

Women Health Education Programme

-- WHEP News --

WHEP News



WHEP Scientific Committee Meeting

in Paris, September 27th,
2005

Jacques Fröchen
October 2005

Minutes of the meeting held in Paris on September 27th, 2005

Prof. André Capron welcomes all the participants of the IAP-WHEP Scientific Committee meeting. Women health education is a crucial point for access to science and life betterment through knowledge. The advice of all the SC Members is very important. The meeting will be very informal and should enable to go further on in the WHEP actions to be reported to the IAP Executive Committee in October in Shanghai.

Participants: Marie-Thérèse ARCENS-SOME, Astrid AURALDSSON (repr. Gunnar ÖQUIST), André CAPRON, Mame Khady DIEYE-GIMENEZ (invited, EPLS pilot-project), Jacques FRÖCHEN, Yannick JAFFRE, May KAILEH, Alain KASRIEL (invited, EPLS pilot-project), Shamila NAIR, Vinodini REDDY (repr. Mahtab BAMJI), Gilles RIVEAU;

Excused Members: Guy BLAUDIN DE THE, John BORIGHT (contacted through a conference call at 4:10pm, Alassane Dialy NDIAYE (received the working documents, had a meeting on 09/23/05 with the EPLS representatives), Florence WAMBUGU;

Secretary: Michel COHEN-SOLAL

1. WHEP objectives.

Prof. Capron opens the meeting with an overview of the WHEP programme, presented in December 2003 in the IAP Mexico City General Assembly and approved in February 2004 by the IAP Ex. Co. in Paris. At that time the group called GRAMM devoted to the reduction of maternal mortality was running on. Pr. Capron reminds that 600 000 women and 5 million children die every year, a crucial and dramatic issue hence the WHEP launching. There were in this field many initiatives which failed because there were too short, lacked evaluation and achieved by the "Northern" countries without a real co-operation and then a sustainable appropriation by the "Southern" populations. Meanwhile the role of women in development has tremendously increased.

Reminder: last March 2005 in an International IAP-WHEP Workshop in Paris 50 experts met to work out a more precise definition of the Programme. Recently WHEP was formally approved and supported by the deputy director of UNESCO Education sector. Contacts for co-operation and support are being taken with UNICEF and the E.U. Commission.

WHEP is a programme based on one key element : education. It aims at bringing health sciences -hygiene, nutrition- to women and the communities where they live thus modifying their knowledge and behaviour according to integrated processes involving committed authorities.

The agenda: Pr. Capron summarizes the foreseen actions of the programme which should be discussed by the IAP-WHEP SC during the day. He mentions the Senegal River Basin Pilot-Project which will be presented by Gilles Riveau. IAP-WHEP recommendations could be tested in the area and evaluated. Another goal is to produce leaflets on education and IAP-WHEP objectives. We shall lastly work on a communication plan.

Shamila Nair estimates that the programme should be complementary to local programmes, and evaluated, which is not the case for all of them. It is the way UNESCO works. André Capron confirms to IAP-WHEP SC that in this respect WHEP will be supported by UNESCO which may create a Chair (i.e. a network) on women health education. According to Gilles Riveau the programmes are very seldom evaluated, and never on their impact, sometimes in quantity values, but not on quality.

André Capron estimates that IAP-WHEP has not to lead a pharaonic programme but to act as an initiator, an innovator, adviser and evaluator. Jacques Fröchen reminds the participants that WHEP is an IAP type programme and cannot be only a revision and evaluation of old programmes; it has to be related with society, and bringing science will be the added value of the IAP Academies of sciences.

Mame Khady Dieye-Gimenez indicates that the pupils and the teachers in her school have already experienced many programmes. But when they were over, they all forgot them at once. André Capron indicated that there was no sustainability in the past programmes. Alain Kasriel indicates that 1/ health education is usually achieved "vertically" and top-down. It seldom changes practical behaviours. 2/ Teachers themselves need to be "educated" and informed about the general objectives of ongoing initiatives. 3/ Education tools should be very different from what they currently are (passive versus active education) and conceived at first and not as they generally are, as the last help when technical approaches have failed. 4/ Initiatives seldom take into account local needs which could prevent an eventual reject of the programme.

Vinodini Reddy explains that implementing the programme is a problem, even with a good theoretical starting point. Evaluation is not coordinated. The problem is the training of education and health staff. In India, there is a huge difference between boys and girls. Education should be effective for girls before marriage which is not achieved or achieved too late. In addition basic medicine has to be provided. Prof. Reddy thinks that should be implied besides education a network with the community. In Senegal, they trained young mothers with children at school to check the impact of education on their own children.

May Salem Kaileh indicates vertical programmes are not very efficient. We should use different procedures. The programme should be integrated, so that sustainability could be obtained. It is necessary to teach the teachers to use booklets, and afterwards to check the impact of this. Permanent indicators are needed to continually know where we are, whether in the good or wrong direction. Jacques Frochen indicates that at any means there is a relationship between GDP and education indicators of "good practices". What IAP-WHEP is based on is a betting on science, quality and "acceleration" in cognitive and economic development through a real appropriation by the actors. Astrid Auraldsson indicates that the IAMP goals can be compared to WHEP's.

