presence and status in from the margins) have become popular as well as the development of networks and the emergence of specialised institutions and programmes for women⁴. On the other hand, more formal regulations have been implemented in other countries including affirmative action policies (positive discrimination) and quota systems. The latter being frequently applied in media organisations or in other regulated arts activities such as the awarding of state prizes.

It should, however, be recognised that certain models of affirmative action programmes, especially when organised on the principle of "automatic preference" for applicants coming from a disadvantaged or ethnic group, may not have achieved their goals and rather have caused resentment or even hostility, as has been the case in some countries. When such preferences are clearly defined as parts of a process involving individual attributes such as experience, qualification or a particular social situation as selection criteria, they tend to be more successful and are also better accepted when it comes to legal conflicts (cf. ruling of the European Court in Luxembourg on promotion programmes for more gender equality, in November 1997).

3.3 International networking

While official international dialogue and national legislative action has helped during the last 20 years to raise awareness of gender equality, the returns of "official" moves toward change have indeed been slow. Legi

⁴ Although specialised institutions like the FrauenMuseum in Germany may be required in order to raise awareness as well as to remind policy and programme makers of the continued marginalisation of whole sections of society, the main purpose of such institutions should be to create a ripple effect, thus bringing women into the mainstream. Concern, however has been voiced over the potential danger of ghettoising women in the very circumstance and institutions created to liberate them from patriarchal practices. In the meantime, there is a consensus that specialised institutions are necessary until the goal of balanced gender representation in all public cultural institutions can be achieved.

slative action may not always be the foremost or indeed the most successful solution for change: in their contribution to a European Expert Conference on Women in the Arts and Media, Guillemonat and Padovani deplored 'closed shop' practices, exclusively for males, (*la fermeture de milieux exclusifs*) in some areas of the music sector such as conducting⁵. Would quotas have helped?

Today, women do not expect a rose garden from legislative initiatives. In a representative study of the female population in France, 1995, where the answers to the question, "What could contribute most to a more equal division of labour between men and women", illustrated that only 6% called for the adoption of new laws. Eleven percent wanted a better application of existing laws while 80% believed a change in mentality (*évolution de mentalités*) would facilitate change.⁶ But how to achieve such an evolution in a more informal way?

Aided by developments in information and communication technologies, women have forged transnational alliances or "networks" that cut across geographic, political, social, economic, cultural boundaries to share information among themselves and with others, to raise awareness throughout layers of society about women's achievements and equal opportunities and to advocate political action. Networks, according to Nicole Bounaga, University of Algiers, "are a place for meetings discussions of common interests, contacts, communication; a space which provides freedom to innovate (in contrast to the rigidity of administrative structures)". This advantage can also become a disadvantage as was pointed out during an international conference in Canada, since "practical instruments or long term projects" sometimes need more firmer structures to ensure practical results."⁷

Networks ideally function in a non hierarchical, non bureaucratic manner, thus allowing for an exchange of views and opinions free from censorship. It goes without saying that public and private support for women's networks is crucial for longer term sustainability. To date, there are hundreds of networks for women, both electronic and "traditional", but the proportion of arts and media related groups is relatively small. Some networks include: Women in Multimedia (WIM) created in 1994 which acts as a forum for women working and interested in new media (www.wim.org) or Women in Music/Les femmes dans la musique (WIM) established in 1991 which strives to, among many things, raise awareness of women's contribution to music. In addition some festivals and fairs, such as the International Feminist Book Fair (the 6th fair took place in Australia dealing with Indigenous, Asian and Pacific women writers and publishers) and the Donne in Musica Festival and Symposium in Fiuggi Italy, are organised according to principles of international networking.

⁵ Guillemonat, F., Padovani, C. *Musique: Les Femmes en Sourdine*. Conférence des experts européenne: Situation sociale et professionnelle des femmes dans les domaines de la culture et des médias. Bonn, 1997.

⁶ *Avec les Femmes, une nouvelle organisation de la société*. Compte-rendu des débats dans le cadre de la 4^{ème} conférence mondiale sur les femmes, La Sorbonne, France, 1995, p.168.

⁷ Cliche, D. ed. *Crossing Frontiers: Issues of Heritage, Culture and Identity in a Comparative Context*: Conference Report". Department of Canadian Heritage, Hull, Quebec, January 1995, page 21.

Networks being a modern, more "civil society" approach to international co-operation, one would have thought that women would play a larger, more prominent role in their administration. A closer look at general arts, culture and media networks has, however, revealed that the share of women as presidents and/or managers is below expectation⁸. In fact out of 146 arts, culture and media networks in Europe surveyed only 33% of the managerial positions and 26% of presidential positions are held by women.

4 Global trends and their influence on gender issues

In an examination of women and cultural policies it is important to ask ourselves whether there are some global trends which inform us of fundamental societal changes that will shape the position and capacities of women and the opportunities open to them. We have identified four trends for discussion:

- (monetary) globalisation and new localism: society as a "marketplace"
- sustainable development: the model of the "eco-system"
- new roles for public authorities and social relations - the goal of a "civil society"
- changing communication practises and the idea of an "information society"

During the 1990's, *globalisation* became a key word in defining the changes that are taking place all over the world in industrial and social relations, in institutional and organisational structures and in the continuous transformations of the social fabric called "civil society". The main trends of globalisation are: internationalisation and liberalisation of trade, ever-increasing importance and power of trans- and multinational corporations, emergence of global financial markets (highly influential in political decision making), and the construction of global communication infrastructure, sometimes called the "information superhighway". Although, we continue to employ the labelling of the above developments as "globalisation", demanding the control of interdependencies, speed and productivity, there have been fewer efforts to analyse the concrete effects of these developments on the "condition humaine", including the - differing - living and working conditions of men and women as well as gender equality in initiating and implementing changes at the heart of this very condition.

There have been some attempts to deal with this problem in terms of the nature of work ("postfordism", evolving class structure, expansion of middle classes) or in terms of cultural orientation (cognitive vs. emotional search for collectivity or for imagined communities). We know that the "real world" economic changes, especially those due to *globalisation/new localisation processes* ("glocal"), and the neo-liberal orientation

⁸ Result of an evaluation conducted by ERICArts of the number of co-ordinators, managers and presidents of arts, culture and media networks as presented in "*Arts Networking in Europe II*" researched by Nicolas Vial Montero and edited by Rod Fisher, Arts Council of England, London, UK, 1997.

to public economic policies have during the 1990s changed the financing - and even other conditions - of the arts and culture. As well the introduction of the *communication and information technologies*, especially new multimedia applications and computer aided techniques, have altered both the conditions and actual practices of creative work, and the transmission and use of its products. There is on the one hand, a recognition of the opportunities this development can open for women, but also on the other hand, doubts that male dominance may hinder such opportunities.

