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EXAMINING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

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Examining The Participation Of Women”**

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ABSTRACT

A central component of the Salvadorean democratization process, which started in 1992 with the signing of the Peace Accords, had its effects on education that derived in a government policy in terms of an Education Reform. This study focuses on the existing disparities between women and men to participate in that education process in El Salvador. These differences are related with current education policies, opportunities and implications they have in other areas of development.

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I. PRESENTATION

This work represents an effort to contribute to the gender approach to support education policies oriented to improve direct participation of women in the educational processes in El Salvador¹.

A synthesis of the democratization process advancement in El Salvador since the signing of the Peace Agreements where an effort to analyze women's participation in the national educational process has been made.

This work begins with some antecedents of the educational panorama before the signing of the Peace Agreements to start describing the essential changes that have allowed the beginning of the democratization process in the country. It emphasizes the importance of the educational sector in the context of the referred democratization. Additionally, it presents the importance of educational policies in the framework of social policy, which is defined as a state action that together with other governmental policies contributes to the sustainable development model that the Salvadorean government intends to carry on thereafter the Chapultepec Peace Agreements of 1992.

To present this work in depth, a description of the philosophical background of women's rights to participate equitably is made in two of the components of the trio relationship of employment, health and education. From an analytical perspective the participation of women compared to that of men in the national educational process is focused. Under this panorama are the main variables that have an impact on the participation by gender in the educational problems of the country. Among these variables are illiteracy condition, school attendance, women as family heads, occupation and men and women salaries derived from the educational situation that is being analyzed.

This work does not exhaust the topic but lets the reflection open to study thoroughly the variables that are included in the discussion. Basically the roles, cultural standards and other education variables such as years of schooling, leaving school before the legal age, repetition, unemployment, age, etc are essential to analyze this topic. Also for future studies, it is advisable to analyze the education policy implementation model related with democracy to discover the direct and indirect results they may cause for promoting women's participation in the education system as part of the different development sectors of the Salvadorean society.

¹ Grateful acknowledgement is made to Fundacion Empresarial para El Desarrollo Educativo de El Salvador, FEPADE and to Harvard Institute for International Development, HIID for supporting this effort.

II. PEACE AGREEMENTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF EDUCATION

1. Antecedents

If we compare the decades prior to the Peace Agreements (1980), the educational panorama was not very promising; during the armed conflict the coverage of the Educational System was quite limited in the urban areas mainly.

A high percentage of schools in the rural area in the north zone of El Salvador (Chalatenango, Morazan, Cabañas) and the paracentral zone (SanVicente) had been shut down due to the frequent army and guerrilla confrontations in that part of the country and for this reason students were not allowed into schools. Nevertheless, traditionally Basic Education had a higher attendance than the other levels (pre-school, elementary and secondary school education). School enrollment in the different levels presented the following data for the years 1983 compared to that of 1995.

**TABLE 1: REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.:
ENROLMENT BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL YEARS 1983 AND 1995**

Educational Levels	YEARS	
	1983	1995
Pre- school	7.5	10.03
Basic Education	77.8	73.9
Middle Education	7.9	8.97
Tertiary Education	6.7	7.19

SOURCE: 1982-83 and 1995-96 Ministry of Education Memoirs, Annex Graphic No. 6, Page 12.

The explanation for the significant increase in the different levels of education is given by the opening of new schools, and basically because the population in school age has enrolled during the post-conflict period. But mainly as an effect of the Current Education Reform which initiated in 1991. Though there is a significant absolute increase in basic education (from 814,250 to 1,164,973 for the same years of Table 1), this increase does not appear in percentage figures but this is due to the National Education System structure which always has a wide coverage for basic education.

The illiteracy problem stems from the crisis of the historic conflict of allocation of insufficient funds to education as well as by the traditional conception of the fact that each family is exclusively responsible for their members' education. The following table shows the disparity of illiteracy by gender during the armed conflict in El Salvador:

**TABLE 2: REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.:
ILLITERACY RATES FOR THE 10-YEAR-OLD AND OLDER
POPULATION FOR THE YEARS 1971, 1975 AND 1978 BY GENDER**

Gender	RATES BY THE INDICATED YEARS		
	1971	1975	1978
Men	37	35	29
Women	43	41	37

SOURCE: 1971 Population Census and National Household Survey Years 1975 and 1978

Observing illiteracy by gender, this presents a greater incidence on women (keeping the absolute figures for the years 1971 and 1978 constant). These figures show the late incorporation of women to the National Educational System, as a result of traditional cultural standards and to the limitation of the coverage of the Salvadorean educational system.

