

ISSN: 2373-6615 (Print); 2373-6631 (Online)

Gender Studies and Sustainable Development in Morocco

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Abstract

The paper explores the need for the continuity of gender studies in Morocco and discusses some of its dimensions. It also argues that the study of gender is in conformity with the goals of liberal education in several fundamental ways: by its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature, synthesizing approach, its emphasis on deconstruction/reconstruction, its examination of the role of value judgment in the creation of knowledge, and its problem-solving stance. It seeks to demonstrate that promoting gender courses and women's rights is crucial for women's empowerment, stressing the ways in which Moroccan women try to reappraise traditional spaces and boundaries by raising their voices, telling their tales and making their own cases known. The paper also seeks to examine the breaking of the taboos related to the sanctity of some discourses by women and the use they have made of the freedom to explore some areas of women's experiences especially after the 2011 Moroccan Constitution. It concludes with an analysis of the future challenges in Morocco: to show the continued necessity of gender awareness and peace studies for those who would believe that we are in a post-feminist age and to fill in the gaps related to sustainable, equitable and democratic growth.

Keywords: gender studies, sustainable development, peace education, justice, Morocco



Some Preliminary Remarks

The concept of gender is different from that of sex in the sense that sex is a purely biological description, while gender connotes socially and culturally constructed categories. It can be defined as the social differences and relations between men and women which are learned, and which vary widely among societies and cultures. It is worthy to point out that gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, and by the geographical, economic and political environment. It is becoming increasingly evident that we cannot make sense of women's lives if we attend only to gender because nationality, place of residence and work, marital status and membership of particular cultural groups all interact and constitute women's lives.

Gender studies refer to important strategies for change that have come out of the women's movement. By their very scope gender studies are an integral part of a broad process of critical evaluation of the nature of human and socials sciences. They are meant to expand the territory of questions and answers by exploring the invisible or silenced perspectives of women. An insurrection of 'subjugated knowledge', to use M. Foucault's (1969; 1971) terms, aptly describes the categories of knowledge that have sprung out of the women's movement.

Foucault (1969; 1971) conveys the idea that the status of the term "knowledge" has been profoundly altered. The privilege once bestowed upon universal, hierarchical, and essentialist knowledge claims is now disrupted by what Foucault (1969; 1971) calls an eruption of "subjugated knowledges." According to him, *subjugated knowledge* is knowledge under the signs of the repressed, the marginal, the fragmented, and above all, the local. He goes on to add that subjugated knowledges are those voices or traditions that were silenced by the discourses of modernity. Foucault implies that such repressed or degraded knowledge has already begun to sprout through the cracks in the once-shining façade of the Age of Reason. However, he also argues the need for critical, erudite researchers and students who will burrow deep beneath the foundations of historiography to uncover the irrational, the discontinuous, and the uncanny.

Now, any discourse that is oblivious of gender is but one among an array of social practices that may all be understood as matrices of domination and power.

Until recently, gender was ignored as an analytic category, as a subject matter and as the defining human construct. It is now included in the Human and Social Sciences in Morocco. In this context, Moroccan scholars believe that all sorts of theorising and research prior to that which takes account of gender, race and class in their intricate intertwining must be seen as partial, erroneous and fallacious in so far as they claim generality, let alone universality. Moreover, a particular emphasis is put on the fact that knowledge is a human construct and carries with it the assumptions that its authors and teachers frequently teach what they do not even know are assumptions.

For Moroccan feminists, the international conferences on women have brought a wealth of international data and cross-cultural contacts. These United Nations conferences on the status of women mark the official birth of global feminism, bringing women together from around the globe to discuss their common ground. Stated baldly, the United Nations Conferences on women brought dynamism and direction to the Moroccan feminist movement and to gender studies.

Offering gender studies courses both challenges the definition of "excellent" "best", "high", "major", peaceful, and asks who defines what is best and what is peaceful and whom the definitions

benefit most. Implicit in this enterprise is conviction that hierarchies and canon-making in the academy are corollary to hierarchies and canon-making in social life.

Demonstrating by its very existence that women and their rights are important, gender studies challenges both women and men to use the power of knowledge to change themselves and their world in order to achieve sustainable development.

Sustainable development is our present best hope and gender studies are an important way of achieving it. This implies meaningful education of women as well as men for it is an important area of the curriculum in which women's existence is fully registered and methodological awareness is encouraged. The transformation of the curriculum to include women is more than a question of human rights. It is essential to fulfilment of the university's commitment to the search for « truth », to the education of all students and to the university itself.