The concept of *sustainable development*, which allows for continued technological progress and economic growth, aims at the same time to maintain the basic conditions (especially material resources and human capital) for the continuation of these processes while maintaining the basic values of humanity which are continuously re-organised and re-categorised under different labels of human rights. There is also a growing awareness that the basic conditions of progress and growth of basic values of humanity cannot be maintained without radically re-structuring the organisation of human relations and basic institutional textures of society.

There have been arguments that women play a crucial role in maintaining a liveable "eco-system".

There has been an additional focus on concepts of a "*civil society*", in which voluntary organisations play a larger role in, for example, mobilising resources, promoting solidarity and the moral code, and supporting action for good causes - including the reduction of risks in their own communities and societies as well as globally. Although the idea of civil society is still bound to a great extent to the idea of the nation state, new international movements (environmental and human rights movements, fight against exclusion and for equality) have been converging. This has made it possible to launch within the United Nations system the idea of Global Civil Society (see the reports of the Commission on Global Governance and the Commission on Culture and Development). These attempts have, however, encountered some strong counter-forces. In particular, solidarity is being undermined by inherent contradictions caused by strict monetary perceptions of economic processes (importance of "share holder value" etc). As well, increased economic interests of world trade blocs have revived interest in *localism* - an increased affiliation with local (economic) communities and the environment. The neologism "*glocal*" can probably be best understood in the social realm: people increasingly perceive the world as a "diminishing and endangered whole" and, therefore, retreat to preserve their identity through actions that guarantee the security, wealth and quality of their close environment. There is of course the danger that the "*glocal*" squeeze will create a new division and, once again, rely on women to act as care takers of such an environment.

This short excursion into the jungle of ideas regarding globalisation and other modern trends does not wholly cover the richness of these concepts. Our intention was simply to sketch the context in which we find ourselves when assessing gender relations on a world wide scale - obviously, "a new understanding of the interaction between cultures, nation states, regional markets and emerging global information and communication systems"⁹ will be critical to the development of concepts and methodology for research activities in this an

⁹ Arizpe, L. *The cultural dimensions of global change: an anthropological approach*. UNESCO, France, 1996.

d related fields as is the maintenance of some basic values of humanity. Coupled with a more concrete analysis of the relationship between these processes, such a world view can balance or enhance the often fragmented research on gender. The gender issue certainly offers one of the best testing grounds for policy principles advocated in different international declarations and treaties that are supposed to set standards for the organisation of political and socio-economic life around the world.

5 Women's specific needs in cultural policies

To what extent do these global trends influence gender issues in the arts, culture and media field? UNESCO has identified eight priority areas for cultural policy makers which will be used to direct our discussion. These include: a commitment to cultural pluralism, cultural rights, cultural creativity and cultural heritage, culture for children and young people, improving research and international cooperation for cultural policies, mobilising resources for cultural activities, the media in cultural policy and culture and the new media technologies. Key issues for women, within the context of the above global trends and relevant main principles identified in section 2 of this paper will be presented. The issues and observations discussed in the following section will vary across disciplines within the arts, culture and media, and may not be applicable in all geopolitical or cultural contexts.

5.1 Cultural pluralism - a gender issue

What does cultural pluralism mean for women? As we approach the twenty-first century, many women continue to be discriminated against, sometimes because of their age, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, or disability. Despite the modern state philosophy of liberal individualism which according to Bhikhu Parekh, recognised "all individuals had equal, that is, the same rights"¹⁰, women have not been given the same chance as men to make full use of these rights. Furthermore, the factual individualisation of women, as of all members of modern societies, is not represented in the arts and media. Basic stereotypes of women are permeated throughout the media, while creative and decision making roles remain reserved for men (as seen in common television serials, for example). The tendency of homogenisation, rather than individualisation goes even further when it comes to the media portrayal of ethnic minorities, of not only women, but also of men. According to Europe Singh, Commissioning Executive, BBC Education and Secretary, Public Broadcasting for a Multicultural Europe, there is "too often a common portrayal of men and women from ethnic minorities as an undifferentiated mass, concentrating on the 'otherness' of minority groups, the gulf between their culture and ours".¹¹

¹⁰ Parekh, B. *"A Commitment to Pluralism"*, background paper to the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural and Media Policies for Development, Stockholm Sweden, 30th March to 2nd April 1998, p.3.

¹¹ *"Changing Images, Changing Attitudes - European Union Challenged Television Producers to be a Focus for Equality"* Press Release, from the European Commission Conference, "Changing Images, Changing Attitudes", Thessaloniki, Greece, 30 October to 2 November 1997.

The above tendencies, though they may become more wide spread with the introduction of new information and communication technologies, today basically refer to the industrialised countries and some large metropolises. However, the great majority of mankind is not living in the "cultural hearts" of such metropolises, but rather in suburban or provincial settings, some of them still in traditional ethnic surroundings. In the latter case, the majority of the public may never have access to a large theatre or museum in their lifetime, not to mention an Internet account. Therefore, cultural policies aiming at pluralism must take these realities into account in the development of their funding strategies, give weight to informal artistic endeavours, to "grassroot media" or to institutions and networks offering cultural education for broader groups in society.

One of the main tasks in achieving true cultural pluralism, a "creative diversity" to be proud of, is to guarantee full recognition of the wealth of women's talents and work. This is not only important in order to enhance the status of women artists, journalists etc., but even more so to ensure that pluralism is an understandable concept. As we have pointed out earlier, there have been efforts to improve the role and the status of women by reflecting on their economic importance in the marketplace as consumers or cheap labour. In fact, there may be much better ways to promote equality by referring to examples from the arts, cultural activities and the media. The results of women's creativity in these fields, and also the particular talents of women in such areas as cultural education, can be used to enhance women's status and bring otherwise abstract political principles - such as gender equality - to life. The visualisation of women's achievements can raise general public consciousness toward the promotion of gender equality.

