



## WAVE Newsletter August 2015

In this Newsletter we have reports from two amazing young women who have been undertaking work with WAVE:

Leela Kruger from Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation, who with WAVE's sponsorship, recently travelled to the Philippines to be part of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) study exchange. Her report is below; and

Zulaikha Shihab who is studying at RMIT and undertaking a placement with WAVE while undertaking a study entitled: Gender and Education: Mapping global/local policy platforms. Zulaikha's proposed research is below. We are sure Zulaikha would like to meet up with other women while she is in Melbourne, so do contact us if you can assist.

### Scholarships

One of the targets that WAVE has set itself this year is to be part of setting up and sponsoring further scholarships for women and girls in the VET and adult education space. We need to partner with other groups to be able to do this. If you would like to work with us, please send WAVE an email. I think after you read these reports below you will be convinced that there are lots of useful things we can do.

### WAVE's Annual General Meeting

WAVE holds its Annual General meeting each year by teleconference. The AGM is currently planned for 21 October. If you would like to attend the AGM, drop us a line. If you would like to stand for any of the WAVE leadership positions (check them out on [www.wave.org.au](http://www.wave.org.au)), then let us know.

### Leela Kruger: Waltja/WAVE

#### My experience with life long learning in the Philippines – July 2015



I've had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines for the first study exchange organised by ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education - <http://www.aspbae.org>). I have experienced life long learning in the Philippines but I have also learned from others and shared my experiences. There were 17 different participants from 13 different countries that attended. We are all adult education practitioners. I work for Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation (<https://www.waltja.org.au>), and I was sponsored by Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE - <http://www.wave.org.au>). My job is Financial Literacy Worker, and I travel out to remote communities across Central Australia.

When I heard the news that I would be nominated to attend the study exchange I was so happy and excited; then when I got the news that I was a successful applicant I was even more happy and anxious. It was my very first time travelling overseas.

I arrived in Manila a day early and went on a tour to see the smallest active volcano and a city tour. It was so beautiful and green compared to here in Alice Springs. The weather was perfect, with some rainy showers throughout the day.

The first day of the exchange was in a conference building. We had introductions and a Filipino welcome with beautiful flowers and we shared our hopes and fears of the study exchange. We watched a presentation about the aims and objectives of the study exchange. There were 5 presentations from some of the participants from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Cambodia, Vanuatu and the Philippines. We had a great presentation from Ed an activist from Philippines about his life long learning experiences.

On the second day we travelled to the Department of Education in Pasig City, Manila. We met with the head of the Department of Education. We watched presentations about education in the Philippines and the types of education learning styles they offer, one being ALS (alterative learning system) for all, rich or poor, any age.

On the third day we travelled again in the hectic Manila city traffic. We went in 2 groups to different locations. One group went to Marikina city and the other group, which I was in, went to House of Representatives. We meet with the congressmen and women for climate change and the representative for Basic Education and Culture. There was a presentation about Disaster Risk Reduction and Education for sustainable development. We found out that the Philippines is located along the typhoon belt and Pacific Ring of Fire and they have about 20 typhoons every year. They have developed a community based disaster risk reduction and management program last year strengthening community members to be engaged with disaster risk reduction and management. The

program is also disability inclusive. They learn it in the schools and in community centre as well. As much as the Philippines try to reduce climate change they always suffer because of their location, surrounded by water. The whole world needs to help. They found that education is the answer. What kind of education? Mind, perception and values. They showed a cartoon showing happiness is around the corner: in each slide there is a different answer - work harder, earn more money, buy more things, keep going. Basically teaching the next generation to continue trashing the planet. With this experience it made me change my way of thinking. In Australia we have it so easy and take things for granted. And with climate change we don't get affected as much and it is the other smaller countries that do. We need to make a change.

The fourth day we travelled 2.5 hours to Balanga City. We met the city Mayor Joet Garcia, who told us about the city's future projects and the project they have already. Balanga is the only city where it is tobacco smoke free. They aren't allowed to smoke in public places. We visited a community organic garden and a local school. We visited Casa Manila, a historic house museum of the Spanish Colonial Heritage. In the evening we had dinner with the mayor and a special Filipino dance performance and local singers performed.

On the fifth day we travelled to a small indigenous community. We had a warm welcome from the local elders who are on the board of the local school. They did an introduction dance and sang in their language. We sat in a group and talked about education and culture in the Philippines. Two others and myself did a presentation about our countries. Our presentations were electronic PowerPoint presentation but unfortunately the community didn't have power due to the weather conditions so we presented using publication materials.



The community cooked us a feast of fresh fish, local vegetables and rice and a nice hearty soup. We sat down again in the group and the locals spoke about their culture. A lot of their cultural beliefs and values relate a lot to my culture and the local indigenous Aboriginal people in Australia. I felt so at home in the community it reminded me a lot of home and the communities I work in. We then travelled to the next city and stayed at a lovely hotel by the beach.