2. Towards Democratization of Education

The Peace Agreements of 1992 gave El Salvador a new course for the humanization of our society. Peace meant to Salvadoreans the undertaking of a new national reconciliation among sectors and groups in the political, economic, social and cultural area. Peace represented the search for democracy as a new social living agreement of all the Salvadoreans.

The Peace agreements gave birth to a process for the political, economic and social modernization of the country with an authentic participation with equity and social justice for all Salvadoreans in search for a just society. This is expected to convey in the perspective of a sustainable social and economic development.

These agreements take incidence in essential aspects of life of the Salvadorean society to build and reconstruct a society damaged by a military political conflict that lasted more than twelve years of violence. For over half a century, this situation has dragged social injustice, poverty, inequality, marginality and conditions of exploitation of the great majority of the population in the economic, social, cultural and political context.

On this base, the Peace Agreements proposed deep changes in the Army, the Legal and Political Order as well as Public Security and they have had great impact on the social and economic areas.

Accordingly, the Peace Agreements objectives that anticipated peace, they seek to end definitely with the armed conflict in El Salvador. They comprise a minimal and initial platform of commitments oriented to favor the development in benefit of all the population strata.

They establish changes in the Judicial System, the Electoral System, land ownership and the Specific Plans for National Reconstruction. Among the main objectives for a comprehensive development of the population affected directly or indirectly by the conflict, the Peace Agreements propose strategic actions to supply the population's basic and immediate needs.

An opening to the popular organized participation in the socioeconomic projects of the country has started. The participation of the civil society is reflected in the programs and policies in economy, education, health, housing, occupation and salary. All this in search for developing better living standards of the Salvadorean citizens.

Credit programs for the small and median businesses, employment programs as well as professional training for FMLN exguerrillas and Army exsoldiers are opened and the reconstruction of highways has started (National Reconstruction Plan PRN-1993). Also reforms in the legal and political areas, some participation level of the organized popular opposition sectors in the programs and governmental policies have been initiated (COPAZ, Forum de Concertación among others).

Education and health have become a privileged part of the Salvadorean government and other governmental organizations. In this context education and health take great transcendence for the development of the country. At the same time, people are considered center of the economic and social development of the country

Consequently the national budget guarantees a meaningful budgetary allocation for the education programs and projects as well as in the health area. Therefore for the second quarter of 1995 the Government assigned 28 % of the national budget to the social area and a 20.6% to Education (Castro, 1996)

Accordingly **with** the democratization of education, in 1992 acceptable countrywide literacy rates are found, 72.3% compared to a 67% in 1978. What is important in this democratization process is to notice that for the initial year 1 out of 2 people did not know how to read or write, and for 1992 it was 1 out of 4². From these figures it could be implied that the undertaken literacy campaigns have been functional.

Examining the Educational System coverage, it is also observed that the access of the population in school age has been broadened in the different educational levels. For example in Basic Education the enrollment relative growth change from 1991 to 1995 from 3.7 to 13.9 which allowed the population that attends from first to ninth grade to triple³.

Summarizing, it is important to emphasize that the democratization of education is defined in this work as the direct participation of women and men en the educational process (in formal

² Data prepared by the author based on IPROS: Monitor Subsystem of Education in El Salvador MIPLAN/SIECA and National Population and Housing Censuses, Volumes V and IV 1992 DIGESTYC/ Ministry of Economy.

³ 1995-96 Ministry of Education **Memoir. Relative Growth of Basic Education Enrollment, (Base Year: 1990) p. 88**

and non-formal education areas). This concept is developed in Part IV of this work "Participation of women in the educational process, opportunities and implications".

III. SOCIAL POLICY AND EDUCATION POLICY

From 1989 to 1994 the social policy approach adopted a new logic that breaks with the traditional conception form that had been practiced before. In previous decades the economic policy was essential for the political and social development of the country and it was conceived particularly separate from social policy.

During that period the social strategy of the government had two basic objectives: first to put an end to extreme poverty and to increase the standard of living of the Salvadorans as consequence. But in essence the long and short-termed sectarian policies of investment in human capital as a generating source within economic and social development process of the country were considered to be a very essential component in the improvement of living standards.

The current Government Plan recaptures the economic and social policy measures of the preceding period and proposes as long-termed national objectives, that education, health, family protection and environment constitute the essential premises for the sustained economic development and for the lasting social peace. In this escenario of changes the educational policy retakes a predominant leadership in education.

