Section V:
RNGO Activities in Selected Fields of Sustainable Development

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Gender and Education

Gender inequality hinders development

Gender inequality is one of the biggest obstacles to sustainable development. It hinders economic growth and the reduction of poverty. Currently, 70 % of the people living in extreme poverty are women. Girls and women often do not have the same access to health and education as boys and men due to unequal rights and social norms. Regarding their work, women often earn less than men and work under more difficult conditions in sectors which are less productive. Women not only have less influence on decisions in politics, society and economy, but also suffer more from gender-based violence, exclusion and discrimination (SDC 2016). Above all, it is the gender inequality in education which hinders development. Economic growth and sustainable development are very difficult to achieve in areas with educational gender inequality (Klasen 2002).

In the last few years, the situation has changed drastically. It was possible for many improvements to be made. The World Bank World Development Report (WDR) of the year 2012 made the following observation: "The lives of women around the world have improved dramatically, at a pace and scope difficult to imagine even 25 years ago. Women have made unprecedented gains in rights, education, health, and access to jobs and livelihoods." (World Bank 2012a: xiii)

The WDR showed that gender inequality in education has almost disappeared as of 2010. Women and men in most parts of the world have the same literacy ratio and the same secondary education attainment. Gender gaps in education have in some places even shifted towards the disadvantage of men and boys. The boys' disadvantage is emerging in some places—above all in secondary and tertiary education—the girls' disadvantage, where it still persists, tends to take place earlier in life and is deeper (World Bank 2012a: 9).

While new inequalities have appeared, old gender-based inequalities still persist. Gender gaps in human development are pervasive. Compared to men, women are more likely to die in countries with low or middle human development index rates compared to richer countries. Some girls are never born or die in early childhood, and many women die in their reproductive

years. The number of dying girls and women is growing in Sub-Saharan Africa and in countries hardest hit by HIV/AIDS epidemic (World Bank 2012b: 2). Health issues are therefore one of the important issues to attack in order to attain gender equality and an improved human development index. As far as the educational sector is concerned, there are still disparities in girls' schooling. This concerns disadvantaged populations in many Sub-Saharan countries and some parts of South Asia, where there is still a very large number of poor women in poor countries. Gender gaps remain significant in these areas. Take for instance, this illustrative example: Girls tend to drop out of school more than boys because they are expected to take over domestic duties such as water collecting. In areas with improved water access, girls therefore stay longer in school (World Bank 2012a: 111).

In many countries that the Human Development Index considers having low human development, gender gaps remain sizable in the area of education and health (UNDP 2015). But it is not only insufficient access to education and health that prevent women from enjoying the same opportunities, but also social customs and institutions, which limit women's access to economic opportunities. Culture is a very strong determinant of female labour-force participation (Bandiera and Natraj 2013: 13–14). Gender gaps remain large when poverty "combines with other forms of exclusion such as remoteness, ethnicity, and disability" (World Bank 2012b: 2). Gender disparities in education often co-occur with other processes of socioeconomic, cultural and/or spatial differentiation, which concern religious customs and disparities between urban and rural regions. Various mutually reinforcing socio-cultural factors influence the decision of whether a family supports a girl to attend school or not. One factor can be the fear of a male teacher who abuses his power and develops a sexual relationship with one of his female students. Another factor is the lack of sanitary facilities for girls, which are very important during menstruation. A third factor is the question of whether travelling between home and school is safe enough for a girl (Rao and Sweetman 2014: 3).