Some of the aims mentioned may seem down to earth *ad* basic, but they remain nonetheless crucial for determining the objectives of sustainable development. In other words, humanities and social science are definitely not a luxury for the simple reason that they help us understand human beings and empathise with them. A point that cannot be possibly overemphasised is that understanding human beings is a determining factor that binds human communities at the level of a neighbourhood, family or a nation or a group of people coming together.

It is worthy of note that development concerns human beings. For that development to take place, society, women and men, have to be prepared and ready for it. Moreover, they have to be motivated and willing to accept it. In this respect, the role of university is crucial: it has to enhance the production, the teaching and the study of humanities and social science. This is one of the important ways for societies to know themselves, to know what they want and what they do not want. This is exactly what development specialists and experts have stressed as the cultural factor of peace. Interestingly, Amartya Sen (2001) invites us to conceptualize human development as freedom because he wants the goal to be wider than, say, a numerical measure of Gross National Product (GNP). This means that he supports real, lived-in freedoms, or what are often called "capabilities": freedoms of sustainable development and not just of theoretical rights.

Still remaining on the agenda of higher education are ways to recognize and counter subtle teachings of the damaging inferiority lesson, ways less amenable to straight forward legal and administrative solutions, obstacles that, in fact, are in the process of being defined and researched.

One of the important steps in gender courses may have to do precisely with freeing Moroccan women's minds from the status of 'the second sex,' and developing a positive self-image.

Another related point is that the relationship between gender studies and the University depends very much on whether one believes feminist discourse can expand one's knowledge of one's blunders, blindness and weakness. If it can, then our duty is to learn from this new scholarship how to improve the study of knowledge. Without the experience of educational jolts to the ego, the existing sexism will remain, and changes will be purely cosmetic. Fundamentally, when facing feminist discourses for the first time, most Moroccan university teachers, men and women, continue to receive blows to the ego. As Moroccan teachers, most of us had learned to think of ourselves as fairly intelligent, competent in our teaching, and on guard against being culturally/politically manipulated. However, the knowledge of the now impressive scholarship on women implies that we are obliged to be creative about what we should continue to teach and how, and about ways of thinking and learning.



Nowadays, emphasis is placed on the ways in which we take on ideas about gender, and the ways in which those ideas affect us. When we are no longer trapped in old definitions and standards, we are able to think much more effectively about what ought to be considered important enough to include in courses such as peace, history, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, international relations, economics and literature.

To help fulfil the ultimate goal of transforming the traditional curriculum, gender studies are now devoted to challenge male hegemony over not only culture and society, but also over the structure of educational instructions and the content of knowledge about peace itself. Proponents of gender courses have argued convincingly that these studies are an integral part of peace studies and of the liberal arts curriculum.

It is said that the most effective way to learn a subject is to have to teach it. The story behind the construction of *Les cahiers du genre* – that is, gender manuals - attest to this axiom. Almost ten years ago, in September 2009, The UNESCO Chair members set out to convince colleagues at both Mohamed V and Ibn-Tofail universities that looking at sustainable development through a gender lens significantly contributes to their understanding of men's and women's roles and responsibilities. The workshops organized included different types of brainstorming sessions. Male and female participants were divided into different groups and participants were asked to share their experiences as a 'man' or a 'woman' (Jacket & Rhissassi, 2008).

This first experience was crucial to the university since it forced us to acknowledge that to date there had been little work conducted in laying out a methodology for teaching gender that made visible the linkages between gender and sustainable development. Ultimately, we came to grips with the fact that regardless of how we felt about our capacity and knowledge, we ourselves had to design and implement the training of trainers' programmes.

As a result, students began raising questions and having expectations that are unprecedented. Refusal to entertain the possibility of such questions and such knowledge distorts, to use Sandra Harding's (1994) words, "women's and men's understanding of ourselves and our lives, as well as our understandings of the rest of the world" (p. 111).

To understand gender studies fully, it is necessary to point out that Moroccan feminists address gender-blind citizenship theorists, argue the need to make gender visible and develop feminist analyses of state and citizenship. The meanings given to citizenship are on the top of the research agenda of Moroccan feminist scholars who ask how women experience citizenship and what strategies and struggles are effective in renegotiating Moroccan women's relationships with citizenship. The growing interest in citizenship among feminist scholars reveals some grounds on which denial of rights and belonging could generate conflicts and multiple forms of violence (Rhissassi, 2005).

