



Finnish Federation of University Women (FFUW/SANL):

Review of the implementation and the outcomes of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Finnish Federation of University Women (SANL) will take up a few points in some of the sections and concentrates mainly on the section on the critical areas of concern and strategic objectives. SANL cannot provide any exact data or statistics as no actual appraisal or review on the achievements of SANL activities has been carried out before or after the year 2009, the key period of interest for the UN. For the same reason the description of the progress made in the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action cannot be very detailed or analytical. Furthermore, as the review is made on national level we assume that the in-depth analysis and major data and statistics will be provided by the public institutions of Finland.

SANL will select the key themes and objectives for its actions on yearly basis or for 3-year periods at time, according to the human and financial resources available. The main strategic objectives are in line with those of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

Section One

Do non-governmental organizations, including civil society organizations, women's organizations, academia.... participate formally in the mechanisms established to monitor and implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

No formal mechanisms exist to follow and record regularly the achievements in the implementation of Beijing, as far as we know. Such a mechanism would be very welcome. A wide variety of institutions and organizations were approached to compile the national review report. A joint meeting of public, private and non-governmental organizations will be arranged to discuss and comment on the draft Beijing review of Finland before sending the report to the UN. A formal mechanism would be highly recommendable.

Section Two

Have any austerity policies/measures, such as tax increases, cuts in public expenditure, or public sector downsizing, been introduced in your country in the aftermath of the 2007/2008 financial crisis?

SANL has particular interest in the employment of young academic women. Since several years young academic women have had difficulties in finding jobs or permanent jobs due to high unemployment in Finland. Part-time jobs or periodical jobs are not a solution as they do not secure normal development of professional carrier. In the worst case this leads to reduced/low pension or even poverty. A small nation cannot waste the resources invested in academic education. This subject would need more attention and would deserve more research on consequences.

Section Four

What are the key priorities for action over the next three to five years?

SANL focuses on various issues of concern for improvement of women's rights and status but the main emphasis and specific topics will be agreed upon on annual basis: equal rights for career development, employment of female university graduates, educational opportunities for all women and girls including the immigrants, women's role in the high positions (fixed number-policy) and in the politics, violence against women and girls, zero-tolerance against mutilation of the girls' sexual organs, women's role in the advancement in the peace culture, human trade with special focus on women. The current special theme is the violence against women and girls, in all its forms.

Critical areas of concerns and strategic objectives

Women and poverty

See the answer in section two. Research on consequences on unemployment of young academic women should be conducted. Funds/fellowships/scholarships are applicable through SANL's own fund in Suomen Kulttuurirahasto and through IFUW (International Federation of University Women). Information and advocacy on the opportunities need to be increased.

Education and training of women

Focus area is equal access to education to all women and girls.

SANL administrates the immigrant women's literacy and basic Finnish language education through "Let's read together"-network since 2011. Zonta International, Circle 20 Finland continues as cooperating partner. There is a network of over seventy groups of 1100 immigrant women and 400 voluntary "teachers" in various Finnish cities and towns. The network has been operational since 2004 and since 2007 as a national program.

SANL operates also a multicultural network “Auroras” for immigrant and Finnish university graduate. The purpose of the network is to deepen the knowledge about Finnish working life and employment opportunities vis-à-vis improving language skills.

Women and Health

SANL has specific focus areas in health, especially in the area of maternal and reproductive health, especially for immigrant women. SANL advocates and takes initiatives gender-sensitive areas like zero-tolerance against the mutilation of sexual organs of girls, forced/child marriage and honor crimes.

Violence against women

SANL has taken and will take initiatives concerning all forms of violence against women and girls and trafficking in women. SANL has launched a project Domestic Violence met by Educated Women in Europe with financial support of the European Commission. SANL is the coordinator and founder of the project and has cooperating partners in Germany, Sweden, Romania and Slovenia.

A seminar will be arranged this spring on Trafficking in cooperation with the women’s network of the Finnish Parliament.

Women and armed conflict

Fostering the culture of peace and participation of women in conflict resolution are subjects which are considered very important. Peace and women’s role in it were the fundamental goals when International Federation of University Women was founded in 1920. They are challenges to be taken on board in future.

Women and the economy, power structures and decision-making

All points listed in this section are of great interest for SANL and it has and will advocate for women’s rights in this area. This is to a great extent a question of women’s rights, of equal salaries and equal access to jobs and higher positions. Fixed number-policy for women members in committees, governing bodies etc. cannot be a permanent solution of the problem. Many female university graduates, especially young, handicapped and immigrant women belong to low-income category or have only part-time or periodic jobs. Consequently, they may run risk in falling in poverty.

Human rights of women

SANL stands behind all of these strategic objectives. All women’s rights are human rights. There is still some sort of legal literacy gap through all levels of social and public structures, education etc. how and where the women’s rights shall be interpreted and implemented.

Women and media

Media is in a central position in advocating, interpreting and taking up problematic questions and areas where improvements are needed. The media should not promote stereotyped picture of women. Even though the Finnish press and TV are quite liberal and balanced they could take a more prominent role in advocating for women’s rights.

The girl-child

Elimination of negative cultural attitudes, practices and violence against girls and elimination of all kind of discrimination in education and health and elimination of child labor is and will be one of the frontline concerns of SANL.