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The Discussion



Much of the forum was dedicated to spaces in which to reflect on the presentation of each participant, engage in dialogues, and discuss commonalities and differences. This chapter attempts to capture at least some of these conversations and discussions. Given the force of the original words, we have opted to simply quote some of the contributions made during the two days of the forum. The first part of this chapter presents the discussions, organized by area in order to aid the reader. The second part is a summary of the small group work.

National and Regional Contexts

The process of “Chilenizing” Chile is constant, holding up a national identity that is linked with defense and maintaining territory, where there are topics such as reclaiming the territory of the Mapuche people, something that is related to ocean access for the Bolivian State. This is reinforced in the educational system, in spite of the fact that it isn’t discussed openly.

The others who must be “Chilenized” are the poor and this means that the educational system has to incorporate a maximum number of people. In Chile, only those who are indigent don’t attend school. The rest are obligated to participate in the educational system.

“Chilenizing” is related to the constant construction of difference and with the idea that there is a stereotype of the Chilean to which all must aspire and an educational system that propels the middle class to university while efficiently pushing out of university those who are not going to succeed. In addition, men are “Chilenized” through mandated military service.

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Mayan societies face three levels of discrimination: for being a woman, for being poor, and for being Mayan. The cost that we have paid has been enormous—we have created a political movement in order to have access to power, and this cost us the lives of 35,000 people.

In 1996 with the peace accords a feeling of hope was generated. There are three major agreements: The first is about identity of indigenous peoples. The second addresses socioeconomic aspects. And the third is about strengthening civil society. During this process the campesino movement, women’s movement, and indigenous movement tried to incorporate demands that would help us create a peaceful society in the future.

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After five years, we find that there is “theoretical” support, but no political will to implement the peace accords. The biggest challenge is to organize politically in order to have influence at different levels of our society, understanding the word “politically” to mean the decision making that can benefit our people.

We suggest organized groups, articles in particular newspapers, and training our human resources with the capacity to influence public policy at the municipal and governmental levels.

Organizations can do something even if it is at a small scale. Today there are many organizations that are generating small initiatives which are scattered. Since this is a forum for discussion, it would be ideal if we could generate what we call in our work the “unifying thread” in order to complement this work and gain influence at a global level.

Finally, one important situation is the influence that members of our families who go to the North are having. They are destroying our Latin American societies when they come back with an American or European “complex.” So at some point the discrimination is stronger because it happens within our own territory and within our families. We must develop a shared consciousness from the perspective of the family that all people have a right to a culture and we must respect cultural diversity.

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Education and migration is a topic that we haven’t sufficiently touched upon. We can no longer speak only of the rootlessness of previous years. I call it a mixing of sociocultural identities and personalities that is being justified with globalization.

There are two factors that are being seen around the issue of migration: (1) The recuperation of our people’s historical memory, which would be something to develop further—how the educational system can aid in this. (2) The adoption of new religions in order to fit in socially [in the North], which then causes tremendous confusion upon the return to the original country.

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[Natural] disasters affect men and women of all ages. One of the primary forms of violence that these survivors face is the loss of their residence and physical removal from it—the place in which they dwell and all that it means to them. The entire population is transferred to shelters.

When there is an emergency situation, men are thrown into the heaviest and most traditional labors, like constructing housing, and women are left in the shelters caring for children and taking on roles related to education and health. It appears that during these early moments the issue of daily, interfamilial violence is hidden. It is when families begin to restabilize that violence becomes once again apparent. Some data show that interfamilial violence increases in the first year after disasters, and is influenced negatively when men receive no interventions like the self-help groups that women participate in. Rather than talk about the issue, it is silenced and evaded. The people in the groups [of the project] began to be aware that they were living in situations of violence only when they began the group process of reflection. It was then that they realized that they must talk about it and they began to look for alternatives within civil society.

Natural disasters make people more vulnerable than they were previously. This is seen in the chain of abuses that they are living, for example two families sleeping in a room much smaller than this, with no privacy and where the husband forces the wife to have sexual relations in the midst of 19 families and children. The people who were sheltered in Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador had to go through situations like this. But survivors also help other people.