In 1991, the Curricular Reform establishes a period of great importance within the National Educational Reform. The participation of the civil society in defense of the democratic principles that would reflect in the equal opportunity to have access to education, health, job opportunities and housing in search for a better quality of life of the citizens are derived from the Peace Agreements of Chapultepec.

The Constitution of the Republic of El Salvador establishes that the right to education and culture is inherent to the human person. And as a consequence its conservation, promotion and expansion is an obligation and a uttermost purpose of the state (Constitution of the Republic of El Salvador 1983 and its reform of 1992, Art. 53). The Education, Science and Development Commission declares the conception of education as instrument of peace and democracy. And from the 1994-1999 Social Development Plan the improvement of the global quality of education and the relevancy of learning in all the Educational System which meant a reform of the curriculum in all the levels was established.

The Education Reform continues in the present decade and within the governmental policies its purposes are oriented to contribute to consolidate peace and democracy. Parallel, the Education Reform includes as curricular mainstays: *Broadening of the scope of education, institutional Modernization, Improvement of education quality and teaching of civic, ethic and human values* (Decade Plan of the Education Reform).

As seen in the education coverage for 1995, the global countrywide school rate increased from 51% in 1994 to 54% in 1995 presenting an increase of 3%percentage points. Pre-school and Basic Education present the highest rate increase showing a difference of 5 and 3 points respectively⁴.

It is important to highlight the Community Participation Education Program (EDUCO) as an expansion strategy of education services in the rural areas. This Program that started in 1991 attended to 8,416 students that year. By 1996 the coverage of this program had increased to 168,672 and parallel to this, the number of EDUCO school sections grew from 263 to 5,271 (1995-96 Ministry of Education Memoir). Within the coverage of the Education System, it is also important to bear in mind the contributions given by ONG's and other institutions that support this process⁵. The loans oriented to support the coverage of the Education System that have been given to the government by international organizations such as BID, PNUD, UNESCO, GTZ and others as part of the international technical cooperation support are very important to mention.

Within the institutional modernization mainstay the following changes were accomplished: creation of department and district-regional offices, creation of the School Directing Councils (CDE's). In the legal and regulatory component the Education Career Law and the Tertiary Education Law were approved and the Tertiary Education Council was created.

In relation to the education quality improvement mainstay, the reforms of the national curriculum in basic and high school education have comprised the creation of 263 model schools ("Escuelas Modelo") as well as the introduction of the Healthy School Program ("Escuela Saludable"). The latter started its first phase in 1995 in 124 schools distributed in 20 municipalities and gave direct attention to 26,000 students of Pre School up to 6th grade. In 1995 the pilot program comprised 148 municipalities with deeper levels of poverty in the 14 departments of the country with 1450 urban schools and schools located in the outlines of the city as well as rural schools where 239,000 children were enrolled in primary school⁶. There were massive curricular training workshops centered in the new methodologies and contents outlined in the educational reform directed to the in-service primary and secondary school teachers. This program also includes training for experts of the Ministry of Education, EDUCO teachers, as well as parents.

Considering the quality mainstay of the Reform, the Ministry of Education has designed new curricula to train pre-school, primary and high school teachers. Moreover the Ministry of Education has sanctioned specific universities of the country that will carry on these curricula.

⁴ Schiefelbein's opinion (1993) is that this increment in pre-school education is due to the growing number of working mothers and the interest of society to reduce school failure observed in primary school.

⁵ PEBA "Programa de Educación Básica del Arzobispado de San Salvador"; Comprehensive Language Project (World Vision); "Proyecto de Escuela Acelerada" "Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario", "Proyecto Movilizador de Alfabetización y Educación Básica de Todos en El Salvador"

⁶ Ministry of Education, 1995-96 Memoir, Chapter III. Healthy Program School ("Escuela Saludable") as a Education Coverage and Quality Strategic Supporting Program.

As a result of the Peace Agreements the Ministry of Education gets a new turn and a new Educational reform is proposed. Such reform is geared to widen the education coverage, improve education quality, modernize education institutions and teach moral and civic values, the existing disparities between men and women have not been eliminated up to now. And all these changes have not been enough to eliminate or to reduce the existing differences and women do not participate equally with men in the education processes. Currently, as it is analyzed in Part IV, there is a lack of equity and equality related to literacy and school attendance; this has a direct impact in the quite significant differences in employment and income Salvadorean women have compared to those of men.