The power of the media, in particular films, television series as well as music and on occasion in the book publishing sector, to bring a particular group into public attention is unrivalled. The media, however, is not a panacea to rectify imbalances. In some cases, the lime lights of the media can blind the *once* discriminated when access to the mainstream channels has been achieved and the temptation to discriminate against those they have left behind are not resisted. For example, in the United States, black male film makers with access to resources and distribution channels have enabled a vision of black masculinity to permeate not only the American market, but also the world. However, on the other hand, the situation for black female film makers has not followed suit and it will only be "when black films begin to be directed by black women, perhaps the wide range of identities that black women command will be adequately represented on the large screen."¹²

In summary, cultural and media (programming) policies must recognise that women are not a homogenous group. They should reflect the diverse needs of women regardless of age, professional or social background, religious or individual beliefs, language, ethnic origins, or sexual orientation, etc. Equal access for all women to education, training, resources and decision making processes must also become a policy priority.

¹² Becker, Carol. *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society and Social Responsibility*. Routledge, New York, 1994, p.166.

As will be discussed further in section 5.6, the issue of a thorough revision of text books reflecting the diversity of achievements and struggles of all strata of society remains to be taken up.

5.2 Cultural rights and women's rights

It has been estimated by the United Nations that women as a marginalised majority do "two-thirds of the world's work for less than ten per cent of the world's salaries and own less than one per cent of the world's wealth". To a large degree this situation is also true for women working in the arts, culture and media. "The marginalisation of women is based on certain practical and ideological constructs, often excused by reference to biology: assumptions about women's strength and stamina, querulous hormones and a propensity to have babies. These assumptions are unacceptable, yet they continue to impinge upon the arts structurally: through administrative and funding bodies, through verbal language and visual representation; through the recording of history and through education."¹³

Could cultural rights ameliorate this situation? What are cultural rights, anyway?

As has been pointed out, "cultural rights might be seen as including all those rights necessary for human dignity and development including the rights to education, to freedom of speech and information, to privacy and to religious freedoms, as well as to protection of the fruits of artistic and literary creation."¹⁴ Generally, such rights have been understood to be mainly those of the individual, but, according to Julia Häusermann of the International Movement of Rights and Humanity, "many now argue that the term cultural rights is a larger notion than the individual one of the right to participate in cultural life and that the former includes the rights of peoples and groups to their own cultural identity and integrity. In this respect it is a collective right ... perhaps the better view is to regard cultural rights as combining individual rights and of group rights".¹⁵

In this view, the right of every individual female artist to artistic freedom, for example, - including the right not to adhere to the feminist movement, on the one hand, and the right for self-expression for feminist groups on the other, can be conceived in terms of cultural rights. However, can we and should we in general assess women's rights from the perspective of cultural rights? For example, cases such as women's circumcision have been used as an argument for reducing women's rights to cultural rights - as a right for an individual woman to refuse circumcision and as a right for groups of women to resist this practice. However, this might lead to the view that there is no need to recognise such issues as ones of human rights which are universally advocated. Women as human beings, are not a homogeneous group and structures and rules governing each woman's cultural environment varies greatly. Consequently the issue of circumcision could be an issue

¹³ Fisher, R., Groombridge, B., Häusermann, J., Mitchell, R. *Human Rights and Cultural Policies in a Changing Europe: the right to participate in cultural life*. Report of a Round Table of same title. CIRCLE Publication No 6. Helsinki, 1994, p.56.

¹⁴ Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

¹⁵ Fisher, R. et al, Helsinki 1994, p.121-123.

e in the debate over cultural values and their relativity, but should, on the other hand, be at the same time regarded as a universal human rights issue. The opening of this debate and, eventually, the universal recognition of such rights, would provide the necessary frame for women to determine their own fate and use their cultural rights - including the right to differ.

Obviously, the goal of achieving equality for women in all aspects of their life and their protection against open discrimination or even violence is not adequately secured within the prevailing concepts of 'cultural rights'. However, such concepts have their role when it comes to enhancing and recognising contributions to a culture by different groups of societies, including women, thus ensuring cultural pluralism and respect of differences. This remains a debate to be furthered not only among international experts but also at national and grass root levels.

5.3 Cultural creativity and heritage - the status of women artists

Women artists remain largely invisible not only in history but also in today's society. How come? Is it because women's work is of lesser value than men's? Absolutely not. The main problem over the centuries has been the lack of encouragement or incentive for women artists as well as a lack of recognition of the potential of women artists and the promotion of her work. While some of these matters require further empirical investigation, there is some evidence to suggest the following:

1. Social aesthetics have been, almost exclusively, and continue to be defined and hence controlled by male "gatekeepers" - but their world view may differ from that seen through female eyes. This "power through definition of quality" may be somewhat less rigidly displayed today, but is surely still valid. Figures such as 80-90% of higher teaching posts occupied by males in academies, universities and leading newspaper positions support this argument.¹⁶ The increased enrolment of women in higher education or training courses has not translated into an increase of women in the labour market. Questions such as: "is additional training becoming an indicator of a lack of talent?" are beginning to emerge.¹⁷
2. Discrimination within families, which traditionally have encouraged daughters to assume other societal responsibilities such as care taking and reproduction, is said to have played a larger role than discrimination against women in the outside marketplace.¹⁸ According to Titia Top, this situation, fortunately, seems to be less relevant, especially for younger female artists in some European countries or in parts of North

¹⁶ Zentrum für Kulturforschung. *Frauen im Kultur und Medienbetrieb II*. Report for the German Ministry of Education and Science, Bonn, ARCult Media, 1995.

¹⁷ This question is currently under investigation by ERICArts in its study, "Women in Arts and Media Professions: European Comparisons" carried out under the 4th Action Plan to promote equality between men and women of the European Union.

¹⁸ Cowen, Tyler. *Why Women Succeed or Fail in the Arts*. Journal of Cultural Economics. 20: 93-113, 1996, Kluwer Academic Publishers. The Netherlands, pg.98.

America.¹⁹ This, however, may not be the case in traditional societies where the family unit continues to play a key role.

3. For more than a century, women did not generally have access to well developed training or education facilities. This seems to have completely changed, as evidenced in many empirical studies and conference debates.
4. It has been suggested that women specialise in activities which lack social status. Historical evidence shows, however, that the link to women's domestic roles is a more important factor in allocating female artistic effort. In addition, many women systematically face "glass ceilings". They are often better educated than men and therefore can see their way to "the top" but are often channelled into occupations or special tasks which have a lower economic ranking, subsequently translating into lower remuneration.²⁰
5. The set of values and professional aspirations of women still show differences to those of men, but this can easily be attributed to socialisation processes and to the absence of support by their mentors, professors and other available role models (which continue to be predominantly male). In addition, the general image of the independent successful professional artist remains contradictory to female stereotypes which have not yet converged: "To initiate change and to create, are manifestations of power" which are encouraged in men and not in women while amateurism is considered a "feminine activity"²¹

It has been proven that female-dominated arts have, at various times in the past, achieved high status within their cultures. Art forms such as textiles, considered a prestigious art in the culture of the ancient Peruvian Incas, wall paintings of the sub-Saharan African tribes, quilt-making in America, embroidery arts from Persia, Egypt and China or weaving during the German Bauhaus period. Unfortunately, the aesthetic police have not sufficiently valued these art forms, and their policy maker followers have not lifted these art forms into mainstream funding.