Nowadays the publications on women are astonishing in their volume. One exciting new development in the area of publication is the creation of the *Feminist Press* in Morocco (1987). Indeed, *les editions Le Fennec* is a powerful tool for disseminating information on key gender issues and contributing to the richness and issues of equality, peace and gender identity, with authors as various as Fatema Mernissi, Souâd Bahéchar, Siham Abdellaoui, Leïla Ghandi, Laïla Lalami, etc. This Moroccan feminist press publishes classic and new books by Moroccan women academics and elevates silenced and marginalized voices in order to support personal transformation, social justice and peace for all people.

Besides the various governmental and nongovernmental programmes, new visibility exists in research and academic instructions. Gender studies groups and research centers exist at several Moroccan universities and have an impressive record. The interesting proliferation of courses and programs, the development and dissemination of feminist scholarship and its gradual but sure encompassing of the field of differences among women show the growing recognition of the link between gender studies and peace.

Clearly, gender and peace are closely linked: peace is vital to promote gender equality, while gender inequality can also undermine peace and drive conflict and violence. One of the main thrusts of peacebuilding commitment is inextricably bound up with a gender perspective. One can say without error that gender studies contribute toward peace, particularly when relevant discriminatory attitudes, forms of violence and social norms continue to be addressed. It is clearly true that a course on gender analysis of conflict can contribute to understanding prospects for peace (El Bushra & Lopez, 2004).

Gender and peace imply that those two fields of interest are connected. In fact, to understand the relationship between gender and peace is essential for an examination of gender dynamics as well as peace dynamics.

There is strong evidence that the gender norms that underpin inequality can cause domination and control. A number of studies have found a strong correlation between levels of conflict and gender inequality, but the nature of this relationship is not always clear. Does violence fuel gender inequality, or gender inequality fuel violence, or both? In some cases, women advance their strategic interests during times of conflict, but this is often followed by the restoration of more unequal gender roles afterwards. A case in point, the Arab spring, increased opportunities for women's political activism, but has been coupled with a violent backlash against women trying to claim their rights. Indeed, conflict and violence have to date been the most important factors obstructing progress and peace. Indeed, conflicts in Africa and elsewhere cause death, injury, displacement, destroy infrastructure, disrupt markets and social ties, and divert vital resources away from development.

The implications of gender on peace education are many and diverse. Generally speaking, Morocco recognizes the potential of women as peace-builders, and actively promotes their inclusion in peace-making processes. It is in that context that in 2012 Morocco launched, in partnership with Spain, an initiative on the promotion of the role of women in the mediation process in the Mediterranean. That initiative has enabled us to give mediation training to a number of Mediterranean women so as to ensure that they are available to the United Nations and regional and sub regional organizations.

Morocco continues to position itself as a leading institution that actively seeks to advance gender analysis as a peace and security tool. Our students and partners in academia are learning what we hope will be a self-evident truth before the close of the decade: that beyond equality, women's meaningful participation simply makes peace more effective. Some examples show that women are essential makers and markers of peace. A case in point is Assia Bensalah Alaoui, Professor of International Law at Mohammed V University, who co-chairs the High Level Panel of the European Union on Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, and is Ambassador-at-Large for King Mohammed VI. She is an exceptional woman peacebuilder. Studying these women leaders' paths and strategies is an approach to understanding gendered dynamics within conflict and peacebuilding and to advocate for women's participation at all levels of peace processes.

In addition, in September 2000, Morocco organized an international conference on the topic of



women and peace and security in Marrakech. The conference contributed to the international debate on the role of women in peace processes and the implementation of national plans of action to promote collective action on implementing resolution 1325. It was an occasion to reaffirm the international community's consensus on the need to strengthen the participation of women in negotiations and agreements concerning the settlement of conflicts and peacebuilding, as well as to renew the commitment of the United Nations to the question of the inclusion of women and gender equality in all strategies aimed at restoring peace and preventing conflict. A number of questions were debated at the conference, including the role of women in mediation and conflict-prevention processes, the lessons learned and best practices in the prevention of sexual violence in conflict.

At this same conference, Morocco announced the creation in Rabat of an independent regional center dedicated to studying the role of women in peacekeeping operations and their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development. The *Mohammedia Centre* serves as a space for reflection, a reservoir of ideas and a source of independent thought regarding the role and place of women in peacekeeping operations, as well as peacebuilding in conflict zones.