In the education quality improvement mainstay it is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Education with USAID funds and the academic support of Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID) has created an Education Research Training Program for training professionals who belong to institutions that are related with education. The objective of this program is to empower the institutions that participate to do research in education matters and that could come up with proposals for redirecting or improving education policies based on data provided by researches.

IV. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION PROCESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLICATIONS

In the mid of 1980's, the World Conference of Copenhagen approved the Action Program for the Second Half of the Decade for Women of the United Nations, which includes Equality, Development and Peace⁷. This implies that the three objectives of the Decade are directly linked to the three subtopics: employment, health and education, which constitute the concrete basis on which equality, development and peace rest⁸.

Consequently to encourage women's participation in the country development and peace under equal conditions, it is necessary that the politicians be willing to accept and promote that in order to improve women's situation. Women have to participate equally within all the sectors of the society, in the education processes, employment and health programs.

During the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nation Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace in Nairobi, Kenya from the 15 to the 26 of July 1985. Strategies toward the Future for women's Advancement were approved. During this conference it was restated that equality, development and peace emphasize the full integration of women in the economic political, social and cultural development constituting operational strategies to pursue until the year 2000.

In El Salvador the impact of the Copenhagen and Nairobi Conferences became important from the Peace Agreements of 1992 with the emergence of women organizations that

⁷ United Nations Nairobi Strategies Oriented towards Future for the Advancement of Women. San Salvador December 7, 1993.

⁸ Ibid

advocate the rights of women in conditions of equality, education, health and job opportunities.

To analyze these women's participation trend in the education, health and work trio this work is focused particularly on the opportunities women have in terms of participation in the different educational levels in contrast with men's participation. The implications related to this participation which are related to access to job opportunities and income are analyzed.

1. Opportunities in the education context
a. Women's literacy conditions

From 1990 the literacy conditions of women show a positive trend that has an impact on the reduction of illiteracy. The process is supported by aggressive massive literacy adult programs within the governmental educational policy in coordination with ONG's and other institutions concerned about women's literacy conditions compared with that of men. The strategic actions to reduce illiteracy have been oriented to both urban and rural areas. The following table shows the positive tendency of the mentioned trend.

If illiteracy is compared on the basis of gender for the years 1992-1996 (Table 3), generally illiteracy and literacy show an inverse relationship, as literacy grows illiteracy decreases. But women present higher illiteracy percentages than men for any year and area. This difference is stressed in the urban area where women show 7.35 points more than men. Hypothetically this situation takes place in the urban area because women are dedicated to housework or they work in the informal market of the productive sector, situation that limits the opportunities they may have to formal education or literacy programs.

TABLE 3
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A:
LITERACY CONDITION FOR THE POPULATION OF 6 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER (TOTAL PAIS, URBANO AND RURAL AREAS BY GENDER, YEARS 1992 Y 1996.

YEARS	LITERACY CONDITION											
	TOTAL COUNTRY				URBAN AREA				RURAL AREA			
	LITERATE		ILLITERATE		LITERATE		ILLITERATE		LITERATE		ILLITERATE	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
1992	73.61	69.36	26.38	30.63	86.85	81.01	15.12	23.42	61.70	57.38	38.29	42.61
1996	78.96	74.47	21.20	25.52	88.81	83.37	12.59	19.94	66.82	62.64	33.17	37.35

SOURCE: National Household Survey 1992 y 1996 Table B02, pag. 121, y 64 respectively. Information Office, Ministry of Economy, San Salvador El Salvador, C.A. (M= men, W= Women).

Though the government states that the illiteracy rate for 1998 has decreased to 16.5%, and if we take into consideration that illiteracy shows a decreasing tendency (Table 3 and Annex

B), it catches the attention to see that in some Departments of El Salvador there are still high illiteracy rates comparable to those of 1980's. It's in Morazan and Cabañas where this rates reach 44.4 and 36.7 respectively⁹. This situation becomes more critic in the rural area where the illiteracy rates are higher than 50.0 and 47.8% in the above mentioned places. This can be explained by the assumption that there exist cultural barriers in the population and that they are not interested in becoming literate though the literacy campaigns get to these places.

a. Schooling Rates

In accordance with a study carried out by UNICEF/El Salvador¹⁰, the schooling net rates in basic education for the country were estimated in 78.8 with significant differences between the urban and rural areas (87.8 and 70.3 respectively) giving a difference of 17.5 % higher for the urban area. When these rates are analyzed by age they increase for both urban as well as rural areas as the school population gets older reaching 94.3% for the urban areas. Generally these rates decrease when students reach the age of 14 and 15 going to 51.7 in the rural areas which is believed that is due to school dropping in any part of the country.

