



Introduction

Background

The forum was carried out at the Rodrigo Facio campus of the University of Costa Rica on February 7-8, 2002, hosted by the Center for Research in Women Studies of the University of Costa Rica and the Gender and Diversities Institute at Education Development Center, with the cooperation of the Network of Latin American and Caribbean University Centers and Programs in Women's and Gender Studies.

The goal of the forum was to bring together a diverse group of persons who work in the areas of education and prevention of gender-based violence, from a variety of disciplines and American countries, to share from a diversity of approaches and conceptualizations within their area of work, exploring and building bridges that will lead to future collaborations.

Each participant presented a brief paper, describing their project's, program's, or center's approach to the issue, as well as their vision of the role of education in this work, lessons learned, and their principal challenges and ongoing questions.

The presentations allowed an interesting exchange of a diversity of opinions and ideas, which stimulated reflection, questions, and the generation of new ideas among people based in the fields of education, health, law, social sciences, and other disciplines, all with a commitment to utilize education in addressing this issue.

Welcome from Katherine Hanson, Gender and Diversities Institute at Education Development Center, Inc.

Welcome! Thank you all for taking time from your busy schedules to come together to address an issue that impacts all our lives. This is a very exciting opportunity to come together across the borders of country and continent to examine how education can play an important role in defining and erradicating gender-based violence. As members of this forum, you each represent a different constituency and a different perspective. Some are researchers, some are university educators, some are K-12 educators, and some represent nongovernmental organizations. This forum provides us all with the opportunity to do some creative and transformative interdisciplinary work. Looking at our different philosophies and our different cultures, we can begin to probe more deeply into the way in which education, and we as individuals, can be shifted in order to provide models and experiences of violence-free and gender healthy societies.

The challenge for us all is how we can transcend our own experience and our own context to build new connections, to be open to different perspectives, and to honor the collective and individual wisdom of the group. Our hope is to provide for a substantive dialogue across North and South. In this we want to look at key issues such as socialization to gender roles in the family, in the classroom, and in informal

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education; the role of law, policy, and implementation; and the role of teachers and teacher education in the transmission or prevention of gender-based violence.

We see this as a first step in building a true alliance and partnership among the individuals and organizations here. This alliance can be the impetus for new inter-American projects, for the exchange of information, for a safe space to challenge ideas, and for the development of deeper knowledge about a process that hurts us all. Thank you again.

Welcome from Laura Guzmán, Center for Research in Women's Studies, University of Costa Rica

We hope that the forum permits the sharing of what is happening in Latin America with respect to public policy aimed at preventing and addressing gender-based violence in its different forms. Diverse legal initiatives aimed at establishing laws against gender-based violence are being approved. These response are not always the best ones for prevention in our societies, however they are steps upon which we can begin to construct many other initiatives.

In this context, the opportunity to learn about what is happening in the United States and Canada can feed into our own work. We learn from advances as well as from the difficulties that are being faced in developing these initiatives. The opportunity to share the learning from some of the failures—because we all have them—can give us the impetus to continue forward.

Again, a warm welcome. We thank those of you who are here. For many of you this has implied a major effort in being absent from your workplace during these days. I urge you to take maximum advantage of this experience and to see this as part of a movement that is moving forward. Thank you very much.