To summarise, gender inequality leads to a less educated workforce, thus reducing income and economic growth. Gender equality is therefore still a main goal for development cooperation, particularly in the poorest areas in the world. It is quite evident that gender equality brings economic growth due to a larger work force in the market. Conversely, the effects of economic growth on gender equality are weak; economic growth does not instigate gender equality (Kabeer and Natali 2013). This was recognised in 1970 by Ester Boserup, a Danish economist, who noted in her groundbreaking book, that the assumption of a causality between economic

growth and gender equality was not correct (Boserup 1970). Women did not always benefit when the income of the male household head increased. Additionally women were increasingly seen as traditionalist and backward-thinking. Elisabeth Prügl, a political scientist, takes this a step further and argues that the commitment to gender equality in the World Bank is simply "a tempered version of neoliberalism that carries a feminist face" (Prügl 2016: 3). Perhaps this is one of the biggest problems that feminism and NGOs which fight for gender equality have to struggle with today. Development within the World Bank is very much focussed on economic growth; a multi-faceted notion of development is not used. Within this unilinear framework of development, gender equality is "understood as part of a struggle over the terms of the incorporation of women and reproductive labour into contemporary commodity relations within the triple movement of marketization, social protection, and emancipation" (Prügl 2016: 3). Within a notion of development that deals with a holistic transformation of society, gender equality plays a different role. It not only promotes economic growth, but also intrinsically values the ability to live the life one chooses as a basic human right and should be equal for males and females.

How can gender equality be achieved?

Before examining strategies to achieve gender equality, it is prudent to consider the goal of such equality. It is not only an improved economic development but also a gender-sensitive development. Such a notion of development has four basic ingredients, so that women not only have the same size slices of the development pie, but they are also able to gain power in the decision-making process. Behind the word SAFE stands a recipe for a gender-sensitive development:

> "A SAFE approach to GAD [Gender and Development] provides a strategic approach to addressing the development needs of women. This is not simply a case of 'add women and stir': it means adapting the usual cooking utensils, changing the recipes to use local knowledge, and bringing men into the kitchen. An approach to development which considers the strategic needs of women in a flexible, agenda-setting empowerment framework does just this." (Mitchell 1996: 143)

The SAFE acronym is broken down as follows:

- S stands for strategic needs of women. To perform their defined roles as mothers, productive workers and community workers, women have distinct practical needs such as access to water, health care, nutrition and income. This is an approach seriously taking gender into account, not only caring about fulfilling practical needs of women, but combining these with strategic interests in order to further female autonomy and transformation in women's positions.
- A stands for Agenda, setting direction to mainstreaming. It is not sufficient for gender mainstreaming to only be added to development policies. Gender mainstreaming issues must have an influence on the agenda setting; a gender perspective should transform the development agenda.
- F stands for Flexibility. Adaptation and flexibility are a must in such processes because the living conditions of women differ very much depending on their national, regional and even local contexts.
- E stands for Empowerment philosophy. Empowerment approaches attempt to transform power and control within development processes, therefore gender and development is highly political (Mitchell 1996: 140).

Gender disparities remain in three areas: domestic violence, the disproportionate amount of time women spend on unpaid care, and male son bias (Kabeer 2014). Higher incomes are not the only measure to reduce gender gaps; focussed domestic policies can have a real impact. The WDR (World Bank 2012a) identifies four areas of priority for domestic policy actions:

- Reducing excess female mortality and closing education gaps where they remain
- Improving access to economic opportunities for women
- Increasing women's voices and agency in the household and in society
- Limiting the reproduction of gender inequality across generations

This chapter concentrates on one way for how gender equality and a gender-sensitive development can be achieved: education. Education appears to be an important instrument in obtaining gender equality or gender justice; it is seen as a basic foundation of equality. But the motivation for education has to be clear. Do we educate and train women only for the purpose of a larger labour force? Or is educating and training women aimed at achieving gender justice? Not only access to education, but also

the kind of education delivered is a fundamental issue for women's movements worldwide. One key concern in the field of education is the ways that gender identities and gender norms are represented in curricula and schoolbooks through which stereotypes can be perpetuated. Furthermore, everyone who is involved in education has to perceive gender equality as an ideal, otherwise it cannot be achieved. In addition, education has to be understood within the broader field of social empowerment. Not only is formal education important; informal spaces for girls and women to exchange their thoughts and experiences are also very crucial in order to achieve gender equality in the long term (Rao and Sweetman 2014: 7–8).