Of equal importance was the organization of an international conference on «Women, Religions and Peace» by The UNESCO Chair: Woman and her Rights of Ibn Tofail University, Kénitra, the Institute of African Studies of Mohamed V University, Souissi, Rabat on 27-28 April, 2009 (Al Farah et al. 2011).

The motivation for organizing this conference is thus grounded in the concern for peace in the world which is today the primary worry of the whole humanity. It also lies within the scope of the international decade for the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace to the benefit of the world children (2001-2010) decreed by the United Nations.

At Moroccan universities, peace studies are enormously strengthened by the focus on the complex role of gender in patterns of war and peace. Emphasis is placed on understanding gender's explanatory value in relation to participation in war; the differential patterns of suffering and violence; and the consequences for men and women in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, transitional justice and peacebuilding. Some modules examine what gender analysis reveals about the causes and dynamics of war and peace and go on to criticize some basic gendered assumptions - such as that war is the business of men and peace that of women. Instead we challenge these dichotomies by examining issues such as the complicated relationship between the social construction of masculinity and soldiering and the challenge posed to militaries by the inclusion of women in their ranks. We ask why peace processes have generally excluded women and what the consequences of that are for the sustainability of peace, while at the same time examining the assumption that 'women' as an essentialized group have particular skills to bring to the peace table. Through these debates we examine the ways in which war and peace are gendered experiences which also shape our understanding of what it is to be a gendered person. The more we know about the circumstances, worldviews and religions we all hold, the better we are prepared to find the solutions that can defuse polarized positions and put an end to conflicts and violence.

Violence against women, one of the most common forms of violence worldwide, must be eliminated, with women's rights to education as the first step towards this goal. In many respects, this violence both causes inequality and is caused by inequality.

It is vital to recognize and believe in the importance of overcoming conflict and violence and in the fact that women's rights and peace building communities can work together to demonstrate the links between their aims in an attempt to secure strong commitments in both areas.

Indeed, gender and conflict should be studied together because ignoring the gender dimension makes it impossible to address crucial elements of conflict resolution. It will also lead to missing opportunities like failing to use the contributions that women can make in resolving conflicts and reconstructing their countries after the war.

The change in the peace concept from the 1980 to the 1985 conferences reflects the worthy efforts of feminist peace researchers all over the world to redefine and revisit the peace concept to include the absence of violence at the micro-level, especially against women.

Undeniably, gender is an important consideration in the context of peace education for a number of reasons. The most fundamental of these reasons is that women's empowerment and equality in all spheres is absolutely necessary in order to achieve a sustainable peace. As affirmed by the United Nations Beijing Declaration, "local, national, regional and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels" (United Nations, 1995).

There is considerable evidence that violence against women and girls undermines global peace and security and prevents countries from achieving social stability and sustainable development. Morocco's parliament has approved legislation on violence against women. It took a very long time for members of parliament to approve law 103-1. The legislation obtained its second and final approval on Valentine's Day with 168 yes votes and 55 nays and is considered a step forward to promote gender equality. The law's first vote dates back to June 2006, when 83 lawmakers voted in favour and 22 against. This law does not meet all the aspirations of Moroccan women. This means that the combat for equality will continue.

The last decades have seen a plentiful harvest of literature on women, violence, war and peace and women's human rights conferences that brought a number of scholars together as participants in international civil society, further internationalizing the field, strengthening its global perspective and enriching courses in peace studies with research and theorizing around the long-neglected sphere of gender and peace. They also offered particularly fruitful substance for pedagogical developments in peace education, especially among those practitioners who perceived human rights as essential and integral to the field.

There are interesting developments in peace education which is a wide field, entailing a considerable diversity of approaches, ranging from human rights education to education for democracy, and from education for nonviolence to conflict resolutions. The common denominator of these programs is to foster changes that will make the world a more human place. Betty Reardon (2000) rightly points out that peace education is "a guided learning that attempts to comprehend and reduce the multiple forms of violence (physical, structural, institutional and cultural)." She goes on to add that peace educators strive to provide insights into how to transform a culture of violence into a peaceful culture.

Gender-based violence is the most brutal and overt form of the inequality that is present in all spheres of society. Thus, a crucial part of peace education must be the dissemination of information about the widespread occurrence of such violence and its negative impacts on women and on progress toward creating a culture of peace and harmony.

