



The Way Forward? The Relevance of VET to Australian Women in Poverty WAVE Research for S4W 2005

Overview

- The outcomes from VET do not lead to sustained economic security for women
- 5 household groups at most risk of poverty in Australia: indigenous Australians; the unemployed; sole parents; young people and those relying on government incomes [ACOSS 2003]
- 70% of people living in poverty are women, and two thirds of illiterate adults are women.
- The International Centre for Research on Women identified four issues that must be dealt with before women are to escape intergenerational poverty (ICRW 2002). These included reversing girl's and women's lack of opportunity to obtain education and employment, 'building intergenerational alliances within families and communities', providing 'adequate sexual and reproductive health and rights options for women' and a 'stronger role of civil society' and 'good governance'
- A relatively high minimum wage has kept Australia from the levels of poverty experienced by the United States and United Kingdom. In the developed world, relative income equality is the major issue.
- Women dominate the part time labour force
- Education is an extremely important tool in alleviating poverty. It creates economic growth, generates higher living standards and makes society cohesive. The cycle of poverty is worsened by poor people's lack of participation in education. However, their outcomes are not favourable (CARC 2004 p227).
- However, women who are in lower level occupations and those with multiple disadvantages do not feel that training will offer them any benefits and that it is too difficult to manage.
- In VET, low SES students have higher participation in TAFE than high SES students
- within ethnic communities there was a low awareness of VET and little value was placed upon it
- Clearly there is a strong need for pro-active research that identifies the needs of women and creates programs to meet these needs,

This research sample:

- 87% of respondents intended to commence paid work in the future.
- 55% of respondents did not have information on job availability in their choice of career area.
- 75% did not have information/knowledge on pay rates in their choice of career area.
- 61.4% of respondents did not have access to careers counselling
- 70% of the women planned to do future study.