Domestic policy actions as listed above need international development partners to complete public action. Not only is funding needed to implement them, but also broad partnerships and networks, which include civil society and private sectors. Religious communities in many parts of the world are important actors of civil society. Therefore, faith-based organisations can play a significant role in completing public action targeting gender equality. Religious leaders have a great influence on societies in the Global South (James 2011: 11).

Case Study: Mission 21 and gender equality

There is a list of development issues that involve religion and gender; gender and religion intersect in various ways: "The teachings and practices of different religions can be a catalyst to improve women's lives or they can be a source of conflict and inhibit change" (Marshall 2010: 35–36). This chapter now takes a closer look at one specific FBO, Mission 21, and attempts to answer the question of how does this missionary organisation engage in reducing gender inequality?

Mission 21 is a network of churches and organisations from different countries and cultures, which arose in 2001 from the merger of five closely related missionary organisations. Today the Mission 21 board of trustees consists of the Basel Mission, the Evangelical Mission in the Kwango and the Moravian Church. The strongest member of the board of trustees within Mission 21 is Basel Mission, founded in 1815 in Basel. Since its inception over 200 years ago, Mission 21 has aimed to give hope in different areas of our world and has been fighting against injustices and for people at the margins. In their overview "portrait" section of Mission 21's website there is also a short video by Mission 21 showing concrete expressions of "hope" in their work (Mission 21 2016a). The partner churches

and organisations of Mission 21 overseas are actively involved in the forming and realizing of projects and relations. Its cornerstones are theological and cultural exchange, but Mission 21 also maintains approximately 100 projects in development cooperation within fields like the reduction of poverty, women and gender, education, health care and the advancement of peace. The work of Mission 21 is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is an ecumenical organisation linking different people from different churches and denominations together. Development is understood in a holistic manner: development not only means economic growth but a transformation towards a more just society.

In all activities of Mission 21 the establishment of gender equality is advocated for. The Women and Gender Desk obtains a special position on the website in the middle of the overview "portrait" of Mission 21 (Mission 21 2016b). This special desk not only offers financial support to strengthen women and women's networks in the partner churches overseas, but also organises lectures or disseminates information on feminist theology from a southern perspective. The special desk publishes the Women's Letter in English, German, French, Spanish and Indonesian which offers a platform for exchange for women globally. The Gender and Women's Desk also publishes a Blog for their Women and Gender Network. The blog is a tool to exchange and connect experiences of women within the network of Mission 21 and beyond. The blog offers different categories such as News, Portraits, Tools and Remembering and is available in the five languages mentioned above (Special Desk for Women and Gender Mission 21 2016a).

Mission 21's advocacy programme 2016 and beyond

At the End of June 2016, the new advocacy programme of Mission 21 was launched: human rights for women, faith-based. With this programme, Mission 21 intends to strengthen their engagement for women globally. It aims to educate and network with women and men from partner churches and partner organisations of Mission 21, resulting in their ability to advocate their rights on a local, national and international level. The programme starts at the grassroot level to improve the living conditions of women in the Global South. Human rights topics arise regularly as burning issues in women's networks within the partner organisations of Mission 21: human trafficking in Asia, violence against women and girls in Latin America and HIV/Aids problems in Africa. These issues shape the continental priorities

and strategies of Mission 21 to campaign for women's human rights (Mission 21 2016c).

In June 2016 twelve leading women from Cameroon, Tanzania, Indonesia, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Peru and Chile were invited to a training workshop in Basel, in addition to a workshop on women's human rights for faith-based organisations, which was organised by the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva. Based on these workshops, different strategies have been devised for each continent, and regional stakeholder meetings will take place. Mission 21 aims to become one of the leading FBOs in the field of women's human rights. Through Capacity Development and topical networking this goal should be achieved. Leaderships will be sensitised and educated locally for women's human rights, and human rights instruments will be disseminated. Theological fundaments on the topic of women's human rights will be acquired, and the local people will learn skills in fundraising. The topical network takes place on a local, national and international level. Alongside this, every three years there will also be an international campaign on women's humans rights (Special Desk for Women and Gender Mission 21 2016b).