There are many ways in which teachers can incorporate gender-informed peace education into their classrooms. A feminist peace educator tries to do away with rigid sex role socialization and the training into femininity or masculinity. A mention should be made of Françoise Héritier, a radiant



scholar, who was both a great teacher and a passionate peace lover. She was also one of the godmothers of Zeromacho, whose evolution she followed with benevolent attention. Her luminous sentence about prostitution summarizes her commitment to equality and peace: "Saying that women have the right to sell themselves hides the fact that men have the right to buy them" (Legardinier, 2017).

Even though many of the questions that feminist peace educators ask today already were asked more than sixty years ago by Virginia Woolf (1966), they were not made part of the agenda of peace education and research before the last two decades. In my opinion, the teaching of feminist writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and V. Woolf contributed to an explosion of feminist consciousness in the English department and has left its mark on several students. The new questions posed by these women writers created an extraordinary climate for research. In fact, the intervention of peace-oriented gender studies strikes me as being incontestably an important moment in the history of English studies. In "Three Guineas," V. Woolf (1966) wonders how women can help men achieve peace when they are so oppressed themselves and when the education they get is not of the holistic kind enabling them really to understand peace issues.

However, Woolf (1966) always countered violence with the possibilities of peace, harmony, and beauty. Elucidating these patterns as they emerge in Woolf's (1966) treatments of war and history, the essay gives a view of Woolf as fundamentally motivated by the call to formalize in her writing the effects of war and violence, but also to create alternatives to the brutal violence that, as she never forgot, has characterized western history from the beginning.

Yet, even after the publication of this book, the field of peace education continued to be looked at as a gender-neutral field where sexism was a non-issue. It was only when feminist scholars started to combine peace education with their knowledge of sexism and with the domain of gender role socialization that certain gender-specific questions were asked within the academic fields of peace research and peace education.

In striving to educate for peace, we must take all societal norms into account and actively try to counteract them. Even something as basic as a history book tends to place the focus on battles rather than resolutions. As noted earlier, it is difficult to educate for peace when textbooks are mostly about war. Thus, Moroccan teachers as peacebuilders must make an active effort to draw students' attention to achievements of peace rather than of war.

Peace education can have a positive impact on eradicating inequalities by raising awareness of the existence of discrimination in everyday life, and by inspiring action to eliminate these inequalities. Moreover, the capacity of women as peacemakers must be recognized and promoted in governments, in non-profit organizations, and in international relations, as well as in the classroom. The United Nations has stated its support for the active engagement of women in the peace process in numerous official resolutions and declarations, and now it remains for the world to follow through.

Teachers can further this goal in their classrooms by discussing the peace processes throughout history and not just the role of wars. Moreover, they should make sure that the role of Arab, Amazigh, Muslim and Jewish Moroccan women throughout history is not omitted. In Morocco, many exercises for students consist of researching women's perspectives from certain historical periods when they do not figure in history textbooks.

Acceptance of this approach depends upon accepting that courses called 'the history of Morocco' that omit the ethnic and religious diversity would have to change their names. It is high time Moroccan

historians answer questions such as what it is like to be a woman being in a variety of positions, statuses, and cultural contexts. The simple answer involves getting the multi-ethnic and multi religious sphere added to the subject matter of the discipline. It is clear that the discipline itself is not simply enlarged and enriched, but also challenged in its terminology and epistemology.

Unlike many Arab countries with once sizable Jewish communities, Morocco has taken wideranging steps to preserve its Jewish history. The Casablanca Jewish museum was restored, the small but colorful 17th century synagogue in Fez was renovated, and dozens of former Jewish schools and more than 100 synagogues were rehabilitated with funding from the crown.

In 2011, in a move that is unprecedented in the modern Middle East, the Moroccan constitution was changed to note that the country has been nourished and enriched by Hebraic influences among others. This effort is the concrete manifestation of a consensus in a society that is partly built on Jewish culture, a culture deeply rooted in three millennia of history.

To my knowledge, Morocco is a noble exception when it comes to familiarize students with the Holocaust. In line with the objectives adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, the Aladdin Project set up important and decisive initiatives in order to introduce courses and research on the Holocaust. Teaching the Holocaust at Moroccan Universities does not mean supporting Zionism since the main objective goal is to introduce into the curriculum of Moroccan academic institutions a study about crimes against humanity, and crimes of war and violence.