Even without formal training or support, women have excelled in other areas such photography. Photography was a new art form with no academies, no formal schools, and no established techniques. Neither men nor women received special photographic training in their childhood [at the time when photography was invented]. Women produced "outstanding achievements in photography almost immediately after the birth of t

¹⁹ Top, Titia. *Art and Gender: Creative Achievement in the Visual Arts*. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1993.

²⁰ This has been a major explanation for the great income differences between men and women as recorded in two extensive representative surveys of authors and artists (4.700 personal interviews were conducted!), undertaken on behalf of the German Government in the early 70's, cf. Fohrbeck, K./Wiesand, A.J. *Der Autorenreport*, Rowohlt. 1972 and: *Der Künstler-Report*. Hanser. Germany 1975.

²¹ Top, Titia, 1993.

his genre as is the case in women's pioneering contribution to multimedia arts."²²

As history has shown us, incentive policies have been quite successful in enabling women artists to engage or continue their work and receive due recognition. In such cases, there is an impression record of female artistic achievement. In addition, after a period where incentives have been given more attention in cultural policies, women are now attaining increasingly higher ranks as cultural producers, both in the visual arts and in music, literature and other cultural pursuits. Although discrimination and lack of training still remain formidable obstacles in many parts of the world, these barriers are contingent upon human belief and conduct. Focus should be shifted from comparing men and women's artistic achievements in a given period to examining the changing course of female achievement over time, genres and societies.²³

In examining incentive policies it is, however, important to recognise the context or the environment in which these strategies have been created. In some cases, incentives such as quota systems on prize juries or preferential treatment in other areas, have given rise to the number of women artists who earn enough money to make a living from their work. In comparing the results from two reports presented to the German government, the first in 1987 and the second in 1995 (*Frauen in Kultur und Medienbetrieb*), one can note that a number of innovative measures or funding strategies were inaugurated for women working in the arts and media. However, these strategies were limited in three aspects: In the first case, they referred almost exclusively to publicly controlled funding bodies, institutions and juries. Second, funding bodies still handed out the most prestigious and best awarded prizes and bursaries to men. Thirdly, hiring (firing) practises have in most cases not been included in such incentive policies, arguing that "quality" or freedom of the press would be key indicators for employment.

5.4 Mobilising resources for women in the arts, culture and media

As governments increasingly search for possible contributions from the private and "third" sectors in support of arts and cultural programmes, the crucial role of women in the development of these sectors must be studied and better recognised. Careful monitoring of these developments, not only of funding and provision of services but also of the development and composition of human resources is essential even if it does not seem fashionable in times of neoliberalism. Especially in the private sector, but not confined to it, there is an increased exploitation of "free" labour in which an extremely high percentage of women can be identified among the unpaid or underpaid contributors. Studies conducted for the 1995 UNDP Human Development Report revealed that approximately US\$16 trillion worth of human activity worldwide are not included in the official US\$23 trillion estimate. Approximately three quarters of this unaccounted activity can be seen in the "non-monetised" or voluntary work done by women. It has been shown that 40% of men's total economic time is paid while only one-third of women's is similarly paid. Therefore, women remain, in large parts of t

²² Cowen, Tyler. 1996, pg.99-105.

²³ Ibid, p. 102-9.

their work, invisible contributors to the world economy. These facts have tremendous impact on the cultural sector as the majority of the work is done on a volunteer basis and mostly by women.²⁴

As volunteers or "stagiaires", women may constitute an important resource in qualitative terms, but this kind of involvement in the labour market should not be readily accepted as it could result in a handy mechanism to extend traditional male hierarchies/patriarchies in public and private institutions or to make it easier for authorities to dispose of their obligation to provide for a diverse cultural life. These trends, are again, related to a general observation in the distribution of labour world wide.

In research reports undertaken on behalf of the Council of Europe and UNESCO²⁵, twelve major new types of measures for financing the arts and culture were identified. They range from the extension and reorganisation of cultural administration and public budget appropriations over new fiscal and parafiscal measures to new compensations through the use of intellectual property rights and alternative types of subsidies, revenue transfers and credit systems, but only a few seem to be relevant when it comes to supporting a better gender balance in the arts and media. Among those which are applicable include specific employment policy appropriations that positively take into account the living and working conditions of women or incentives in the form of matching grant systems to complement activities of foundations or networks. The whole system of fiscal and parafiscal measures, on the contrary, does not really apply to this field of action as is the case of the compensation via copyright which is highly regulated by international conventions. There are, however, in some countries, interesting models and experiences regarding the establishment of credit systems that encourage freelance and economic activity by women in the fields of arts, education and media. Research has also shown that programmes of international and supranational bodies such as the European Union that were originally not directly earmarked towards women or the cultural sector can be "re-channelled" in favour of gender related projects in a given field if the latter are adequately prepared and seem reasonable in their approach.²⁶

Central institutions such as state museums or theatres, as important as they are, should not guide all cultural policy and use up all funding devoted to the arts. Public funding of programmes such as "Culture in the Neighborhood" or "Community Arts", now found in European as much as in Latin American, or some Asian and African countries, is crucial, especially in view of the need for a broader educational foundation to meet future challenges of working life. Normally, such programmes (and generally "Third Sector" activities) rely to a great extent on contributions of women

²⁴ ZfKf/ERICArts, *Women in Arts and Media Professions: European Comparisons*. Conference report, Bonn, Germany, 1997, p. 9.

²⁵ Mitchell, R. *The New Measures for Financing the Arts and Culture*. Helsinki, Finland, 1989. See also Watanabe, M. *Mobilising Resources for Cultural Activities*. Background paper to the Inter-governmental Conference on Cultural and Media Policies for Development. Stockholm, Sweden, March/April 1998.

²⁶ Scott, L., Kirby, S and Teuchies, H. *More Bread and Circuses: Who does what for the arts and culture in Europe*. Informal Theatre Meeting and the Arts Council of England, 1994.