Marie-Thérèse Arcens-Some estimates that the population should be involved in the definition of educational actions. Alain Kasriel estimates that since men generally are "the authority", it should be important to evaluate what is done with men, what they do, what is done with boys. Shamila Nair explains that anything that is done has a strong cultural dimension. Salem Kaileh May estimate that the main goal is cultural, that is through culture that education goes.

Yannick Jaffré estimates that, observing ongoing programmes, there are several "effets pervers". He estimates that the problem is only part of the whole: e.g. languages are to be taken into account, the fact that there is a faucet at school, but not at home et cetera. There is also a very strong political dimension. André Capron explains that the programmes are too short (i.e. NGO initiatives) acts for a too short period and that no relay exists allowing the effort to last...

2. WHEP Scientific Committee organisation.

André Capron resumes the session in giving a few information. IAP-WHEP is an international programme involving 22 different Academies; the Académie des sciences, Institut de France, is

leading it. In this context according to the French Académie, the Scientific Committee should be a key body in the process. The scientific Committee needs to include committed experts which cannot always be achieved with nominated academic "overbusy" representatives. The Committee is not limited nor fixed and we still can add a few more experts as needed i.e. from Latin America. After the Executive Committee of Shanghai and the 2006 IAP General Assembly, the Committee will be implemented by "professional" but not political representative.

The missions of IAP-WHEP SC should be:

1. to ensure a permanent flock of key-ideas and suggestions;
2. to check the complementarity with existing actions,
3. to check the complementarity with international actions as the Millenium Development UNO Goals, the IAMP objectives and actions, et cetera.

The core objective of WHEP is to bring science to women i.e. to bring health-education to women fostering favourable conditions to improve the whole population's access to knowledge and a healthier life. On our way we should not forget to promote the evaluation of applied strategies and actions for women-health-education, and their compliance with the ethical requirements of the methods.

A web site will be created rapidly, in order to circulate the information. As WHEP cannot benefit from huge funding and because the current members are very busy, the Scientific Committee will hopefully meet twice a year in principle and in any case next year before the IAP General Assembly.

André Capron explains that the Senegal pilot-project should be considered as an experimental framework for WHEP. He shows how IAP-WHEP should be linked with international organizations like IAMP and others, but stresses that the programme is strongly related to education, not to medicine.

Inside the Committee, 3 sub-groups are created in order to overview the achievements of WHEP objectives:

- pilot projects (in Africa and other continents), May KAILEH, Shamila NAIR, Yannick JAFFRE, Gilles RIVEAU...
- edition strategy, Marie-Thérèse ARCENS-SOME, Astrid AURALDSSON (on a volunteer basis), Mahtab BAMJI, May KAILEH, Shamila NAIR...
- communication plan. Marie-Thérèse ARCENS-SOME, Astrid AURALDSSON (on a volunteer basis), May KAILEH...

NB. The lists are open and every member of the IAP-WHEP SC will collaborate to any WHEP action.

A booklet should be produced before the end of the year as the first testimony of our action as well as a flyer on the Committee. Both will be circulated at large. Producing a newsletter is an interesting idea (Mahtab Bamji) but it should be a short one. Michel Cohen-Solal said that the IAP bulletin is an appropriate way to inform the whole IAP. Jacques Frochen explains that information should be organized on several basis: communication within the SC, vis-à-vis the Academies, then States authorities, then stakeholders, then communities...

May Salem Kaileh says that there should be a link between the Academies and the Universities. André Capron explains that it depends from the countries and the way that the Academies are

running; link between the University and the Academy do not really exist in France as the Académie des sciences is "independent".

A review of the Academies is made. Some Academies are missing: South Africa, Brazil, China. Some of the partner Academies are not that efficient. It is decided that all the Academies will be informed of the current minutes.

To have a booklet by the end of 2005, raises Shamila Nair, is not an easy initiative. Jacques Frochen explains that we need to indicate that we are "living" and promoting important messages. Michel Cohen-Solal says that the target should be defined. A project is included in the documents given to the participants. A 4 or 6 page booklet in French and in English (then other languages as Spanish, Arabic et cetera) will be proposed by the Edition Strategy group of the SC. Information will be communicated by e-mail. André Capron indicates the 3-4 important and basic topics that have to be included. Besides Shamila Nair mentions cartoon books which could be produced as well.

3. WHEP actions.

A. the Pilot Project for Health Education in Senegal River Basin.

André Capron says that WHEP does not have to promote a Senegalese project, but use it as a prototype frame of action. Gilles Riveau explains that the project was launched recently and that it is still tentative. He presents the project: while focusing on young girls as powerful vectors of appropriation, the project is targeting children at elementary school, water as the central point which leads to major hygiene problems, assimilation of global notions of health at school with participation of teachers and parents. A tentative project of double-page cards would be used to tentatively change the behaviours within relevant community through girls. "La santé au fil de l'eau" ("Health on the edge of the water") would suit to a specific cards collection.

