RESEARCH NOTES
Mother’s Education and Youth’s Future Orientation in Albania.
By Aida Orgocka, M.S.

Research in countries of the Western World has shown that mother’s occupational and educational status affects daughters’ plans for their future life (Pearson, 1983; Rosenfeld, 1978). In developing countries of Africa and Asia, mother’s education also plays an important role in the future education of young girls (Handa, 1996; Hyde, 1993; Tilak, 1993). This article contributes to this literature offering the perspective of a country of Eastern Europe: Albania. The study demonstrates that mother’s education is of importance in the plans adolescents make with regard to their future education, work and marriage/family.

Several psychologists have concluded that adolescence can be conceived as a period of thinking about the future in preparation for transition to adulthood (e.g., Erikson, 1959; Poole & Cooney, 1987). Perceptions of the future for adolescents play an important part in their identity formation, which is often defined in terms of exploration and commitment concerning future-oriented interests (e.g., Marcia, 1980; Nurmi, 1991).

Studies of adolescent development cross-culturally have identified three main interest domains for the future: education, occupation and family (e.g., Gillispie and Allport, 1955; Nurmi et al. 1995). In the present study, future orientation toward education, work/career and marriage/family is defined as the degree of involvement adolescents display with regard to these domains.

Future orientation does not develop in a vacuum. Relevant literature has shown that parents set standards for the future orientation of their adolescent children. Trommsdorff (1983) emphasizes that educational and social status of the parents determine their socialization goals and behavior toward their children. Their own experience in responsible activities and long-term planning may guide their socialization practices, which in turn moderate the future orientation of their children. According to Nurmi (1991), parents contribute to adolescents’ future orientation by (1) setting normative standards, thus moderating the development of their children’s interests, values and goals; (2) serving as models for solving different developmental tasks; (3) providing support that may serve as a basis for adolescents’ internal and optimistic attitudes toward the future.

Ideally, a measure of parental socioeconomic status (SES) would have contributed to more precise results. However, in the present study it was not possible to measure SES. According to Entwisle and Astone (1994), the three factors that could indicate socioeconomic

REPORT FROM THE FIELD
The Integrated Technology, Education, Information, and Communication (ITEIC) Project: Malawi. By Dr. Kate Cloud

Project Goals
To develop, through collaboration among several non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) and government ministries, a gender-sensitive process of participatory planning with poor rural villagers in addressing their most pressing problems in food security, population and AIDS.

To develop a cadre of trained front-line workers and a manual for training others in methodologies relevant to this approach.

Project member summarizing discussion

Setting up the process
The project is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through an International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) program of small grants for gender-sensitive development initiatives. Because the project coordinator is from the Ministry of Agriculture and the project manager is from an NGO, Self-Help Development Institute (SHDI), it presents an unusual opportunity for collaboration across institutional lines which has been successfully exploited.

Because the project is framed as a process of collaborative learning between villagers and development workers from different disciplines, the first step was to secure the collaboration of relevant
View from Tirana square

status are financial capital, human capital, and social capital. Financial capital generally refers to financial income or assets. In the case of Albania, household income can hardly be classified as an indicator of socioeconomic status. According to the Albanian Human Development Report (1995), the shift to a free market economy has brought about greater polarization of the population by income. Generally, less-educated people will generate more income due to high demand for construction, transportation and related domains. Professionals and researchers have to survive on the meager income provided by the government. Social capital represents the resources embodied in social relationships. At the family level it includes the number of birth parents in the home, the presence of a step-parent and the presence of any grandparents. In the event of emigration, with family members leaving the house, and in the absence of necessary statistic data, social capital is difficult to be estimated. Human capital constitutes the educational status of the family, children's health and long-term education (Kalmari, 1991), Ernİs and Ascone recommend that mother's education be used as the main indicator of human capital at home. Although mother’s education by itself cannot be an adequate indicator of socioeconomic status, it has emerged as a powerful variable in a number of relevant articles (e.g., Pearson, 1983; Rosemund, 1978). Mother’s education was chosen for two additional reasons: First, in a few studies conducted in the Albanian context related to parental support and adolescent identification with their parents in issues regarding school and family, adolescents mentioned their mothers more often then their fathers (Dede, in 1995). Male migration becoming widespread in Albania, many women-headed households will emerge in the near future. Many mothers will be

primarily responsible for adolescents' socialization and orientation to the future.