If these rates are analyzed by gender, there are not significant differences between boys and girls in the whole country (78.6 for boys and 79.2 for girls), in urban areas (87.4% for boys and 87.7 for girls) and in rural areas (69.6% for boys and 70.9 for girls).

In pre-school "when the family head is literate, the schooling rate gets almost four times higher (31.3%) than the school rate of those children who belong to families where fathers are illiterate (9.5). The same situation happens though in a lesser way in the families with literate women as heads (28.6%) in relation to that where there are illiterate women (14.9%)¹¹.

The above figures show that both illiterate women as well as men influence negatively the children's schooling rates.

Analyzing the reasons for school non-attendance in 1996, it becomes evident that the gender differences show significantly that women's non-attendance to classes in the rural area is strongly determined by their responsibility to do the house chores (45.51) as compared to the other reasons such as lack of economic resources (8.01), work (13.05), age (17.6), not having interest to attend school (9.53) or other causes. This shows that the house chores as class non-attendance reason or excuse doubles when compared to economic reasons (employment or lack of economic resources). For men the reason that mainly determines their school non-attendance is lack of economic resources (66.01%) and responsibility for house chores represents only 2.1%¹².

⁹* National Household Survey 1994. Planning Ministry , 1995.

¹⁰ UNICEF El SALVADOR Assessment of Mid Decade Goals. El Salvador, C.A. Annexes.Table 21.

¹¹ Ibid, pag. 50

¹² National Household Survey 1994,1995, 1996 Table B05, pag. 67. Information Office Ministry of Economy, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

The figures of Annex C display information that show that in spite of the accelerated changes of the country modernization, the traditional role of women conditioned by the house chores persists. And the non-attendance to school is determined by the family culture that women are responsible of housekeeping.

2. Implications

a. Family heads by Gender

One of the implications of women's participation in the educational system is related with the moment when women takes the house main role, that is to say when the woman becomes the head of the family. This role has been increasing in the present decade. The data that are presented below show the increase in that status.

TABLE 6
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.:
FAMILY HEADS BY GENDER (TOTAL COUNTRY, URBAN AND RURAL
AREAS), YEARS 1992, 94 AND 96.

Years	Total Country		Urban Area		Rural Area	
	Family heads		Family heads		Family heads	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1992	73.62	26.38	69.54	30.46	78.06	21.94
1994	72.68	27.32	65.45	34.55	76.85	23.15
1996	71.33	28.67	68.19	31.81	75.79	24.21

Source: National Household Survey 1992, 1994, 1996 Table 0. Information Office, Economy Ministry, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

The highest increase of women as family heads of 1992 to 1996 is shown in the rural area with a percentage increase of 21.94 to 24.21% which is equivalent to 123,533 women for 1996. However, the highest percentage of women as heads of the families is found in the urban area (31.81%) equivalent to 230,681 women. This condition may be explained by the rural urban migration of women family heads during and after the war; and basically by the abandonment of the men family heads due to the lack of fatherly responsibility.

The woman status as family head limits their access to the formal education which in absolute figures shows a minimal quantity of women that finishes basic education in comparison with family head men that have also finished their basic education (1st. to 9th grade). The data shown below explain this phenomenon.

TABLE 7
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.:
MEN AND WOMEN AS FAMILY HEADS WHO HAVE FINISHED BASIC
EDUCATION (TOTAL COUNTRY URBAN AND RURAL AREAS) YEARS 1994,
95 And 96.

Years	Total Country		Urban Area		Rural Area	
	Complete Basic Education		Complete Basic Education		Complete Basic Education	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1994	12.65	6.82	17.55	9.35	6.33	2.13
1995	12.48	6.47	16.73	9.08	7.03	1.57
1996	12.78	6.77	16.72	9.41	7.74	1.83

SOURCE: National Household Survey 1994, 1995, 1996 Table B07. Information Office, Economy Ministry, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

In general, at any geographical level of the country the difference of reaching and finishing the basic education is far away from being equitable; it can be supposed that the enlargement in the number of women as family heads is contributing even more to the lack of equality. The highest differences between women and men to finish the ninth grade of basic education are found in the rural area. The number of men who have finished 9th grade at the national level (12.78%) doubles the number of women (6.77). A similar situation happens in the urban area, but what worries most is the figures for the rural areas where the difference between the number of men and women who have finished ninth grade is 6 times higher for men. Trying to explain this condition, it can be said that the education coverage in these areas has been limited. The data in tables 6 and 7 show the education levels that men and women generations had reached previous to the implementation of the education policies.