5.5 Research on gender issues in culture and cultural policy

This is not the place to recall all of the research during this century related generally to gender issues, or in particular to the many sociological or anthropological studies conducted over the years. What we need to keep in mind is that since the 1990s, in most countries, analysis of media content have far outnumbered studies dealing with the social and professional situation of women working in the arts or culture. There have, however, been several studies on the employment status, social situation or remuneration of women journalists,²⁷ - results of which are not different from the evidence presented throughout this text on women artists.

The majority of content analysis on women have produced mostly quantitative information. Such studies usually adopt a more micro rather than macro level analytical approach yet have often taken into consideration issues such as media ownership patterns, media structure and regulation or economic and political structures in determining the construction of gender images.²⁸ Research on macro issues is being conducted mainly in the context of the new media. Key issues being examined in this sector include access, ownership, education and training. Additional emphasis in other studies is placed on pornography, sexual harassment, language and communication, gender identity and computer games.²⁹

Quite often, the role and presence of women in the arts and media is underestimated or misinterpreted due to the lack of readily available comparative information. Therefore, the first task should be to provide for a constant monitoring of the role and development of women and men in the arts, cultural dissemination and media. This implies, among other things, the collection, exchange and dissemination of comparable data and information on the status and role of women working as artists, authors and designers, as curators and librarians, as agents, directors and arts administrators and in related professions, on a permanent basis.

Occupational studies on women working in the arts and media have been carried out in Germany (surveys carried out by Zentrum für Kulturforschung/ZfKf and by Petzinger/Kozinowski for the Government), in the United Kingdom (eg. a series of sectoral studies on employment patterns and training needs conducted by Woolf and Holly 1995-6) and in Australia (national survey on women working in multimedia, Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, 1997) The results of these national studies (latter unknown) effected change at political and practical levels and serve as important illustrations of how research and empirical

²⁷ For more information, see Gallagher, *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*. UNESCO, Paris, 1995; Lünenborg, M. *Journalistinnen in Europa: Eine internationale vergleichende Analyse zum Gendering im sozialen System Journalismus*. Westdeutscher Verlag GmbH. Opladen, 1997; Zilliacus-Tikkanen Henrika. *Journalistikens Essens I Ett Könsperspektiv*. Rundradions Jäaställdhetskommitté. Finland, 1997 and other works.

²⁸ Kivikuru U. (project manager of transnational team) *State of the Art Research: Images of Women in the Media*. Prepared in the framework of the EU Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, June 1997, p.5-6.

²⁹ Ibid, p.8.

data may be used to mediate working relations between women artists and employers or the state. These and other studies incited a great deal of public debate in the media which contributed to consciousness raising and ripple effects in sectors such as education. They also created a desire for similar data and information in or from other countries.

In order to compare such data and information, adequate and realistic indicators must be first developed as pointed out at the first European Expert Conference on Women in Arts and Media Professions, hosted by the ZfKf in Königswinter/Bonn, Germany in 1997. This conference also served as a preparatory meeting for a large comparative project carried out under the auspices of the European Union until the end of 1999, on the same subject. Recommendations were made regarding the methodology and particular indicators for such comparisons. Among them:

- The overall methodology needs to consider not only the social, economic and political context of women working in the arts and media, but also reflect the diversity of women's experience. Therefore, serious attention needs to be given to women from ethnic minorities as well as other marginalised groups.
- It was observed that employment boundaries are changing (the word "career" is being redefined) which is effecting the development of the labour market. Job security is no longer a guarantee and everyone is expected to assume a multitude of tasks, often as freelancers. For example, journalists increasingly have to perform technical or similar functions. An historical assessment of women's work, as traditionally multi-skilled managers, may provide a model for the new, "flexible" workforce.
- There is a need to study the value/effects of different types of affirmative action plans. For example *internal plans* (appointing an equal opportunity officer vs. quotas) and *external plans* to garner political commitment for equality at the national level.

This monitoring should be accompanied by investigations of "good" or "best practises" and of legislation in this domain adding transparency to policy making. Results should reaffirm public awareness of the need to promote women's equal opportunities in policy making, production, dissemination, training and research in the arts and media, as long as there is a need to do this. Since the links of this increasingly sophisticated research field to the issues of globalisation, sustainable development and re-organisation of civil society remain feeble, UNESCO should secure contacts between running projects, try to improve comparability and strengthen co-operation between international networks, initiatives, experts and specialised institutions or NGO's in different world regions.

5.6 A "spice generation"? challenges to education

Would it be a great surprise to learn that around the world: girls do not have equal access to education, nutrition or physical or mental health facilities, not to mention arts or cultural facilities? that girls are, nevertheless

ss, considered by some as "a good investment" but this is only if they are well educated, since this may lead to reduced child mortality, falling birth rates, less child labour and increased gender equality".³⁰ That society and the media transmit inferiority images to girls which reinforces the vicious circle of gender inequality over generations? or that girls remain almost invisible in research, policy development and programme making? Sound familiar?

It is clear that the present and past struggles of women will not change unless better education and encouragement of girls is secured and society's learned behaviour for the unequal treatment of women – their role models -- is transformed. Current pressure on girls to continue as "care takers for society" must be lessened.

Not only girls, but also boys must be taught about gender equality in order to facilitate change. This requires assistance and guidance from parents, teachers and inspiring women role models in the community. In this process, boys and girls can learn to work together as equals, to communicate with each other and address these types of issues collectively.

Aided by the media, male and female stereotypes enter into children's psyche without the critical tools to determine discriminatory practices. In her paper, "Children's and Young Peoples' Culture, Isaksson suggests that parents [and teachers] explain and talk to their children about the content of the programmes they are consuming. We can further this important point to insist that parents are also critical in their programme discussions, especially when discrimination against women is prevalent. Media education is an imperative to provide girls (and boys) with the tools they need to understand the millions of images and messages that are transmitted via the globalised media market, especially regarding violent images and sex role stereotypes.

Targeted encouragement of and confidence-building for girls at an early age is crucial. This can be achieved through the consistent provision of positive role models and elaborated information about leading women.

Until school textbooks and hence course material in the arts, but also in all subjects from history, geography, literature, economics etc., are rewritten and updated to include the contribution of women and hence establishing women as positive role models, it will be very difficult to obtain true equality between men and women. While in fine art and in literature, some progress has been made and women are now appearing more frequently in encyclopedias and media reports, the example of music - a truly global language - still shows us the deficit and need for such role models which could help future generations of pupils and students. Dr . Patricia Adkins Chiti questions,

"Why are school text books still teaching that Gregory was a great theoretician who invented, or imposed, Gregorian plain chant upon the Catholic Church and why is Hildegard von Bingen, perhaps the most prolific composer of her century, doctor of the church, writer, philosopher and one of the most brilliant minds of her period never mentioned?...Don't we realise t

³⁰ Isaksson, B. *Children' and Young People's Culture*. Background paper to the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural and Media Policies for Development, Stockholm Sweden, 30th March to 2nd April 1998.

hat role models are not something we come into contact with when we are in our teens, but that they come to life in our school text books during our first music lessons?"