The strategies and projects within the advocacy programme of Mission 21 differ in each continent. In Asia, Mission 21 supports a centre for domestic migrant workers in Hong Kong, which is run by Christian Action, a local charitable organisation, which acts on three levels: a paralegal service, shelter and education. Through this kind of advocacy, the meaning of sisterhood, safe spaces and empowerment becomes clear. The women's self-esteem can improve through using this centre; their ability to act is elevated and they are taught how to stand up for their rights and how to perceive themselves as capable. To illustrate the work of this centre, Siti's story provides a rich example. She is an Indonesian woman in her early twenties, working for a couple with two children in Hong Kong:

> "The first indignity she suffered was not being given a bed, and being forced to sleep on the floor. Siti's life was complicated as her employers often gave her conflicting instructions, and having random objects thrown into her face by her angry employer became a weekly occurrence. Seeking help from her employment agent proved to be futile, and not knowing she had any recourse to justice left Siti feeling frightened and helpless. Siti's sister sent her to Christian Action, seeking help to open a case at the Labour Department. For the duration of her case, Siti was offered free shelter, counseling and paralegal services. While she waited for her case to be concluded, she participated in a number of activities and outings arranged by Christian Action." (Christian Action 2016)

This example shows us how a Christian organisation is working on women's rights in the very sensitive context of migrant workers. Their offer is at a low treshold, concrete and nurtured by the Bible, where Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25,40).

Violence against women and girls is a big concern for women's networks and activists in Latin America. Rape and femicide rates are very high in various countries on the whole continent. A number of women's networks are trying to encourage women who suffered from violence to break down prejudices and customs, claiming their right to exist. Violence is often supported or fuelled by religious fundamentalism, which is growing in Latin American countries. This is combined with political aims, attempts to deny women's rights and the possibility to make decisions for their own life in order to pursue a life of dignity. Therefore women's networks are concerned with replacing such fundamentalist theologies with other liberating theologies to support emerging alliances and new social networks. The cause for gender-based violence can also be seen "as a systemic reaction of men grappling with their own struggles with (dis)empowerment on shifting economic and political sands" (Parpart 2015: 21). High levels of unemployment, especially among young men, and the competition with better educated women is giving rise to social tensions that sometimes have violent outcomes.

The Moravian Church in Tanzania's Southern Province is involved in education and social activism by campaigning about HIV/Aids. Awareness-raising groups—church choirs and theatre groups—are campaigning at market places to encourage the population to undertake an HIV test. They provide a mobile clinic to give tests right on the spot. Other activities of the church include assisting HIV-positive children and their relatives or other carers with small amounts of money, educational material or nutrition.[1]

Although the campaigns and strategies in the advocacy programme of Mission 21 are diverse, they also have communalities. Firstly, the advocacy programme always collaborates with existing local partners, such as Christian Action in Hong Kong, the Moravian Church in Tanzania, and Women Networks in Latin America, with all of whom they have long-term relations. Secondly, the notion of education is more or less the same in every programme. It is understood as training women towards empowerment. The

1 See the documentary of the support group Lusobilo (Hope) in Tanzania. Even though these people are infected with HIV they do not remain silent, give mutual support and encourage others: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgEPpir01kM.

intersections with religion are taken seriously. Education also targets religious norms. Religious values which exacerbate gender inequalities are questioned.

Furthermore two observations seem to be important. The advocacy programme of Mission 21 is in line with the goal number five—gender equality—of the 17 sustainable development goals adopted in September 2015 (United Nations 2016). Secondly, the advocacy programme shows a further development within Mission 21. This organisation, which in their beginnings was strongly rooted in Pietism, has become increasingly a rights-based organisation. This is a turn which lots of other NGOs have also taken in recent years (Ottacher and Vogel 2015).