In the Nicaraguan experience, the intervention occurred when people were in settlements; they weren't refugees. The communities were re-established, but housing was different, transforming their entire lives.

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With the approval of the Leave No Child Behind legislation for primary and high schools [in the United States], which was approved by Congress last month, there is a greater emphasis on annual testing in reading, writing, and mathematics, which pushes teachers to concentrate on good results in these areas. Do you think that this will affect the possibility of addressing other topics of interest within education?

In New York we have noted that teachers feel a great deal of pressure with regard to this change, which demands standardized testing in all states. Many times this is the only thing that counts or is addressed throughout the entire year. Our strategy is to emphasize that these activities help in reading and critical thinking. Sometimes teachers tell us "I don't have time for this because there is so much to do." If they do these activities and deal with [violent] behaviors, in practice they have more time to concentrate on examinations.

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Women have differing levels of power depending on the group that they belong to. How is this addressed in Costa Rica, for example women with disabilities?

Costa Rica has a national law that makes it obligatory to eliminate all barriers to education that people with disabilities may face, including women. In the case of the University of Costa Rica, a beginning step is being carried out to include in this gender-sensitive curriculum the needs and specific interests of women with disabilities. The reality is that there is a high percentage of women with disabilities who don't enter university. For example, there are only a few blind women, though there are more blind men registered. It is a slow process. There is a university commission that forms part of the Center for Academic Evaluation. This commission works to eliminate discrimination and marginalization of people with disabilities.

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Comparing gendered violence and gender issues with poverty, it makes me believe that in Canada we are making more headway in terms of gender equity than in socioeconomic equity, since the latter requires a greater openness from those in power and in public policy to change the "welfare state."

General Comments on Gendered Violence and Our Work

In the comments from Chile, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic the issue of how people "of color" are perceived in these societies is something that is shared with the United States.

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This [discussion] has made me question the definition of "violence," since we are assuming in our conversation that violence is physical. Nevertheless, violence is not only "active." It is also "passive," like when children are not given an education, don't have health services, when people are discriminated against because of the color of their skin or ethnic group, or when opportunities are unequal—whether it is the white, male, middle class in Chile or the United States. Because of this, it is important and critical that we expand our definition of this word. Passive violence is as prejudicial to children and families as active violence, and its consequences accumulate over the long term.

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A common thread through the presentations is the systemic presence of both the obvious and the hidden violence, linked to different types of submission. The presenters talked about elements to identify what is behind this. We need to go deeper with this and not just stay with the manifestations that are more obvious.

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We have to understand that gendered violence is not only physical, but psychological, emotional, and spiritual. To the extent that we work on all of these areas, we will construct a more humane society.

Have we made a mistake in the way that we approach and combat gendered violence? We have exhausted ourselves in a process of sensitizing and raising consciousness, which has not had the effect that we need. One step we should take is to demonstrate what is working, with practical examples for reflection. Then we need action that has a greater impact, and also a deeper philosophical change of values, attitudes, and hierarchies. We have to stop separating the objective and the subjective.

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It is important that people who direct violence programs or those who work with survivors, have it clear that aggressors have diverse resources. Among these are the way in which they make deals with judges and police. One the one hand, the judges and police are there to defend the victims, but [on the other hand] they identify with the aggressors because they are in patriarchal relationships.

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When violence against a woman exists, we can't negotiate her life.

The Role of Education in General

It is important when addressing the topic of violence and education that we take into account the fact that the education system has an important role in change to reduce the exclusion that we are submitted to year after year.

A fundamental issue is the need to incorporate professional education in the areas of law, education, medicine, psychology—prevention and services that address violence against women.

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There is a huge investment in the health system with regard to the topic of violence, and there is a need for the education system to take a proactive role in terms of prevention, building this into teacher preparation. On the other hand, the issue of ethnicity should be addressed as part of primary and secondary education, as well as reducing the gap between these two levels of education.

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Some of the presentations have placed an exaggerated value on the role that teachers play in the change process of a gender inequitable culture. We cannot forget that we are part of a social structure, and that we are also victims of the violence that is seen from distinct perspectives and expressed in different ways. In Ecuador, teachers, professionally speaking, are in the lowest rung—not only in terms of economy, but also in terms of the social value given the teaching profession. The work that is developed is focused on improving the quality of education and also in revaluing of the role of education in social development in general.