The challenge to achieve equity for the conditions of women, as family heads in their participation in the education processes would be to fulfill goals for the future related with rural as well as urban education coverage. It becomes also important to stop with irresponsible paternity, and finally to improve life condition of salvadorean homes.

a. Occupation

The specific participation rates by gender of the economically active population traditionally show significant differences. This means that women have been set aside from the productive process in terms of access to job opportunities as well as from the most qualified and best-paid job positions. This social marginalization situation is mainly motivated by the cultural difference of roles of women to traditional occupations and which privileges the best and qualified job positions for men. It is also important to point out that women have lower education levels than men. The following data presents an approach related to specific participation rates by gender.

TABLE 8
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.
SPECIFIC PARTICIPATION RATES BY GENDER (TOTAL CONTRY, URBAN
AND RURAL AREAS) YEARS 1994, 1995 And 1996.

Years	Total Country		Urban Area		Rural Area	
	Specific Participation Rates		Specific Participation Rates		Specific Participation Rates	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1994	71.17	37.92	67.11	46.09	76.18	26.12
1995	70.56	36.51	66.47	43.86	75.61	25.98
1996	69.18	35.62	64.75	43.04	74.71	25.12

Source: National Household Survey 1994, 1995, 1996 Table 0. Information Office, Ministry of Economy, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

The data of the previous table in general show a chronological falling tendency in the specific men and women participation rates; however the greater differences concerning equity in these rates are found in the rural area. The lack of equity in rural areas is determined by the limited access of women to the traditional and non-traditional occupational sector; this situation relegates them to house chores.

Men and women incorporation to occupations in the economic activity branches demonstrates that women are employed mostly in the service sector which is part of the informal market, and this sector offers employment opportunities to most women. This occupation relationship is doubled at a countrywide level (Men: 34.37% and women: 67.92% in 1996). In the rural area the relationship is higher for women whose data is 4 times higher in commerce and services when compared to that of men (men: 12.75% and women: 53.67 %)¹³ (Annex C).

In Annex C, as it may be expected, the data about women's participation in agriculture is only a third of that of men. It can also be stated that women's data in industry and construction do not show significant differences from men's data at the national level as well as in the urban area. One can add that this is because maquilas demand women's labor as they earn lower salaries than men do.

b. Salaries

Men and women's salaries equally present deep differences which possibly are determined by the lower educational levels women have as well as by the cultural standards that impact in the formal or informal requirements of the profiles demanded to fill determined

¹³ National Household Survey 1994, Table D09; 1995 and 1996 Table D05. Information Office, Ministry of Economy, San Salvador, El Salvador C.A.

occupational categories. The following data becomes important if they are analyzed comparing men and women's salaries when they do not have any school year.

TABLE 10
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.:
MONTHLY AVERAGE SALARY OF MEN AND WOMEN WITH NO SCHOOL
YEARS (TOTAL COUNTRY, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS)
YEARS 1994, 95 AND 96.

Years	Total Country		Urban Area		Rural Area	
	Monthly Salary*		Monthly Salary		Monthly Salary	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1994	\$104.25	\$73.21	\$146.43	\$80.45	\$81.26	\$63.90
1995	\$98.89	\$73.21	\$121.83	\$83.56	\$82.20	\$61.49
1996	\$106.66	\$83.21	\$139.54	\$92.98	\$91.37	\$71.26

SOURCE: National Household Survey 1994 Table, 1995 and 1996 Table E01. Information Office Ministry of Economy, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

*\$1.00 equals to ₡8.7

The data of Table 10 show that the average salary of women in the urban as well as in the rural areas does not cover the current minimal salary (\$132.18) representing a 62.9% of the same at countrywide level. This salary is increased as the number of school years increase and these women salary goes as high as two times the minimal salary after they have completed 13 or more school years (National Household Survey 1996 pag. 94 Table E01). The salary condition turns more critical in the rural area where the working women's income is \$71.26 monthly. This amount does not permit them to satisfy the basic needs of their family group.

Data of the Report on Human Development Indicators about El Salvador also make visible the salary differences between genders. In 1996 women's annual per capita income in dollars in the Salvadorean cities of La Unión and Cabañas which have low human development, is of \$616.00 and \$694.00 respectively in 1996. On the other hand, men's annual per capita income is doubled in the same year reaching \$1857.00 and \$1666.00 respectively¹⁴.