Basel Mission and gender equality

Gender equality or the improvement of the situation of women has almost from the foundation of Basel Mission in 1815 been an important goal for their missionary work. From the beginning, education, training and networking were instruments to reach women in their different contexts. Since the second half of the 19th century, Basel Mission has been working intensively with women's networks. In 1842, the "Women's Association for Female Education in the Pagan Countries" was founded. Although this association was subordinate to the male committee of the Basel Mission where decisions were made, the female committee, set up for the coordination of the work of all the local women's aid-associations within Switzerland and Southern Germany, had a certain influence. The main goal of this association was the education and training of women by creating boarding schools for girls in the various fields of mission. From 1845, specially trained, unmarried female teachers were sent out to educate girls. The work of such female missionaries also changed the perception and standing of women in Europe. Although these female missionaries were not treated in the same way as their male colleagues, slowly these women began to gain more importance. After several years the Women's Association won a small achievement in ensuring that the women who were to be sent out also received a blessing in public. However, the blessings were given at the mission house, not in the large church where the male missionaries were blessed.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Association was revived under a new name: Association for Women's Mission. This association was concerned with the education and training of unmarried women and wives of mission-

aries. In 1911, a specific sister house was opened in Basel which gave education and training to female missionaries, married or not, and gave the whole association a better standing within the still patriarchally-organised Basel Mission (Frank 2016). More and more women were sent out, and in the 1920s two female doctors were recruited, who were responsible for a mission hospital in India. From 1945 women and men missionaries were blessed together in the largest church in Basel. In the 1960s the sister house in Basel was closed, and the training became the same for women and men missionaries, later called ecumenical co-workers. A commission for women was also set up to support the women missionaries overseas. Since 2001, Mission 21 has run the previously mentioned special desk for Women and Gender.[2]

A boarding school situated in Mandomai, former South Borneo, which is currently the Indonesian Province Central Kalimantan provides an illustrative example of the work of Basel Mission in the field of training women. The boarding school was opened in March 1934 with a focus on housekeeping. 16 students attended the school for ten months. The focal point was the improvement of the situation of the Dayak women as mothers and housewives. The women were seen as an important starting point of the missionary work (Kühnle 1934). The first teacher sent from Basel to Mandomai to build up the school was Luise Junginger. Before the boarding school was opened, Junginger started to work as teacher for handiwork, such as embroidery and knitting, in the mission school. 35 girls from Christian, Muslim and local faith families attended the school. Mothers and girls warmly welcomed Junginger, and they were very excited about the new topics at school. The girls waited one or two hours outside the school to start at 4pm. Besides the work in the school, Junginger also supported the missionaries` wives with the sewing association of the Christian women in the village (Junginger 1931: 3). Education at that time was understood as schooling and targeting the improvement of women's lives by providing them with income generating tools.

The earliest development approaches after the fifties also focussed on women as mothers. The development work therefore pointed at fertility reduction and the improvement of mother and child health (Coles, Gray and Momsen 2015: 2). What was typical for the first steps in development cooperation towards gender equality started in the Basel Mission 20 years earlier.

2 See exhibition in the Basel Mission headquarter.

Discussion

For 200 years, Mission 21 has been fighting for sustainable development and a fair society, where gender equality also played a crucial role. Through the description and analysis of the work of Mission 21 focusing on gender equality, two things become visible: adaptation and continuity.

Mission 21 has adapted their work on women to the changing world situations. While the boarding school in Mandomai had a focus on housekeeping and the improvement of the living conditions of women, the advocacy programme today focusses on calling governments into responsibility. To achieve this goal, Mission 21 works with secular instruments. Important sources and instruments for the advocacy work of Mission 21 were developed in the UN, where women's human rights have been debated for several decades. The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 is an important instrument to sensitise governments and other civil society networks for the aims of human rights for women (UN Women 2000–2009). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 aims to advance the implementation of gender equality (UN Women 1995). The Resolution S/RES/1325 of the Security Council on Women and Peace and Security adopted in 2000 reaffirms the important role of women in conflict resolution (OSAGI 2016). The latter resolution was achieved thanks to the commitment of women's networks and organisations, female politicians and academics, as well as relief and faith-based organisations.