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Another aspect is social construction. We have individualized ourselves so—poor and rich, white and black—that a time will come when humanity will disappear by its own hand. We have to understand that gendered violence is not only physical, but psychological, emotional, and spiritual. To the extent that we work on all of these areas, we will construct a more humane society. Among these approaches, literacy is an important way in which to work with men and women, in primary school, secondary school, upper secondary and technical education, university, and graduate schools.

We have to permeate all levels of teaching. We should include families, which would allow us to make these changes in a more permanent manner. This would allow us to work in a more sustained manner, with the responsibility falling not only on teachers but also on other leaders. We must start to train them in prevention of gendered violence, for example, what can a teacher do? or a mother? a politician? It is from this perspective that we can change this paradigm.

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We need to take into account the informal paths in education, because there are countries in which this work is just starting in primary education. It is only a “peep” at nonsexist education, and here we are very focused on the university and graduate education.

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Another aspect that we must identify as a threat within this context, and not only in Latin America, is the growing wave of conservative religious positions. In the case of Honduras, last year the legislature approved by decree a Bible reading for all schools, before classes begin each morning. A lot of work was done around sexual education, but the books that were developed were never distributed because the Opus Dei and other very conservative groups opposed them. These are threats, organized as global networks, with a lot of funding—more than the State has.

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A central task would be an analysis of the educational system, formal and informal education. In our context, the percentage of illiterate people is very high, which means the informal educational system must be looked at. We must take into account diversity among women, because many times, in the context of public policy analysis, we have a paradigm of a woman. We are professionals who have a very different conception of other women.

In our diploma program in Honduras, our primary work was to “de-academize” the knowledge. The change that has happened in the past decades is seen primarily in women’s access to education, but to a heavily stereotyped education. It is important to see this as an education system, in which everything is interrelated.

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How are we going to arrive at a point of convergence of these two contrasting worlds? I see it as the daily struggle to break with paradigms not only in historically rooted institutions such as the church, the capitalist class, and the cultural invasion of other countries through the media, but also in the desperateness of our countries. I would like to generate a proposal that we begin to recognize that they are contrasting worlds and that we can complement each other to generate action. I am interested in a political curriculum that can be adapted to different realities, and take advantage of the curriculum design already incorporated, and the informal paths of teacher

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training. Because I can educate through the media. In our countries, parents are leaving the training of their children to the education system.

University Education

The professor transmits a series of values, cosmovisions and ways of relating. One learns to see this as natural (authoritarianism in professor-student relationships). Many times the circumstantial position of being a professor is utilized to expound at length on our perceptions, concepts, and values in the day-to-day of the classroom.

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Though I don't have experience in the field of teaching law, I have colleagues and information with respect to that. Vera's presentation impacted me greatly. In the United States of America a professor would not say in class that he or she did not want women participating in the discussions. That type of authoritarianism isn't acceptable at the postsecondary level; despite that, there are similar attitudes that occur at a more informal level. In other words, despite the fact that there is no longer an open expression of this type in class, that doesn't mean that it has been overcome within institutional culture or with respect to the subliminal messages that students receive. Though it is a relief that this doesn't happen so openly any more, it is harder to confront it when it is hidden.

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They say to us "You are the gender people—put gender into this course," or "put one of the ones who can talk about gender on to that committee." This has been the most difficult thing.

I know that our nursing professors at the University of Toronto lack a gender awareness, even though they are mostly women. It seems to me that you now have a critical mass to carry out change within the academy. I would like to know more about how you achieved that. Have you done it with one or two professors leading? Or are there more aware professors in this school?

Forty of us women work in the Nursing School. Three have studied to earn a specialty in gender studies, but other colleagues have not understood that gender is a paradigm. They say to us "You are the gender people—put gender into this course," or "put one of the ones who can talk about gender on to that committee." This has been the most difficult thing. They are willing to listen. They like the spaces for reflection and the talks, but they always have some resistance. They think that instead of being subordinate they are leaders. They say "I am the professor"; however, they exercise their role patriarchally and in classes they subordinate the female students and overvalue the male students.