Work has already begun in international organisations such as ISME (the International Association for Musical Education) to incorporate gender in teaching methods and in textbooks in their particular field. The Groves Dictionary of music and musicians is currently compiling a volume of women composers. Organisations and foundations such as Women in Music, Donne in Musica, Frau und Musik etc are establishing national and international archives of the work of women musicians and/or composers. Ovatones, an organisation which focuses on the provision of musical and technological skills for women takes its work into schools and colleges. Its primary function is to act as an independent music resource centre for women and girls. It offers a wide range of courses for women in performance and the use of technology in music, all of which are taught by women.³¹

The gap between boys and girls in primary school in relation to computer use is wide. However, this situation is likely to change with the rush to equip schools with new technologies - in some cases at the expense of books and human resources and often without proper development of original software that fits into the local cultural environment. Examples such as the efforts of the Costa Rican Omar Dengo Foundation (FOD) to equip over a hundred public primary schools in rural and marginal urban areas of the country with computers and connect them to each other and to the Internet are important. Included in the foundation's project is even a program for street children. This ensures that many girls from low income families, who would otherwise not have access to the new tools are learning how to use them to communicate with their peers in other parts of the country or the world. Other telematic programmes of this kind around the world include: Association for Progressive Education (APC), PeaceNet, EcoNet, ConflictNet, Glasnet, Nicarao.³² While access to technology is one step in the right direction, it must be coupled with educational guidance in order to achieve both a fully developed personality and a productive professional life.

In March 1998, Sweden hosted the conference "Children's Creativity Builds the Future" to discuss children's creativity in relation to present day society. A great deal of emphasis was placed on issues such as the cultural rights of the child and the portrayal of children in the media. Perhaps this is an important beginning to ensure that girls are included in policy and programme making agendas.

5.7 The media - a productive agent of change?

The portrayal and representation of women in the media continues to be discriminatory. Negative images of women continue to be constructed in advertising campaigns - one of the most powerful agents of socialisa

³¹ *Women in the Arts: Notions of Equality*. Arts Council of Great Britain, London, UK 1992, p.62.

³² Steffen, H. *Information and Communication Technologies: their role in research and training for the advancement of women*. Rome, 1995, p.11.

tion.³³ As well, women continue to have limited access to expression and decision-making in and through the media. Such practises are, at present, reinforced by globalisation and the concentration of power in the hands of multinational media conglomerates. But this does not necessarily need to be the case since those in the media business could be persuaded to make better use of women's achievements and productive energy. If there was sufficient will to do so, governments could work together with media organisations and community groups to formulate or evaluate media policies to ensure that the rights of all women, including those working in the media, are upheld. Evaluation mechanisms should accompany such policies and the results made available to the public. Projects such as the creation of national and international databases (inventories) of women artists or women working in the media should be supported.

For example, the World Association for Christian Communication has for the past ten years supported women projects, publications and research, especially in the area of women and the media. They have conducted regional seminars around the world since 1987. While each seminar had its own objective, critical issues which were reared time and again in all regions included: the representation and portrayal of women in the media, women's access to the media and inadequate coverage of their concerns, media globalisation and commercialisation, media violence, sexist language and the problem of pornography.³⁴

The expansion of transborder economies, new technologies, and changing work patterns have collectively influenced some radical changes in, for example, the media sector. These have great implications for women in the media labour market³⁵. Some of the results have been:

1. A large increase in commercial broadcasting companies with an ear closer to the market than to public scrutiny (generally no "enforced" responsibility to respect gender equality);
2. An even greater increase in radio and television channels to choose (this tends to segregate societies into "special interest groups" with the danger that social commitments and cultural fabrics are gradually loosened);
3. The rise in the percentage of independent production companies. Studies in the UK and the Netherlands regarding the status of women in the independent sector show that although there is a new opportunity to provide women with new career options (esp. in the area of new technologies), however, discriminatory practises found in older, more hierarchial institutions are being carried over into the independent sector;
4. Steadily decreasing permanent full-time staff and a growing number of short term or freelance contracts, often hired by individual units which leaves most personnel departments without centralised records of such workers (making it more difficult to determine male/female representation);

³³ *In from the Margins*. Report of the Task Force on Culture and Development in Europe. Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1997.

³⁴ <http://www.oneworld.org/wacc/womedia/page1.html>.

³⁵ For more information see also, Gallagher, M, *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*. UNESCO publishing, France, 1995.

5. Major restructuring within public broadcasting companies thus placing equal opportunity issues on the back burner.

Another important factor to consider is the effect that the dramatic political and economic changes in former socialist countries have had especially with the introduction of old stereotypes -- most of which come directly from "market" oriented democracies. For example, studies on the effects of television images following the unification process in Germany note a new emphasis on women as mothers and housewives, although in the former German Democratic Republic, media portrayals generally depicted women as capable of combining paid employment and family life (Rinke 1994; Frauenbilder 1996). As well, data from Central Europe suggests that the transformations of 1989, and the adaptation of the media to market oriented demands, have resulted in a new stereotype of women as sexual objects (see for Poland, Reading 1996, for Romania : Marinescu, 1995; Roventa-Frumusani, 1995).³⁶

Some initiatives have begun on international, supranational, national and grass root levels to counter these realities. For example, media monitoring initiatives, in some cases run by local media watch advocacy groups, all over the world such as Mediawatch in Jamaica and in Canada, CENECA in Chile, the Cambodian Media Monitoring Group and Mediaworks in South Africa have focused their attention primarily on women, media and violence. The Global Media Monitoring Project conducted a study of world media coverage of women on a given day. Some of the results included: regarding journalists (from newspapers, radio and television), 37% were female and 63% male; there was a huge imbalance between female and male interviewees in media programming, 15% and 85% respectively; men tended to dominate in subject areas concerning politics and government (93%) as well as war and terrorism (90%).³⁷

Such critical information is raising public consciousness of the situation. On a more political level, the 1995 EU/EBU Charter for Equal Opportunities was signed by over 36 broadcasting organisations in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The purpose of the chart was to bring senior managers from the private sector together with policy makers to fully recognise women's contribution to and increase their representation in the media labour market. Unfortunately no mechanisms have been put into place to monitor whether or not this initiative has been successful.