On the last day we did a reflection circle and we split up into 4 sub regions that ASPBAE works with. I worked in the South Pacific group with 3 others from Vanuatu, Fiji and New Zealand. The tree of life is about values and beliefs, etc.

We then travelled back to Manila city. And we got to do some shopping which was good because our hotel was across the road from 3 major shopping malls.

The next day I was on my journey back to Australia. I travelled to Singapore before I got to Sydney, and when I arrived in Sydney it was freezing cold. I stayed the night before I headed back to Alice Springs.

As well as ASPBAE, I would like to thank everyone at my organisation I work for (Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation) for their support and a very special thank you to Elaine Butler and WAVE for giving me the opportunity to be part of the very first Study Exchange organised by ASPBAE. This has been such a great learning experience for me to learn about life long learning education in the Philippines and learning from other Adult Education Practitioners from different countries in our region.

### **Research Proposal**

**Zulaikha Shihab (RMIT): placement with Women in Adult Vocational Education Inc (WAVE)**

**Title: Gender and Education: Mapping global/local policy platforms**

#### **Aim:**

This project aims to:

- map and analyse key policy decision points and outcomes of the emerging Post-2015 agenda, including key global, regional, national/local stakeholders and statements of intent,
- the Australian Government's position and
- consider how this might inform future advocacy approaches in the interrelated areas of gender, education (with a focus on post compulsory education and training), and decent work for women's organizations such as WAVE (Women in Adult & Vocational Education).

**Background** - 2015 is a landmark year with the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the 20-year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) - the global agenda for women's empowerment to promote equality, development, and peace for all women, and current activity focusing on the Post 2015 Development Agenda and so the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This convergence presents significant opportunities and challenges for those involved in global/local platforms, policies and potential outcomes that centre gender & education within a global framework of human rights and development. The focus of the 2015 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 59) was that of Beijing+20 (2015), a review of progress in the implementation of BPFA

*"., including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women...The session also addressed opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda." – (UN Women)*

The post 2015 agenda on women's empowerment, equality and education was being debated in the discussions of Beijing +20, the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Present at each and all of these events are selected representatives of Governments, NGOs and global policy making bodies.

While CSW59 concluded with an international political commitment to end gender inequality by 2030, the SDGs call on Governments to:

*"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"* (SDG 4) & *"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"* (SDG 5) – Open Working Group (2014).

This has been enhanced by agreements at the recent World Education Forum (WEF) (UNESCO 2015).

Additionally, the recently released Australian Budget affirms the establishment of:

*"\$50 million competitive gender equality fund to strengthen gender equality and women's economic empowerment in our region"* – (The Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs)

The decisions and outcomes of these debates in the international arena have significant impacts on a national scale. While they put a spotlight on particular issues internationally, they also have the potential to influence national gender and education policies, and shape international guidelines and norms. Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade states that through its foreign policy Australia aims to be "a global leader on gender equality and women's empowerment" (DFAT 2015), but how do these international decisions and statements evolve and translate into action? Some issues highlighted at the beginning of negotiations are often disregarded through the evolution of discussion. For example, although the Education For All goals highlighted lifelong learning, the MDGs primarily focused on primary education. How do these issues fall off the agenda?

Mapping and analysing key decision points, outcomes of the emerging post-2015 agenda, the government's position and how negotiations evolve can inform future advocacy approaches of educational and women's organizations like WAVE.

Based on the mapping exercise, the research aims to answer the questions:

1. What are the critical points for global policy making for women, in relation to education and work?
2. How do we move the agenda of lifelong learning for women forward?
3. How should organizations approach advocacy in the current global setting?

## **Methodology**

A mapping exercise will be conducted, tracking the most important policy making bodies, policies and statements of intent from global to local (regional/national) with a focus on gender & education, for the post 2015 SDG agenda. This will include the links - hits & misses between national/regional/international policy advocacy, using gender as the focal point with post compulsory education.

The research will also analyse the outcomes taking place from Beijing +20, CSW59 and the SDGs, and how they translate in terms of political commitment, advocacy and creating public will. This will include an analysis of how the MDGs on education and gender have informed policy advocacy in the past and how they can be tools for advocacy in the future.

Although Gender Studies is not merely the study of women, as the report is being produced for the purpose of advocacy in women's post compulsory education and training, the research will be primarily focused on the outcomes of these debates in relation to women.

The study will examine current debate, academic literature, government publications, speeches by organization and government officials, organizational documents and websites.

### **Proposed Output**

The report can serve WAVE to guide its position on education and training for women in the emerging Post-2015 development agenda and advocate for the government to stand up to its international commitments to education and gender equality nationally. Additionally, it can be used to mobilize campaigns, inform education and women's organizations and also be submitted for publication.

The project will also aim to act as an educative tool and represent the findings of the report in a graphic 2 paper that will be suitable for printing as well as electronic use.

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