We have had some small achievements. In terms of our one-on-one work, the work of day-to-day life, personal attitudes and behaviors are transforming, beginning with our relationships with them and with the students, which are compatible with equity principles and respect. We have approached it like that. In a larger group like a university congress, there is more resistance.

It is hard to create spaces for reflection within the Nursing School. After leaving the master's program in women's studies, in a space with the professors, we talked about how men and women construct ourselves. We analyzed how women allow ourselves to be under the "charge" of men, or are ordered to be. One example is that here in Costa Rica women sign "so-and-so of . . ." and use the husband's last name, indicating that they are a kind of property of their husband. [When we brought this up as an example,] the professors began to rummage in their purses and say that they didn't sign that way, so gender didn't have anything to do with them.

This work has been difficult. Nursing is a career that is subordinated to that of a doctor. The Nursing School here in Costa Rica was developed under the philosophy of Florence Nightingale, and among its rules it says that the nurse has to be faithful to the doctor as she is faithful to her husband. The nurse must manage the medical personnel as she manages the staff in her home. The nurse must care for her patients

as she cares for her children. We cannot get this out of the heads of many of the nurses.

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There is a dialectic relationship between two aspects of the curriculum: the formal (documents) and the practice (what happens on a day-to-day basis). In this sense, we must speak of a hidden curriculum, for that also is curriculum. In this construction everyone involved is bringing and questioning their beliefs, prejudices, values, and knowledge. It is not just in the formal structure of a curriculum that a new philosophy has to be incorporated—we must also work for change in practice and procedures. The challenge that we have posed is what do we do to create change in practice? Our perspective is that curricular design has to involve all of the academic faculty in a school. It is an active, participatory, and eminently reflective process. We begin knowing that we must construct two frameworks: a sociohistorical framework of the profession, and an epistemological framework of the discipline. These allow us to establish the criteria for the cultural and content selection for the organization, implementation, and evaluation of a curriculum for professional education.

This perspective was used with the Nursing School. Including a gender perspective in this construction of a sociohistorical framework implied reconstructing the history of the profession, and contextualizing it within the political and socioeconomic processes of a country and of the world in order to understand it and make decisions about how we want to design the major. In the case of nurses, in this historical construction they identified how the profession is closely tied to women's history, because it has been a field developed by women. It was born in a military system in which obedience and hierarchies are very important. In practice and theory nursing has been subordinated to other disciplines traditionally exercised by men. They felt that we needed to move away from this biological focus with which we have worked since nursing is a largely social health science. They even questioned whether it should belong to the School of Medicine, or be moved to the social sciences. So the reform process produced questions, revolutions, resistance, and discussion.

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The experience at the Nursing School at the University of Ecuador has been the fruit of a collective leadership. When they begin their professional practice as nurses, they have questioned the entire power structure of the health system in our country, and this has facilitated the process of inserting gender into the curriculum because nurse-teachers have had to confront the process of training future generations as well as how they relate to the whole healthcare system.

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I'd like to speak about the presentations related to the School of Education, which were very concrete. There is research that shows that 80 percent of new teachers don't feel prepared to be in a classroom when they finish their university studies.

We have worked with two schools of education, one in New Jersey, where there has been an attempt to change not only the education courses but the philosophy behind them. What we have done is integrate "Quit It" in some courses so that when teaching practicum is done with these practical tools they can change this cultural baggage. One of the things that we should understand is that students come with their own baggage, not only professors. So we need to not only make observations and reflect, teachers must also have practical tools to address this topic for themselves.

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Another topic that arose was the necessity of working together, especially to avoid dividing forces, and also to recognize that necessities vary when working with different populations and sectors.