Other international declarations regarding women and the media include the 1994 Bangkok Declaration which states that, "it is essential to promote forms of communication that not only challenge the patriarchal nature of the media but strive to decentralise and democratise them, to create media that encourage dialogue and debate, media that advance women's and people's creativity, media that reaffirm women's wisdom and k

³⁶ Kivikuru U. (project manager of transnational team) *State of the Art Research: Images of Women in the Media*. Prepared in the framework of the EU Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, June 1997.

³⁷ Media Watch. *Global Media Monitoring Project: Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media Inc. Toronto 1995, p. 11-14.

knowledge, and that make people into subjects rather than objects or targets of communication. Media which are responsive to people's needs".³⁸ Included in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action is a section on the media. Two important recommendations include : 1. An increase in the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and in new technologies of communication and 2. The promotion of a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media.

On a more practical level, the Observatorio de la Publicidad in Spain is an agency with a 24 hour complaint hot-line gathering information on Spanish media which portrays women unfavourably. The purpose of the Observatorio, as an advocacy group, is to report and act against advertising which exploits women. So far they have had a 100% success rate in getting offensive material withdrawn.³⁹

5.8 New technologies - challenge for women

New media technologies have been heralded as a means to break down socio-economic distinctions and patriarchal hierarchies. Despite this enthusiasm, there is a growing gap not only between the technologically rich and poor but between recognition of women's and men's achievements. The latter is especially true in the case of women's pioneering role in video art. Literacy as a precondition for participating in the new technologies provides women with another barrier to participation as - women make up 2/3 of the world's illiterates.⁴⁰

At present, the gender gap also seems to be widening in computer cultures because of women's traditional lack of access to technology related training and education and through the influence of highly gendered computer games.⁴¹ Although men still outnumber women on the Internet, a study conducted by the Graphic Visualisation and Usability Centre at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the USA indicated a growth in women's use of the internet from 5.1% in their first survey in January 1994 to 31.4 percent in its 6th survey in Oct-Nov 1996. Interestingly there was a significant increase in the percentage of women users aged over 50 from 15% of total users to 27.1% in the sixth survey indicating that older women are more substantial Internet users than had previously been thought to be the case - an interesting potential for cultural participation of a group that is difficult to reach via some outdoor activities.⁴² As mentioned by Steffen (1995), "it s

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "Changing Images, Changing Attitudes - European Union Challenged Television Producers to be a Focus for Equality" Press Release, from the European Commission Conference, "Changing Images, Changing Attitudes", Thessaloniki, Greece, 30 October to 2 November 1997.

⁴⁰ Steffen, H. *Information and Communication Technologies: their role in research and training for the advancement of women*. Rome, 1995, p.8.

⁴¹ Kivikuru U. (project manager of transnational team) *State of the Art Research: Images of Women in the Media*. Prepared in the framework of the EU Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, June 1997, p.22.

⁴² Swanson, G and Wise, P. *Digital Futures: Women's Employment in the Multimedia Industries*. Australia Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, Australia, p.179, 1997.

ould be pointed out that the gender ratios in the composition of cabinets, or national or local legislative bodies: consistently less than 4% world wide, in the case of ministers, and only slightly over 10% in the case of parliamentary representatives are much less than figures for participation on the Internet. Things seem to be improving at a far more satisfactory rate in cyberspace!"

New technologies have increased the possibility for women to network. Today, there are hundreds if not thousands of web sites dedicated for women. The sites cover issues ranging from new technologies, science, engineering, economics, feminism, health care etc. As well, there are some sites devoted to women multimedia artists. For example, the Women in Multimedia (WIM) network/non-profit organisation was created in January 1994 to explore the effects of new media production and consumption of women and to create a dialogue insisting that women and women's experiences be taken into consideration in the design and development of new technologies. They provide among other things, a mentor programme for younger women (girls), a press base which provides information on how to contact women involved in new media, web site (www.wim.org/info/main.html), monthly "live" networking meetings etc. However, there are even fewer sites devoted to the work of women artists.

The information highway remains male oriented and often a forum for gender discrimination, intimidation and even harassment. In addition, the majority of positive action is taking place in the developed industrialised countries. In African society, for example, most of the positive effects of the information revolution have bypassed women. This does not mean, however, that African women are unable to use information and communication technologies. In fact, they have shown great skill and courage to express their opinions in this public, "non-regulated" forum and acquire allies across communities nations and regions especially during times of apartheid when, for example, the reporters of the African Information Afrique (AIA) in South Africa, most of whom were women, used modems and computers to transmit news reports out of the country.⁴³

Some of the main issues for women in developing (as well as developed) countries remain:

- the type of information/content being produced and circulated on the net;
- access to information and communication technologies (seen as a central empowerment issue);
- dependability of telephone lines and cost of on-line access,
- the English language as a dominant means of communication (this factor is relevant in other sectors of the media, arts and especially scientific literature);
- obtaining places in training courses which remain crowded out by men.

Support of women's achievements and contribution to the development of multimedia art are critical. Fortunately, this field offers more optimism than more traditional arts, culture or media sectors, such as museums

⁴³ Huyer, S. *Supporting Women's Use of Information Technologies for Sustainable Development*. IDRC, Canada, February 1997.

and blockbuster exhibitions where representation of women is often quite low (10%). In a quick survey conducted by ERICArts of the number of interactive, multimedia works represented in the permanent exhibition of the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie/Centre for Art, Media and Technology, Karlsruhe (ZKM) we found that: there are 24 artists or groups of artists whose interactive works are represented in the permanent exhibition of the ZKM - 12 are by men; 7 are by women; 4 groups comprised of men and women; 1 group comprised only of men. Promising statistics!

The ZKM is an interesting model where public and private co-operation has created a mega or mecca centre of creativity⁴⁴ which goes far beyond the possibilities of traditional museums and seems to be representative in its exhibition. Other public-private partnerships could be created to initiate cooperative projects such as the creation of an independent (equipped) space(s) where women, for example, can experiment, acquire and share new skills and exhibit their works. Assisting the creation of worldwide Internet-links between women's initiatives and events in music, visual arts and film, literature and other fields, as well as offering special courses to introduce the creative use of new technologies by (the majority of) women students in the

arts and media subjects at colleges and universities are other promising areas of action.

