

Women from across the world collaborate as Partners in Research on Gender and Innovation

Three-day workshop establishes a platform for new leadership to lead this challenge

New Delhi, January 15 2010. A three-day workshop on Gender and Innovation organised by Development Alternatives (DA) in collaboration with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) at the India International Centre, Delhi threw up several challenging questions for research.

Giving the keynote address, **Dr. Ashok Khosla, Chairman of Development Alternatives and President of IUCN**, stated that the base of equitable and inclusive development being innovation it should go beyond technological innovation because of the interconnectedness of life and issues and problems in the larger global phenomenon. Innovation has to be bigger than solving a problem and not be causing more, observed Dr. Khosla. Women, he emphasised, are the carriers of our social memory and culture on which a large part of the next generation survives and from which innovation can derive inspiration and knowledge.



Dr Vinita Sharma, Advisor and Head of SEED (Science for Equity Empowerment and Development Division), Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, stressed on the need of participatory research where women must be central to innovation as they are the users of the technology. Traditional knowledge, which responds to the social needs of the people, should be validated by scientific research.

Representatives from eight developing countries - Afghanistan, Bolivia, India (DA), Pakistan, Palestine, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia are partners in this research and emerged as leaders in this new initiative. Other leading practitioners on gender issues such as Dr Veena Ravichandran IDRC, Dr Arun Kumar, President Development Alternatives, Ms Ranjanan Kumari, Director Centre for Social Research, Dr Sara Ahmed IDRC, Ms. Umadevi Swaminatthan, MD SEWA and Ms. Reshma Anand, CEO Earthy Goods also participated in the workshop.

The focus of the workshop was on understanding the role of women in innovation processes related to development and on how to pursue research activities effectively with organisations from developing nations.

While welcoming the participants, Dr. Stephen McGurk, Director, Regional Office for South Asia and China of IDRC spoke that, "In developing countries a lot of innovations have been taking place but formal systems are not very much engaged with women. Collaborative efforts of universities, research organisations, and scientific councils in innovation systems have huge potential to link up with formal systems."

The eight countries presented their research subjects and methodologies of each of the research areas. These research projects, funded by IDRC, are looking at the role of women in various development issues of developing countries. The topics of the research include governance and decision-making, agriculture, habitat-based livelihoods, enterprises for women



and involvement and influence of women in integrated water management.

The workshop highlighted networking and knowledge sharing amongst the countries, which will facilitate a common understanding of the work, objectives and background on methodological research on gender and innovation.

Development Alternatives (DA) is a leading civil society organisation in India as well as one of the world's first social enterprises. It innovates and delivers eco-solutions that reduce poverty and regenerate the environment. DA works on spearheading and influencing major policy changes that promote sustainable development and empowerment of the marginalised. (www.devalt.org)

International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada is one of the world's leading institutions in the generation and application of new knowledge to meet the challenges of international development. For 40 years, IDRC has worked in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world in their search for the means to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.