We must look at a variety of paths, formal as well as less formal educational arenas. Despite this, we cannot deny the weight that education has in the formation of a patriarchal culture that promotes violence in different ways. In the university experience, as outside of it, we have found it very different to permeate the education school. We have had less difficulty working with the School of Medicine and School of Engineering. There seems to be less resistance and slightly better conditions to generate change in these academic areas than in those in charge of training teachers. We also have to see the role that society has given teachers in order to understand the difficulties that the Ministries of Education face. The latter are trying to incorporate new kinds of nonsexist and antiviolenace training and they encounter resistance from teachers. Teachers are a product of society, and they are assigned the function of repressing and of reproducing these violent forms of relating. In the case of Costa Rica, we say that our army is the teachers.

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Including gender in the curriculum means establishing links with philosophical and epistemological elements that relate to the different disciplines as well as to the training processes at different levels. This requires developing more depth with regard to our work around gender.

Professional Training

Would it be possible with the space that is being opened here to develop some type of exchange to certify training courses at different levels among Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala?

I didn't have the chance to explain, because of time limits, that the [MINCAVA] Child Abuse Prevention Studies program is also offered on the Internet. I think that I mentioned that we are converting our regular classes into online classes.

Many write us saying that they need training in domestic violence as well as in child abuse prevention. We are very interested in expanding in this direction. This is the first time that we are offering all of our courses online. We have so many sites that it seems natural to offer training via an institute specializing in domestic violence, and because of all of the international traffic on our site we believe that there is interest in this.

Summary of the Central Points of the First Day

Vera Aguilar Cruz

The first panel reconceptualized gendered violence from the perspective of indigenous women, Afrodescendent women, migrants, and women with disabilities, and the second looked at community focuses for empowerment and for work with different age groups.

The definition of violence is not only physical and sexual. Several of the participants spoke of a scale: passive, or as Altagracia said, a daily mutilation, a wearing down that happens every day because of gendered violence. Several participants spoke of mental health, of the necessity to relate the physical with the emotional and spiritual when we work with people, because it is something that happens to the body, the mind, and the spirit. Many spoke of the importance of starting early and working with healthy forms of relationships, given that people from different populations and ages have different needs, some of which we all share.

Another topic that arose was the necessity of working together, especially to avoid dividing forces, and also to recognize that necessities vary when working with different populations and sectors. Another aspect is the role that adults play, especially in work with children and adolescents. They should assume the power that they have and realize that when they don't respond to stereotypes, violence, or

aggressive behaviors, what they are doing is reproducing them. Because of this, they should intervene in violent actions. If not, children and adolescents will believe that this is an appropriate way to behave.

Practically everyone mentioned the necessity of working in groups. Many of the primary school and high school programs that were mentioned made the point that it isn't enough to work only with students, that teachers must also be involved since they are in the classroom directing and creating diverse environments—environments that should be stimulating without being violent. Students need to be empowered and to realize the power that they possess to make their own rules and determine their own behavior. Other school personnel also have important roles, be they drivers or nurses.

Various participants highlighted the importance of the family, which can be a place where an identity is formed that takes into consideration gender and ethnicity, or a place where violence is reproduced. It is fundamental to work with families because of this.

One aspect that could be interesting to consider during the next day are social systems and the social structure. According to what I have heard in the presentations and especially in the discussions today, in places like the United States and Canada, where there is a strong infrastructure, the educational system is large and bureaucratic. So what we try to do frequently is to work ourselves into this infrastructure so that our concerns and demands are integrated within the curriculum and in teacher education. This is very different to other countries, like the example that Rosa María gave concerning natural disasters and how all of a sudden an entire infrastructure is gone. Between these two points we have the interest in working with communities and with all kinds of groups. Because of this, stability or the desire for change is also a topic of interest in order to continue advancing in this area.

We have noted that in both the North American and Latin American experience there are a series of topics that we consider central. Sometimes they take different forms, but in the end all of us here are dealing with the differences, the gender relations, diversity, transformation of the education system, and democratization. Considering these general topics, the discussion today has had an institutional framework: presentations were made from the South and from the North in the area of postsecondary education, primary and secondary schools, students, curricula, teachers, informal groups (like families), nongovernmental organizations, and communities. Direct intervention, activism, social work, health, interdisciplinary work, different philosophies and theories of culture, and North-South public policies were all addressed.

This poses a challenge for us: we hope that this meeting will be the opportunity to make this the first in a series of many meetings focused on these fundamental issues that cross the North-South border.