Alain Kasriel explains that in Senegal the main problem is the access to water through 3 kinds of possibilities, the river, the well and the faucet. Use of water is the same using the 3 sources. Education is related to the use of the kind of access and people have to know which water is good for drink. The education deals with the behaviour and use concerning the three kinds of water which are different according to local situations. School is important, but the family is crucial. Thus the action should not be restricted to school. In this context, child must be taught as an individual and not only a part of the community. The programme has to be no coast, not low coast. The education should be permanent and integrated into the school curriculum programme, and not for a restricted time.

Yannick Jaffré, as an anthropologist, says that the project is based on a behaviourist pattern action. It should be considered differently and include historical backgrounds. The child at school is in an artificial environment and he has the reality at home. It is important not to rely only upon pedagogic cards, which means relation with language; and we know that language is difficult (see the beginning).

Alain Kasriel explains that the project should not be restricted to the school, but it must be spread in the general population. Gilles Riveau notes that the main problem is to evaluate the actions and check that it is efficient as a universal tool. Shamila Nair explains that evaluation should be permanent and can correct the programme if necessary. Jacques Frochen estimates that WHEP could labelize pilot women-health-education projects, because the education is universal although not to be standardized, and is articulated on common concepts like methods, actors, targets, tools...

André Capron explains that the project should target a real and sustainable appropriation (active participation versus passive education). Our main goal is communication and diffusion of knowledge. Hygiene is a universal concept and pedagogy has to use the local tools to teach it. Shamila Nair explains that the pilot project in Senegal is very easy to be transferred in other countries, like South Africa. André Capron estimates that the programme should be in touch with the World Bank, because "they have money" and because it is part of a huge programme on developments ruled by other international institutions.

Gilles Riveau stresses that there is a scientific approach in the EPLS Senegal project, which was emphasized by the High Commissary of OMVS, because it has never happened in previous programmes. André Capron estimates that the project must be evaluated and he is confident that an evaluation will be achieved, even if some aspect like anthropology or others are not considered as the heart of it. He explains that, taking into account some "reserves", the principle of an health education action is feasible. It will be a pilot project, base on sustainability, strategy in education and should be hopefully spread in other regions.

Decision of the SC: The EPLS pilot-project is approved as an essential part of WHEP action and will be presented in the Shanghai IAP Ex. Co. meeting (16-17th Oct. 2005). The Senegal River basin women health education project is "*whepable*"!

B. draft of WHEP edition strategy

Jacques Fröchen presents the draft of WHEP edition strategy (see in the folders). Edition is a part of education. It should imply the booklet, the recommendations made by the Academies, educational document prototype, and about water. André Capron indicates that the production of documents for presenting the WHEP (booklet) is an urgent tool needed before the end of the current year, that the other goals are less urgent: e.g. "Cards" production can be progressive.

The documents to be finalized will be worked out differently according to their goals, the relevant audience, their contents, the edition time-table, the allocated budget...

Decision of the SC: after the IAP Ex. Co. meeting in Shanghai (16-17th Oct. 2005), the Edition Strategy group of the SC will work on the two above mentioned documents during the coming weeks by e-mails or any convenient means.

C. WHEP Communication plan.

Shamila Nair proposes a motto "Empower women with health education".

A website including hyperlinks between the involved Academies is also decided. It will enable the flocks of renewed ideas we have to promote in this field.

A logo is essential to get a strong identity. Gilles Riveau will receive all proposals by mail by October 11th 2005 and will be helped by a colleague to design the logo. It could hopefully be submitted to the Executive Committee in Shanghai.

At 4:10 a conference call is set up with John Boright and all the participants regarding the whole WHEP-SC meeting. John BORIGHT strongly support the project-pilot in Senegal, adding that a connection could be set up with the other US lead project in the country..

André Capron reviews the list of participants for the subgroups. The documents from UNPD are discussed (Human Development Index and recently back move of African countries). They clearly show the utmost importance of IAP-WHEP actions.

Decision: The SC will work on finalizing the elements involved by the communication plan (website, logo, motto...).

4/ Recommendations

suggested by the participants are distributed and key words are commented upon with the following text:

WHEP Scientific Committee Recommendations

1. Implement the IAP-WHEP programme as a crucial means of bettering women's everyday life;
2. Promote a synthetic approach to regional and local socio-cultural backgrounds;
3. Promote individuals and authorities commitment and a suitable coordination between Education and Health policies;
4. Before implementing any educational action fulfil all conditions required for communities to appropriate various types of knowledge and behaviour;
5. When defining and then implementing IAP-WHEP actions, keep in mind that they complement past or ongoing undertakings; account should be taken of the historical background of existing women-health-education projects in the relevant places;
6. Take into account the fact that sundry types of knowledge from several sources (tradition, education, family...) are tied together among relevant populations;
7. Set up permanent indicators that allow a dynamic IAP-WHEP steering and take both positive and negative results into account;
8. Imagine a universal approach that can be adapted to local actions, and at the same time, implement local projects with a view to international extension.