V. FINAL REMARKS

The Salvadorean society started a transition process toward democratization with the Peace Agreements of 1992, modifying its political, judicial, cultural, economic and social structures. This new circumstance has opened opportunities to the different sectors of the country for participating. This participation implies a conciliation and reconciliation process between the social groups that have accepted the peace process as a long and rugged way to follow toward equality and equity with social justice.

¹⁴ Government of El Salvador. Indicators of Human Development in El Salvador. PNUD, DIGESTYC, Ministry of Economy, pag. 86-87. El Salvador, San Salvador, 1997.

The democratization process has had limitations due to the complex and delicate changes of the nature of the Salvadorean society understanding that there are not only structures but also some social groups difficult to modify. The way to democracy implies economic, social, ideological and cultural changes but overall these changes have to take place in the personality and mind of the people responsible of leading the democratization process in the country. The government and other institution representatives that have been involved in this process are the most important actors in this process and they should be the first ones to start changing.

The society democratization process has meant changes for El Salvador in the quality of the state management with perspectives to promote the sustained development. This in turn is expected to generate public benefits in terms of social impact that would improve the population living standards: education, health, employment, income, land, technology, etc

It is in light of the government management changes that the social policy adopts a new logic that breaks with the traditional conception form that had been practiced before. In previous decades the economic policy was considered central for the country economic and social development and it was conceived particularly separate from the social policy. As a consequence of these changes the social policy is privileged and education and health are considered as the pivot of development and a condition for the sustained development of the country. It is in this context that the educational policy assumes a prevailing role carrying forward the educational reform at the beginning of the present decade.

Even though education policy in light of the Peace Agreements started a new turn through the Education Reform, it has not been able to eliminate or diminish the existing differences between men and women that would allow the latter to participate equitably in the education processes.

Currently we find a lack of equity and equality related to illiteracy conditions and school attendance what derives directly in the quite significant differences in the Salvadoran women's employment and salaries compared to those of men that have higher educational levels, better qualified employment and as a consequence higher wages.

Though the illiteracy and schooling programs have reached the different Departments of the country, currently there are places with illiteracy rates comparable to those of the 1980's as in the rural areas of Morazan and Cabañas (between 40 and 50%). Based on this it can be expected that in the farther villages (cantones) and municipalities the illiteracy rate would be higher. It is important to make evident that the armed conflict was developed with more intensity during the 12 years of war in these Departments. Besides the cultural barriers, one can suppose that this is another reason that may help explain the low socio educational development in these places.

Women's work is limited by their low education level, which in turn limits their jobs to a part of the commerce and service sector of the informal market. Generally women have been

incorporating to industry since the maquilas came to El Salvador in 1990 mainly in the urban areas. But men's occupation is almost always higher in any economic activity mostly in agriculture in urban and rural areas.

One of the factors that contribute to the gender differences is found in the standards and cultural values accepted by the society itself- men, women, and the family. The family is considered to be responsible for the daughters' education, women are believed to be for taking care of house chores and for motherhood; men on the other hand are considered to be for working in places different from a household and to support the family. And job positions or projects that require higher education and decision-making are for men.

Finally, what is needed in order to help women to participate directly under equality conditions in the formal and not formal educational processes, is the politicians' willingness and consciousness of those that are in charge of implementing the education policies within the nation educational system. In the same way men and women have to internalize those roles so that they become conscious of equity between men and women

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ANNEX A: METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory descriptive work about the democratization process in El Salvador in order to examine women's participation in the national educational process. The document analysis technique has been used with bibliography that can be found in the country.

To base the analysis of the topic the most recent education employment and salary statistics have been gathered from institutions that produce these data. Among these institutions are the Ministry of Education, The Information Office and the General Statistics Office and Censuses of the Ministry of Economy, the High Strategic Studies Center of El Salvador, University of El Salvador, and “Fundación Educativa para el Desarrollo Empresarial”, (FEPADE).

Also articles, studies and national and foreign author researches that are related to the gender approach and educational policy were consulted.

The present work includes some qualitative analysis of the topic. In addition to the previously mentioned sources, the topic author's sensorial experience on the gender approach in the education environment supports it.

ANNEX B
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A:
6-YEAR-OLD POPULATION AND OLDER BY LITERACY CONDITION AND GENDER (TOTAL COUNTRY, URBAN AND RURAL ZONES) YEARS 1992, 93, 94, 95, 96.