These UN conventions are also applicable to governments. States that signed the CEDAW (all UN member states except the USA) are responsible for implementing this convention in their countries and report on their progress every year. Through these reports it becomes clear how complex certain issues are, how divided nations can be and how much interpretations of human rights for women can differ. Women's organisations and networks can support these government reports with shadow reports.

A certain continuity within the work of Mission 21 is also visible. The work with and for women has always been very crucial within this organisation. And the justification of development work has always been the same. For Mission 21, theology and theological education is the centrepiece of their development work—all the rest follows. Without a Christian motivation this work would not be done, and without theological thinking, the kind of development which is targeted by Mission 21, would not be achieved. The theological background of Mission 21 is strongly formed by

a holistic understanding of mission. Mission is not only a means of attracting people to the Christian faith by evangelisation. It always also stands for fighting for justice. Mission is not only words but also deeds. Diaconia and Evangelisation are always linked.

Conclusion: How does religion make a difference?

Do religious organisations act the same as secular organisations to reduce gender inequalities in development? The engagement for women and gender equality within Mission 21 is strongly in line with the engagement of other NGOs and governments. For quite a long time now they have all been aiming towards the integration of women into economic development. This was mainly done by income-generating projects for women. The problems within such projects were the failure to see the diversity among women and the assumption that women have spare time to undertake new projects (Coles, Gray and Momsen 2015). Also the second wave of feminism which led to a shift from women towards gender and took part in the 1980s in the secular world, is clearly visible within the work of Mission 21. Therefore, we can conclude that in some aspects the religious feature of Mission 21 does not make a difference.

Not only are the aims, programmes and outcomes of religious NGOs sometimes difficult to differentiate from those of secular organisations, but religion is also often cited as an impediment to development as well as to gender equality or to women's access to education (Tomalin 2013: 183). Therefore, religious NGOs have a difficult position. Religion can be a source of conflict and hinder change regarding the improvement of women's lives, but it also can be a foundation for transformation which the case study of Mission 21 has illustrated.

Nevertheless, there have been catalysing moments of religious NGOs in the field of gender and education. First of all, they play significant roles in critical areas like health and education. Within these fields of development work they are often central players. Their reach is vast, and they often work in areas which are not accessible for the state. The poorest at the margins—mostly women—are in focus. Furthermore, FBOs show a continuity which many of the secular NGOs are lacking (Marshall 2010: 36).

Secondly, FBOs target the collaboration of civil society in a special way. They mostly work together with religious organisations and religious leaders. In many developing countries, religious leaders are the most trusted people. People think that identity-forming organisations such as churches

are more capable at solving development problems than the state. Church leaders are often key persons and therefore crucial for social transformation. Churches have good access to the people in their communities, and there are women's or youth networks which can be used for the purpose of development. Through the engagement of civil society, governments can be held responsible (James 2011: 11).

Last but not least, the theological dimension of an FBO plays an important role in their engagement. Obviously, this theological dimension can be very exclusive—this is something which is often talked about in the public sphere and in media. This chapter stresses the advantages of the theological dimension of an FBO. Working with religious organisations opens the possibility to talk about difficult moral values. It is exactly these values which have to be considered to improve gender equality and the educational situation of women. Religion is an important factor shaping norms and values in a community. The issues where religion and gender intersect can range from female genital cutting to domestic violence, missing girls, rape as tools of war, trafficking of women and girls, early marriage and AIDS (Marshall 2010). Such issues—and there are even more—and the intersection with religious norms and values have to be the focus of NGOs which aim to improve gender equality, development and the improvement of women's lives. Organisations which are faith-based have a natural advantage to target these issues and values. Education and training, which first of all means identifying and eliminating stereotypes, are the first steps towards gender justice.

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