The term "violence against women" refers to "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm of suffering to women" (United Nations, 1994). The continuing worldwide prevalence of such violence remains a significant obstacle to building a lasting peace, as women living in fear of gender-based violence cannot achieve true equality.

Not only is violence against women an unacceptable act in itself, but according to the United Nations (1994), it is also a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.

An important consideration when thinking about violence against women is the effect of the media on social and cultural perceptions of women. The media as a whole tend to perpetuate negative stereotypes of women, and an important step in gender-informed peace education is to recognize this trend and develop awareness about it by incorporating media studies in the syllabus. Kempadoo, Maxwell, and Smith (2001) describe this media bias as follows: "There is a link between media images and incidences of violence against women... Negative media images are harmful in a society where violence against women is increasing."

In the classroom, there are many ways in which a teacher can work to further this goal. For instance, the teacher should choose pieces of literature, film, and media carefully and in consideration of how these sources might portray women in a negative way. If use of a biased source proves necessary, this provides an opportunity for a lesson on gender stereotypes, war, violence and raise students' awareness of their own, often unconscious, behaviors that enable the status quo to continue.

The first step for teachers wanting to counteract this trend of unequal socialization is to become aware of the gender stereotypes that they (perhaps unconsciously) perpetuate. If teachers are conscious of their own perceptions of gender, they will be able to make an active effort not to recreate them in the



classroom. Similarly, in the context of any class assignment or discussion, the teacher can challenge students' ideas about gender roles and inspire them to think critically about the origins of these inequalities.

I fervently believe that education has a transformative capacity when it inculcates Enlightenment ideals that promote equal treatment for women and men. The more educated human beings are the more open they are to being tolerant of others regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation and other location. Education is a powerful mechanism that teaches individuals to be more accepting of others by giving them the experience of learning and interacting with people different than themselves.

Over the past two decades, women's activism has taken creative new forms across the Muslim world. Working within the frame of Islamic piety and engaging fully with the Muslim tradition, many women have been distancing themselves from the largely secular feminist projects of social reform, legal rights, or empowerment-through-development that had dominated the social field of women's activism across the Muslim world. Indeed, reformers and feminists like F. Mernissi, may peace be on her, and A. Lamrabet repeatedly try to affirm with remarkable tenacity that the reforms they seek involve no disloyalty to Islam that they are in conformity with, and if not in conformity with the letter, then, in conformity with the spirit of the Qur'an. A case in point is the work achieved by Musawah in partnership with the UNESCO Chair /Woman and her Rights in Morocco. Since its launch in 2009, Musawah has sought to produce new knowledge to support local and national movements as they develop and advocate for peace. The contributors are academics and activists from varied disciplines and backgrounds who are together with Musawah. They are: Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Omaima Abou-Bakr, Asma Lamrabet, Fouzia Rhissassi, Ayesha S. Chaudhry, Sa'diyya Shaikh, Lynn Welchman, Marwa Sharafeldin, Lena Larsen, Mulki Al-Sharmani, Jana Rumminger and AminaWadud (Mir-Hosseini, 2015).

Conclusion

There can be no doubt that gender studies serve sustainable development and that they produce knowledge that supports peace.

As peace educators, we believe that the linkages of gender and peace in all their forms constitute one field from which multiple forms of learning relevant to the tasks of educating and acting for peace can be gleaned. We have drawn upon the fruits of peace research, the substance of university peace studies, the methodologies of peace education and practical peace action in the development of the pedagogies we practise. We adhere to educational methods consistent with the values of justice, nonviolence and sustainable development that inform the pursuit of peace knowledge.

Gender issues are neither a territory nor a passing fashion that one can wear and discard in order to dress for success. Instead, they are a movement that requires of its participants considerable awareness of the subtleties of their positioning in discourses of all kinds and especially the conservative ones.

This commitment to gender equality was reaffirmed in the 2011 constitutional reform, which established the principle of parity between women and men, providing for the establishment of an Authority for Parity and Combating All Forms of Discrimination (APALD).

Finally, societal consciousness of gender inequalities and discrimination against women in all spheres must continue to be addressed. The differences in the socialization of boys versus girls and gender equality in education are highly relevant topics for the achievements of peace. A fundamental aspect of campaigns to foster a worldwide culture of peace and harmony is to ensure equality between women and men, thus affirming that gender is an important consideration with regards to peace education.

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