The third panel addressed the sociocultural construction of gendered violence and the role that education has in the promotion of gender equality. The common thread was a questioning of whether the dissemination and approval of norms is an effective instrument for change and response to gendered violence and the role of education and training. Gloria spoke to us of some laws. Some of them stipulate substitutive or adaptive measures that in practice, rather than protect or benefit women, end by being prejudicial to them. The question emerges: How do we achieve a balance in the law? To what extent is this path appropriate for confronting these types of issues?

Katherine characterized the United States as a multicultural country of immigrants that struggle for a fair democracy, but within a cultural framework of individualism. What can be done to achieve this democracy?

Cecilia addressed how advocating for rights, and specifically human rights, has to be contextualized, and looked at how to create strategies for exercising human rights. Contextualization has to do with what is behind all of the discussions in this

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forum. The similarities and differences among countries of the North and South coincides with the fact that all countries, through education, experience gendered violence. How can we approach this issue?

Vera presented a summary of research that tried to show how formal education is a transmitter of values and meanings differentiated by gender and how the world views of professors are reproduced in this context. In the fourth panel, networks, institutional alliances, and prevention of gender-based violence were investigated as important to unifying efforts to confront and understand the topic of violence from the viewpoints of education, community, and governmental and nongovernmental institutions.

Heather commented on the interaction between education and the health sector in researching the impact that violence has in health and how the investigation and construction of models for service integrate this experience with health at the University of Toronto.

Norma, Ana, and Ana Isabel spoke about the importance of creating online tools, access to materials, and the transformational role of interdisciplinary work.

Xinia asked What is the contribution of distance education to the prevention of gendered violence? The commitment of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED) in this regard is recent and integrating a gender perspective across the university was taken up as a central task of the university. Distance education plays an important role as a means of access to postsecondary education for women. In spite of that, there is a segregation by gender in choosing careers. But this is being addressed in concrete actions such as a review of curricula and of policies.

Margarita spoke about how the masters program in gender studies and education began to be envisioned, and of the technical and pedagogical content of the courses.

Finally, gendered violence was framed in different areas, as well as how it can be studied, learned about, and worked on from different disciplines.

Summary of Small Group Work

Proposals and Comments from Group 1

1. The discussion centered on North-South or South-North relationships and the general framework for establishing alliances and the way that these can be established. One part of the discussion focused on how, from our own experiences, we can visualize the historic development of these North-South, South-North relationships. This mutual discussion allowed us to get beyond the lack of trust that is part of our historical relationship in terms of how expertises and knowledge are valued differently between the North and South. We also spoke about this unequal relationship. We proposed that rather than construct an alliance, any relationship has to be constructed within a framework of trust, that it is going to have different components, as well as the institutional and personal emphases of those who are involved.
2. Gender relationships and the ways in which violence appears have to be understood within the cultural frameworks in which they are produced. Even though there are constants, there are cultural specificities that we have to deal with and take on. For those of us from Latin America, the political context in which violent gender relations are produced are important, and this was not seen in the presentations of those from the United States and Canada.
3. We have to move forward not only academic and professional knowledge and interests, but also to know the people with whom we work. Each person has a great deal to contribute from the life experience and expertise in the topic.
4. It is important in the discussion to be concrete about how violence is differently lived in poor countries and in rich countries, in terms of challenges and necessities in these contexts. In fact, what is defined as strategic varies according to each of these contexts.

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5. We went deeper into the term of violence, which has multiple expressions. The strategy of alliance is very linked to the levels at which we situate the issue and in the description of violence. It is also necessary to locate the issues arising from violence within an international political stage since decisions are modified and challenged within global political processes.
6. We did an exercise in which each of us told about our motivations for focusing on this topic from our own personal experience and our strengths in this work. This ended by being biographically interesting as well.
7. One strategy for moving forward would be to have dialogues on topics and more focused interests, as well as more general dialogues that take advantage of technologies like the Internet to gain more knowledge and create specific alliances.