Method

The study was conducted in May, 1996. A total of 297 Albanian senior high school students (194 females and 103 males) drawn from four high schools in Tirana, Albania participated in the study (mean age 18.05 years; SD=0.58). Albanian age-graded context suggests that at this age students are supposed either to pursue further education or be engaged in the work force. Furthermore, for girls this is an acceptable age to start a family. It was assumed that by this age students would have decided what they want to do in the future regarding their further education, work/career, and marriage/family. The proportionately high number of women in the study is representative of high school population. In recent years there has been a decrease in school enrollment rates for Albanian boys and girls. This decrease may be related to the greater opportunities to participate in market activities. Only about 35 percent of the 14-18-year-olds pursued high school education in both 1993/1994 and 1994/1995 down from 79 percent in 1989. Out of this figure, only 22 percent of the students attended university (Albanian Human Development Report, 1996). However, boys’ enrollment rates have decreased more rapidly than girls because of emigration. The INSTAT/UNFPA report (1996) estimated that 30 percent of Albanian male population between 20-24 years of age were abroad by 1992. According to the authors of the Albanian Human Development Report (1995) female students had higher enrollment rates due to these factors: a) school is considered a good excuse to avoid housework, or (b) school attendance provides them one more opportunity to be involved in outdoor, social activities.

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which included items to index the future orientation of Albanian students and their mother's educational level. Questionnaire administration was conducted in the classroom context.

Future orientation of the students was measured by utilizing an adapted version that was originally developed by Doe (1993). The questionnaires (EQQ) designed by Nurni, Segner & Poole (1990). This instrument measures the levels of exploration and commitment manifested separately in each of the three domains of future life: education, work/career, and marriage/family.

Results

Mother's Education (ME): A mother's education by 3 (intermediate) domains: measured through ANOVA was run separately for boys and girls. For both boys and girls the results indicated that although there was no main effect from mother's education, there was an interaction of mother's education with interest domain, [E1.4,530.01, p=0.001 and E2.1920.25, p=0.05, for girls and boys respectively. In order to examine these significant interactions, separate one-way (mother's education) ANOVA s for boys and girls were run for each of the future interest domains. Analysis revealed that mother's education significantly moderated the degree of future orientation toward education, E1.1691.109, p<0.001, toward work/career, E1.1609.3, p<0.05, and marriage/family, E3.1691.1.6, p<0.05 for girls. Furthermore, least significance difference test at p=0.05 found that the group of female students whose mothers had college education scored significantly higher in the future orientation toward education scale than female students whose mothers had high school education and students whose mothers had middle school education. Least significance difference found that the group of female students whose mothers had college education scored significantly lower in the future orientation toward marriage/family scale than the groups of female students whose mothers had middle and high school education. For boys, mother's education significantly moderated the future orientation toward education, E2.2692.41, p<0.10, and work/career, E2.2692.2,55, p<0.10. Least significance difference test at p<0.05 found that the boys whose mothers had college education scored significantly higher in the future orientation toward marriage/family than the boys whose mothers had high school education. Also, boys whose mothers had college education scored significantly higher in the future orientation toward work and career scale than boys whose mothers had middle school education.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that mother's education moderately influenced Albanian school students' future orientation of Albanian school students toward marriage/family. On the other hand, mother's education significantly modulated future orientation in all three domains. The analysis showed that female students whose mothers had college education scored higher in the future orientation toward education, marriage/family scale than female students whose mothers had less than college education. This research finding from a country in Eastern Europe confirms what research in other countries has shown: mother's education plays an important role in the future of young girls (Handa, 1996; Hyde, 1993; Titak, 1993). The other finding related to the association between mother's education and children's future orientation toward marriage/family. Female students whose mothers had only high school education scored higher in their future orientation to marriage and family scale than female students whose mothers had less than college education. This finding may be explained by the fact that the mothers with high school education may see their daughters at the end of high school as having accomplished their duty of becoming educated and are ready for the next commitment prescribed by traditions, i.e., marrying and starting a family. High school educated mothers may already have embarked on the customary and well-accepted responsibilities in Albania related to marriage, like preparing a dowry for the daughter who is expected to make a marriage decision in the near future.

References


Aida Orgocak is currently a Ph.D. student in the Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. The above was drawn from her 1997 M.S. thesis on Contextual Factors and Future Orientation of Albanian School Students. Questions about the study should be addressed to her at orgocak@uic.edu.
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ministries and assure the participation of their front-line workers. Dr. Grace Malindi, the project coordinator and former GRID student, visited the permanent secretaries of agriculture, health/family planning, education, forestry, and community development, explained the nature of the effort and received the necessary permission for extension and supervisory staff to participate. The District Commissioner, who under the new governmental decentralization has increasing day-to-day responsibility for front-line workers, also gave his enthusiastic support and has attended each training session.

On the NGO side, SHID seconded three of their experienced village organizers to work with the process. National and district advisory teams have also been enlisted to support the project.

Thus, the project is firmly linked to the governmental system at national, district and local levels, while also facilitating collaboration with non-governmental groups. The Ministries are eager to participate because they see the benefit of the shared learning in participatory methods as the new government moves towards increased decentralization.