6 Policy recommendations

*We all have a left foot and a right foot,
and we know very well that walking is much easier
if the two are of the same size."*

We can now, after our short venture, return to examine women in cultural policies from the perspective of our *five policy principles* and the changes precipitated by the *globalisation* processes. In future, the success or failure of gender policies (and in the policies directed towards other excluded groups) will depend increasingly on the generation of *synergy* and *complementarity* of these principles and processes.

⁴⁴ At the ZKM, one can find a Media Museum, Institute for Visual Media, the Institute for Music and Acoustics, Media Theatre, Museum for Contemporary Art, an exhibition hall.

⁴⁵ Catherine Lalumière, former Secretary General, Council of Europe, quoted in, *The Gender Perspective*. Council of Europe, Publishing, Strasbourg, 1995.

Below is a summary of some cultural policy measures and programme recommendations directed at national and local governments and UNESCO. This list is not exhaustive but takes up many of the arguments and suggestions made throughout the text.

equality: Women must have access to decision-making positions in cultural policy, the arts and the media, receive equal pay for equal work, and have the same social conditions (which does not rule out specific measures for women such as child care). They must also have access to further education and training programmes and have the same opportunities as men.

Recommendations:

1. Governments must act upon the recommendations presented in the World Report's International Plan for Gender Equality. They should also conduct an evaluation of the implementation of its commitments following from the Beijing Platform for Action;
2. Governments should examine the proportion of women and men holding key decision-making positions and make these results public. UNESCO could co-ordinate a world wide study on the working status of women in the arts and cultural sector similar to the one it published on gender employment in the media. Special attention should be placed on the social and legal frameworks (including equity policies and insurance laws). Regional models for such studies, including the one presently carried out for the European Union, could serve as a starting point;
3. Affirmative action (e.g. quota) policies and similar strategies should be investigated which have historically enabled women artists to engage or continue their work as well as receive due recognition in suitable environments (such as incentive policies).

diversity: Women must be free to express themselves, including those with differing values and opinions. The differences among women must be acknowledged and supported, but emphasis should be given to furthering their presence and contribution to cultural life as a whole.

Recommendations:

1. Cultural policies must recognise that women are not a homogenous group and Governments should ensure that the diverse needs of all women are adequately reflected in cultural policies;
2. Support is required for the existence of women's institutions (e.g. museums etc.), rites and rituals as well as for the great majority of those that want to come "in from the margins" and find adequate ways and means of expression in the arts and media sector in their country;

3. Pluralism must be the overriding principle when educating the new generations. Textbooks and curricula should be occasionally revised by the state to eliminate chauvinism and discrimination of any kind and must also include positive "role models" (historical and contemporary) that different groups in society can associate with. In this regard, the grave imbalance in universities and other important public institutions requires change and monitoring;
4. Concepts such as "mainstreaming"; as well as the emergence of specialised institutions, programmes and policies for women and the development of networks to promote equal opportunities must be debated and evaluated. Public meetings could be organised by National Commissions or by international NGO's in co-operation with UNESCO.

recognition: (cognitive realisation and emotive respect) Women's rights as human rights must be recognised along with their past and present achievements. Society will only then be able to make full use of the wealth of talent, expression and experience contributed, but often not recognised sufficiently, by women over the ages.

Recommendations:

1. The goal of achieving equality for women in all aspects of their life and their protection against open discrimination or even violence refers to human rights and not to prevailing concepts of 'cultural rights'. However, the latter has a role when it comes to enhancing and recognising contributions to a culture by different groups in society, including women, thus ensuring cultural pluralism and respect of differences. International as well as grass root debates on these matters is required ;
2. Governments must work together with media organisations and community groups to disseminate information about the achievements of women in the arts, culture and media. Projects such as the creation of national and international databases (inventories) of women artists or women working in the media as well as the work of the Media Monitoring centres around the world should be supported;

3. Funding and prize systems must recognise the work of women and grant them the prestige associated with such awards. Special attention must be given to the composition of juries in order to enhance criteria and experience connected with the notion of "quality".

transparency: Is required, for example, in political decision-making processes, in the production and dissemination of information (including research results) and in all innovative processes, thus ensuring visibility (access) for all groups and processes in society. Quality media programming and freedom of expression are prerequisites to ensuring a true "creative diversity".

Recommendations:

1. Government policies impacting the composition and operations of the cultural sector must include mechanisms to ensure access and equity objectives and develop monitoring/assessment mechanisms to evaluate these policies on a regular basis. In particular, monitoring mechanisms are required to ensure that cultural resources are equitably distributed;
2. Positive occupational policies and more transparency in large institutional practices (e.g. in the media) should bring forward "internal" institutional reform. However, they remain limited unless coupled with proactive "external" action to influence all sectors of society and garner political support for equality. As well, such programmes can only be successful if they are accepted by the women they are designed for; understood by colleagues and promoted by senior management and personnel departments;
3. Governments or national statistical offices as well as international organisations, including UNESCO, should, as a rule, include gender questions or empirical data relevant for their discussion into working programmes, policy statements, data bases and/or publications. They should be advised by experts, international research institutes or commissioning bodies on existing studies or on indicators that might be used for comparisons or in monitoring exercises;
4. Networks ideally function in a non hierarchical, non bureaucratic manner, thus allowing for an exchange of views and opinions free from censorship. It goes without saying that public and private support for women's networks is crucial for longer term sustainability.

productivity: Maintains a strong relationship to economic development, but this must be reconciled with societal needs, emphasising individual creativity/talents and production of values as opposed to pure market demands. Without productivity, especially in such fields as media/new technologies, sustainable development will not be achieved.

Recommendations:

1. Nowadays, media debates lead one to believe there would be only film packages from Hollywood, sports rights or technicalities of satellites or the Internet at stake. Women's productive achievements in these areas, including their avant-garde role in the creative use of the new technologies, seems almost of no concern. The encouragement of such productivity by any means possible is vital to the future of our mediasphere;
2. There have been efforts to improve the role and the status of women by reflecting on their economic importance in the marketplace as consumers or cheap labour. Governments should explore other ways to promote equality by referring to examples of productivity in the arts, cultural education and the media. The results of women's creativity in these fields, and also their particular talents in such areas as liberal education, can highlight and thus enhance women's status and bring otherwise abstract political principles - such as gender equality - to life, by raising general public consciousness towards this goal.
3. Productivity should not be perceived only in terms of the *end results*. It should be seen as a process from creation to consumption in which *values* are produced and in some cases transformed. Consideration of women in this process is crucial and can lead to improved gender balance in the arts, culture and media.