This has been a good opportunity for communicating at a more personal level, something that we hadn't done up to this point during the forum. Sometimes there would seem to be some distance between people. We discussed how it seems like the North counts on an infrastructure, while in Latin America it is frequently absent. But infrastructure can also be an obstacle. Even though there are many benefits, there should also be flexibility. We think that we would get to know each other better if we went to the beach together. We will work on this as a next collaborative project (laughs).

One point that we all agree upon is that we would like to stay in contact, even though we should probably divide into smaller groups to work on more specific topics. This doesn't mean that the bigger group shouldn't stay in contact, just that the real work will come to fruition in small groups.

The exercise that we carried out at the end was very good because each of us spoke about our strengths and also our characteristics: who we are, and what our work and our role are. It was hopeful to feel the energy that was in the group and, if we had more time, we could surely build on this. It was a very important process.

Proposals and Comments from Group 2

1. The experiences, interests, and expectations of each of the group participants was shared.
2. The contexts in which educational processes occur must be taken into account, from the day-to-day to the formal system.
3. Map the various elements that a situation has and establish important areas and priorities for work. For example, that women understand the advances made and the way in which they can utilize these rights.
4. Identify different sectors for change and work with them. Something that stands out is that it must not be only the teachers who take on this work.
5. Work with our own reality and take back these areas since in Latin American we have had experience and we must value our own approaches and instruments.
6. Consider the world and specific contexts in political, economic, and religious terms. Recognize the opportunities and also the threats in this context, clarifying the interests of international aid and rescuing the experiences and advances within countries. In addition, we need to analyze how to state these demands to the State and which demands.
7. Alliances must be based in a democratic relationship, and with the active involvement of all parts in needs assessment, planning, programming, implementation, and evaluation.
8. Consider the conditions and characteristics of our reality from the perspective of financial administration.
9. One model for regional work is to produce materials together, uniting efforts and resources so that they can be used in different countries.

Alliances must be based in a democratic relationship, and with the active involvement of all parts in needs assessment, planning, programming, implementation, and evaluation.

At the end of our conversation we asked ourselves what would be necessary to have an effective North-South collaboration. As we said above, it would have to be based on a democratic model. It is not right that the North would be in charge of finding funding, putting it on the table with a series of rules, and later leaving without even participating in the activities. Rather, there should be communication at all stages. For example, one cannot simply provide money for an educational program without first taking into account what the participants have to do in order to get there, or that they can be hungry. We must learn from each other what is needed for an educational program to be successful, with all of the sectors involved.

Proposals and Comments from Group 3

1. We focused on methodologies and other aspects of education, but we also recognized that there are multiple education and discussion sites, formal and informal, that we could use for discussion and reflection.
2. We need to frame culture within a more day-to-day vision, and promote change in this way.
3. Focus on looking for alternatives and strategies for change to achieve equity.
4. Build bridges for relationships between formal and informal spaces, and generate concrete experiences that show that it is possible to advance new forms of relating between genders with practical experiences.
5. Create spaces for exchange of all of the experiences that we are having, of lessons learned, of those that we still must learn, of goals, and strengthening the existing experiences.
6. How do we get people to involve themselves in raising levels of consciousness? By thinking about the necessity of interaction, participation, collective construction, participatory planning, where universities believe in linking with communities, by basing work in the practical and real.
7. Discuss and analyze situations of violence and nonviolence in order to recover the positive.
8. Look at problems with the language (above all in Spanish where we have a differentiation of the feminine and the masculine, so we feel included or excluded) of discourse, of texts, of the role of the media as change agents, but also as emitters of violence messages.
9. Work to eliminate the bias of equating gender with women.
10. A wider educational proposal: How does gender affect teachers? How does gender affect those with disabilities? How does gender affect elderly people?

We began by emphasizing the importance of being able to move from theory to specifics. In other words, we asked ourselves what would help us in establishing alliances. It was suggested that our work continue with concrete activities. Another proposal was that perhaps it would be more valuable to share lessons learned, as was done in the fourth panel. This type of information would help us also in sharing not just the lessons but also the change strategies. How are we doing our work? How can we improve on it?