The two villages selected as initial project sites, Fikila and Lshitu, are densely populated and known to experience perpetual food shortages and high levels of HIV, problems which are characteristic of the southern part of the country. Villagers are Chewa, the predominant ethnic group, which is matrilineal, with land passing through the maternal line. There appear to be more women than men in the village much of the time. Indeed during the October plenary in Fikila Village, there were one hundred and six village women in attendance. Many men are away working, or looking for work, and there are many women-headed households. Thus, much of the planning and execution, of necessity, falls on women. Less than half of the villagers are literate, with more young than old, more men than women able to read and write.

Training

Training is led by a cadre of seven experienced trainers (3 men, 4 women) from participating institutions. Together, they are responsible for the production consumption cycle: planning, harvest, hungry season. The first training was in July, 1998, the second in October/November, 1999, the last two will be in early 1999. Participant evaluation of the first two training session has been very positive.

The first exercises mapped the village and features encountered on a transect walk across the village. Maps were drawn first on the ground with a stick, and after discussion, on chart paper for preservation in the village. Institutions operating in the village were mapped in various graphic styles that reflected the villagers' judgment of their relative importance. This exercise generated a number of surprises for the outsiders.

Food-flow diagrams looked at the in-flow and out-flow of food through the household, assessing the main sources of household food, the importance of each source for household security, and patterns of utilization. The exercise opened up a useful discussion on food security issues and made it very clear that farm production is not the main source of food in the villages. Their main sources of food are two or more months after harvest, and people survive through coping strategies such as casual labor and small business. Although people identify themselves as farmers, their food security depends on a much more complex set of resources.

A reproductive health assessment matrix (RHITA) was used to assess the flow of information and technology on family planning and sexually transmitted diseases. Discussions began in general, then by sex and age, and then in groups, and were then reported to the plenary. This opened up an effective community discussion between men and women on issues where discussion had always been taboo, and seems to have prompted considerable openness in later sessions, particularly on issues of family planning, and the sexual transmission of AIDS.

The final set of activities dealt with problem identification, analysis, and the development of solutions. Villagers described their desired situation, the problems in achieving it, the underlying causes of the problems, and the relationships among problems. Then each village in turn talked past symbols for the major health problems, depopulating the matrix for the ones they felt were most important. The major priorities that emerged were food production, including seed availability and soil fertility, deforestation, income generation, water sources, health, "too many children", and in one community, AIDS. Finally, each village generated a community action table, which identified the problems, the solutions they could undertake themselves, and those that would need outside help. Last, they generated a change monitor, so that they could judge where they were making progress and where they were stuck.

The whole process was highly interactive, and prioritization brought quite a number of groups to engage in considerable debate. The tools helped the villagers to visualize the problems, together with their causes and consequences. During these first sessions solutions were stated in general terms, which will need additional specificity. Some groups did not attempt to come up with solutions still others were designed to assess progress and to work with village committees to deal with the problems in greater depth. The first and last days were devoted to plenaries, assessing progress and planning next steps. The other days were taken up with committee meetings designed to list in greatest detail the activities necessary to address each problem. Villagers had been very actively organizing themselves, forming farmer's clubs and women's cooperatives as well as outside resources. Some resources had arrived: hundreds of seedlings for reforestation supplied by the ministry were being tended by the forestry committees. SHID provided bean and groundnut seeds to nearly two hundred households, and the district veterinarian had organized for a deep bore-hold well to be drilled in each village to provide a cleaner, more reliable water source. Villagers will be responsible for bricking in the wells and building platforms around them. Other resources such as contraceptives, condoms, credit, maize seed and fertilizers were still awaited hopefully.

Village meeting

At the beginning of each workshop, participants receive a short overview of the purpose of the training and work with clearly specified objectives at each stage of the process. Because the training is designed as a process of active learning, much of the work is done in demonstrations and dialogue among participants and with villagers. During the first session participants were divided into teams for each village, and work together throughout the training. Tools from the manual are demonstrated to participants in training, which they immediately use in village meetings. Then they debrief one another, assessing both the tools and the villagers response. Between PRF sessions, participants keep notebooks with records of what is happening in villages and share this information during training.

2. The process in the villages

During the first participatory rural appraisal (PRA) sessions, the intent of the project was explained to the villagers and, after substantial discussion, they committed to participation. In a series of meetings, the front-line workers facilitated a series of exercises to help villagers identify and analyze their problems and resources. These were done first in gender and age-based groups; then the findings were shared and discussed in village plenaries.

