

Proposal to establish a Gender Standing Working Group

Since 1994 a gender group, first as a Standing Working Group meeting outside of the main ISCHE conference and then, since 1999, meeting as an integral part of the conference, made gender accepted as a significant concept in history of education. Twice, (at Montreal and Oslo respectively), the SWG represented ISCHE at the quinquennial International Congress of Historical Sciences (CISH). The general success of the group was such that at the conference in Sydney in 2005 it was decided that gender has become such a constituent part of ISCHE that the SWG could be disbanded. At the same time it was decided to keep a watchful eye on how gender progressed without the SWG meeting. At the following conference at Umea, a number of participants – including those who had not been in Australia – regretted the fact that the gender group was no longer meeting. It was therefore decided to reconstitute the group under the new criteria for SWGs and notice was given of this intention at the AGM.

The importance of the new Gender SWG is seen in relation to the internationally expanding scholarship on gender in history of education, investigating a range of aspects including how both femininity and masculinity have been organizing concepts in education; how male and female negotiated the social, cultural and economic structures they inhabited; and how new types of sources and approaches can be used in research on gender.

The aims of the Gender SWG would be:

1. To work towards an edited book (possibly in two volumes), demonstrating at an international level the significance of gender as an organizing concept within history of education. Within this aim the publication would consider specifically:
 - ❖ How conceptions of gender have affected both the range and types of education open to males and females and their subsequent life prospects.
 - ❖ Women as active agents and as educators in global networks in educational history.
 - ❖ The interrelationship of class and/or ethnicity with gender and education.
 - ❖ Sources and methodologies for exploring gender and education in history.

N.B. Education would be viewed in its widest sense of meaning the development of mental or physical powers, although all forms of institutional education and systematic instruction would be included.

2. All articles in the book would be selected from papers given at ISCHE conferences in the years from 2008-10. A selection panel would be established by the group for this purpose, but the objectives, general plan and progress would be discussed at the annual meetings held at the ISCHE conference. All those speaking on gender could attend these meetings. The final decisions would be taken after the CISH/ISCHE conference in 2010. The meeting in 2011 would wind up this project.
3. Gender panels specifically addressing the themes of the book would be organized for the CISH conference.
4. Generally gender papers would continue to be given within the main conference, not in separate SWG meetings. Gender panels would be organized by the convenor in liaison with the conference organizers for that year as was done successfully 1999-2005. (This year at Hamburg, Professors Mineke van Essen, the previous convenor, and Ruth Watts, the temporary convenor, are doing this in conjunction with the conference organizers).

Ruth Watts, Professor of History of Education, University of Birmingham, UK