This developed into another topic of conversation: we have to be sure to be cautious to avoid simply joining in with the majority, something that is popular now. For example, perhaps the topic of gender equity isn't as popular today as it was three years ago, and the question would then be how do we stay firm in our convictions and not just let ourselves be led by whatever idea is in vogue. It is crucial to see how we move toward self-sufficiency. This point is related to the preceding one, since we are not going to be changing topics to whatever is popular. We have to be self-sufficient in order to survive.

Another issue is that funding opportunities vary from country to country. We spoke of the differences in our work depending on the country and that if we are really going to form alliances, we must perhaps do more than come and see each other for one or two days. The suggestion was that perhaps we should be brave and

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take a sabbatical and spend three or six months in one organization and another six months in another organization. The central question is if we are serious considering these alliances, what must we do to go further than the normal 10%? We need to delve more deeply in terms of knowledge about the complexities that are our countries, in other words, the context in which we are immersed.

This also opened another door for dialogue on the great differences that exist between our countries and especially the educational systems. The experiences vary a lot by country; for example in Costa Rica it is expected that students work while they study and that they support their families. They are not eighteen-year-olds with no obligations. We also shared the experiences of the United States where perhaps it is a stereotype that a student is an eighteen-year-old with no obligations who dedicates 100 percent to their studies. In reality, this has changed in the last decade. Now students, especially those from the working class, need to work in addition to studying. There are also many older women who return to the university and must support their families. We do see some of these kinds of similarities.

The point that we should clarify is that the quality of life still varies a lot among countries, which leads us to ask how we understand the context in which we work. How do we understand the context in each country?

In conclusion, there are two main points that summarize all of the points raised before. The first is that when we think about these alliances in a general way we need to define what points we have in common. The second is around the specificity that we offer in the dialogue: what is different or special about our work in relation with our countries or our communities of origin? Here, some examples were posed around how this varies: a natural disaster is related to the political climate, since the country can go backwards some ten or twelve years depending on this climate. We should take into account that our work doesn't occur in a vacuum. It exists in a context that we must make the effort to understand and that determines the nature of the work in each country.

Other Comments and Suggestions

It is interesting to observe that there are points in common between all of the groups, for example the need to collaborate so that we can all continue to teach and learn. For this we need to know each other better—we cannot just do a project and leave. We need to establish relationships in order to know each other better and from there develop trust.

We have been thinking about ways that this group could stay in contact, and as Katherine said before, our dream is to find the funding to meet in Boston, where my center is located, to continue this group dynamic. Something that we can do without much budget is to continue the relationship with Laura for follow-up work. Our institute will continue to work with her and any other that wishes to join forces, in order to create a final product on this forum. We would like for it to be more than proceedings; we would like for it to reflect the creativity that there has been seen and felt here and also include the instruments that people brought. Another task that the Gender and Diversities Institute can do is create a database of addresses so that we can at least stay in contact electronically.

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Develop a very original web page, where everyone in the group participates, in English and Spanish, and then look for ways in which we can resolve the problem of communication.

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[W]hen we think about these alliances in a general way we need to define what points we have in common. The second is around the specificity that we offer in the dialogue: what is different or special about our work in relation with our countries or our communities of origin?

We have learned that there has been discussion around establishing alliances with smaller groups, for which an electronic discussion list would be useful for follow-up with each other.

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One tool that we can think about to help us maintain communication within the group is a database with each participant's information. We are doing this in Access and we can continue to add to it additional information that people would like to share electronically in order to better know each other, know about interests, and this information can be shared electronically in a more direct way.

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We could use teleconferencing as another communication method, which would address the desire to meet each other in a closer way and share.

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Rethink forms of contact and communication, so that they are not only electronic, since in certain moments communication like this becomes something only expeditious and we want to look for ways to avoid falling into this trap.

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Presentations are another way to get deeper knowledge about the work that each is doing, and its accomplishments.

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This can perhaps sound like a perspective very based on the situation in the United States, but it would seem that one of the aspects that determines whether things can continue is the issue of funding, and no one in this group comes with funding that would permit them to live without the need of working. Considering that we are all hard workers, we should try to establish smaller groups for staying in contact to develop projects that address the specific issues that we have contemplated. We should work in a collaborative way to create projects and models that would permit us to find funding in order to continue with the larger project.