February 1999

WID Information

March 1999

Gender

Working with the villagers on gender issues presents interesting challenges. Because the project is focused on gender-sensitive participation, attention to differences in male/female patterns of labor, resources and benefits is threaded throughout the activities. The society is based on separate male and female spheres. Everyone knows "what men do, and what women do," but there is very little tradition of discussion among men and women on whether these are always the best arrangements in a changing society. The project is designed to open up this discussion while addressing very concrete problems.

Early in the first session, participants worked through the Harvard gender analysis framework (Overholt et al, 1985), examining the division of labor, resources and benefits in the communities. In an effort to understand whether men and women might face the importance of problems differently, during the prioritization process men used stones and women seeds in their voting. Somewhat different priorities did emerge: Agricultural resources and water supply were high priorities for all, but women were more likely to rank AIDS and family planning problems highly.

At the beginning of the second PRA, there was an effort to make the process more manageable by integrating several committees that deal with similar issues, thus reducing the number. At this point, some all too familiar process unfolded, which will need explicit attention in the manual if it is to be avoided in other settings. In planning for the village meetings, at the pilot (male and production-oriented) field staff began to discuss simplifying committees, they suggested collapsing AIDS and family planning into one, and added in the health committee. Then they folded in the water issues and called the committee, "Health." Gradually they started referring to it as the "water committee", which would have focused around well construction. At this point, facilitators stepped in and said," no, the project is explicitly targeted at population pressures and AIDS, as well as food security, and this focus must be visible." They quickly agreed that the water committee was best dealt with separately, since it would demand considerable labor and resources, and the health
J O B O P P O R T U N I T I E S

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH (CATIE) is seeking a rural social scientist specializing in participation and gender (ref/2-0199006). Requirements include: (1) PhD or MSc in social sciences; (2) minimum of 3 years of professional experience; and (3) fluency in English and Spanish. Interested applicants should send a CV and letter of interest to HR/CATIE, Codigo Postal: 7170, Taritalba, Costa Rica or CATIE, Nicoboc 112, PO Box 57644, Miami, FL 33152. Closing date: 5 March 1999. For more information email: catie-career@wlrw.com.ni

PROGRAM LEADER, CGIAR GENDER & DIVERSITY PROGRAM: The CGIAR is seeking an experienced and innovative manager to lead a Gender and Diversity Program that supports 16 international agricultural research centers to attract high quality female and developing country researchers and professionals and to develop gender and diversity modules in the production of postgraduate training materials. Applications must include a strong commitment of contribution from staff from diverse backgrounds. The ideal Program Leader will be a dynamic individual with expertise in, and a strong personal commitment to, gender and diversity staffing issues; a charismatic and persuasive leader; and a first-rate communicator who can build productive relationships with senior managers and staff in the Centers; stimulate Center initiatives; and promote Center-to-Center interactions. Experience leading and managing a research or scientific environment is desirable. Knowledge of the CGIAR system or international development organizations will be an advantage. Salary range is US$30,000 to US$40,000. Applications should be sent to the Program Director, at the address above. For more information contact: Dr. Mark Weightman, Tel: (808) 949-7665, Fax: (808) 949-7666. Interested applicants should send a CV and letter of interest to HR/CATIE, Codigo Postal: 7170, Taritalba, Costa Rica or CATIE, Nicoboc 112, PO Box 57644, Miami, FL 33152. Closing date: 5 March 1999. For more information email: catie-career@wlrw.com.ni

C O N C L U S I O N

Gradually, the project is embedding itself in the on-going actions of the CATIE. With this strategy it is demonstrating the feasibility of a NGO/government partnership in shifting services toward a more integrated participatory approach. It has great potential for dissemination throughout the country. UNDP, FAO and the CGIAR have expressed interest in learning from the project, but if it is to continue and grow, relatively modest amounts of additional resources will be necessary for training, communication and transport.

What makes this project work so well as it does is a group of unusually competent and dedicated trainers. Their good judgment and long experience within the system permit them to knit together disparate elements smoothly. In the past they have not always been able to do this. Will they be able to continue work with this new approach. One can only hope that support for expansion is forthcoming.

Dr. Kate Cluick, (left) former Director of the WID office, is Associate Professor in the Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Current research focuses on the social construction of gender and agriculture in Guatemala. She is one of two women who were cofounders of the AIDS and Women Committee, a group that reflects the cultural norm assigning reproduction to the women's sphere. However, when the committee women did the gender analysis, they decided they needed men on the committee. They knew which men they wanted, and asked them to join. The men agreed, and undertook to talk to other men in the informal settings like beer drinking and work groups.

Over time it will be interesting to see what comes of this more open dialogue between women and men on issues that have always been taken for granted. At this point, it is women's voices that spoke out the plenary about the need to rethink cultural norms, and women who said, "We will do family planning, but you must give us the weapons." It was the headman's wife who said, "Give us the contraceptives, we will talk to the men. We don't want them to be, (promiscuous), but we don't want them dead."