YEARS	LITERACY CONDITION											
	TOTAL COUNTRY				TOTAL URBAN COUNTRY				TOTAL RURAL COUNTRY			
	LITERATE		ILLITERATE		LITERATE		ILLITERATE		LITERATE		ILLITERATE	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
1992	1,505,672	1,592,925	539,658	703,551	841,015	943,159	127,228	220,972	664,657	649,766	412,430	482,579
1993	1,514,435	1,610,791	535,837	701,185	840,206	952,336	127,995	222,247	674,229	658,455	407,842	478,938
1994	1,594,650	1,702,739	532,680	675,238	993,862	1,127,455	156,710	248,540	600,788	574,684	375,970	426,788
1995	1,688,629	1,784,047	505,723	653,000	1,043,157	1,163,813	147,955	236,534	645,472	620,234	357,768	416,466
1996	1,825,563	1,944,687	491,258	666,396	1,120,223	1,243,010	141,104	247,903	705,340	701,677	350,154	418,493

SOURCE: National Household Survey 1992,1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 Table B02, pag. 121, 72, 55, 64, 64 respectively. Information Office Ministry of Economy, San Salvador El Salvador, C.A.

ANNEX C
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.

CLASS NON-ATTENDANCE REASONS GIVEN BY THE POPULATION OF FOUR YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER BY GENDER , YEARS 1995 AND 1996

YEAR	COUNTRY AND RURAL AREA	CLASS NON-ATTENDANCE REASONS									
		Because s/he works	Lack of economic resources	School located at a long distance	Coverage deficit (*)	S/he repeated many times	S/he is not interested	Because of Age	S/he Finished studying	House Chores	Other reasons
MEN											
1995	COUNTRY	56.51	8.97	1.11	1.91	0.33	9.78	15.20	0.82	1.90	3.38
1995	RURAL A.	53.06	9.07	1.91	3.69	0.47	10.37	16.77	0.11	1.30	3.24
1996	COUNTRY	59.89	7.63	0.63	1.00	0.31	10.05	14.98	1.04	2.00	2.48
1996	RURAL A.	57.50	8.51	1.05	1.70	0.44	9.89	16.08	0.20	2.11	2.51
WOMEN											
1995	COUNTRY	22.54	8.01	1.45	1.42	0.25	9.22	17.01	0.75	36.83	2.52
1995	RURAL A.	11.58	8.77	2.66	2.87	0.33	9.66	17.60	0.48	43.08	2.96
1996	COUNTRY	23.45	7.00	0.83	0.85	0.27	9.66	17.40	1.00	37.55	1.99
1996	RURAL A.	13.05	8.01	1.43	1.55	0.48	9.53	17.70	0.47	45.51	2.29

SOURCE: National Household Survey 1995 y 1996, Tables B05, pag. 67. Information Office Ministry of Economy, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

*It includes those that stated, "There is no teacher", "School was closed", "There is no night school" and "There is no any higher grade at school".

ANNEX D
REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, C.A.

WORKING PEOPLE BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BRANCH AND GENDER (TOTAL COUNTRY, URBAN AND RURAL. AREAS) YEARS 94,95
AND 96

YEARS	TOTAL COUNTRY						URBAN AREA						RURAL AREA					
	MEN			WOMEN			MEN			WOMEN			MEN			WOMEN		
	Agricul. Minery	Industr. Constr. Electri. gas	Comer. Serv. Transp. Commu FE*	Agricul. Minery	Industr. Constr. Electri. gas	Comer. Serv. Transp. Commu FE*	Agricul. Minery	Industr. Constr. Electri. gas	Comer. Serv. Transp. Commu FE*	Agricul. Minery	Industr. Constr. Electri. gas	Comer. Serv. Transp. Commu FE*	Agricul. Minery	Industr. Constr. Electri. gas	Comer. Serv. Transp. Commu FE*	Agricul. Minery	Industr. Constr. Electri. gas	Comer. Serv. Transp. Commu FE*
1994	40.42	25.57	34.03	8.34	22.13	65.55	11.77	34.82	53.41	1.62	26.47	71.90	71.81	15.42	12.67	25.88	25.24	48.88
1995	38.77	26.50	34.62	7.75	25.86	66.40	11.45	34.78	53.77	1.71	26.89	71.41	68.60	17.46	13.94	22.83	23.29	53.90
1996	40.43	25.21	34.37	7.89	24.20	67.92	11.49	34.04	54.48	1.78	24.58	73.65	71.52	15.72	12.75	23.07	23.26	53.67

SOURCE: National Household Survey 1994 Table D09, 1995 and 1996 Table D05. Information Office Ministry of Economy, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

*FE: Financial Interprises