



## **DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Development must be looked at within the context of a major set of problems which despite differences in scope and magnitude are similar in most of the developing world. Worldwide, gender inequality finds expression in the lack of opportunities and support women have. Gender inequality is one among many issues that need to be addressed in understanding development and underdevelopment. After a long period of neglect, the two last decades rendered a vast range of literature on all areas of development creating an unprecedented awareness about the importance of gender analysis in this field. The central notion is that the degree of human development of a given country is closely related to the way the country treats women.

Governance processes – with their emphasis on principles of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, inclusiveness, and more recently sustainability – should be a means to social transformation. But despite this potential, they are failing to deliver on gender equality, and women are having to struggle to get their voices heard and needs met. It is necessary to map out persistent obstacles to gender equality in governance and deliver possible ways to promote gender balance in positions of authority and building political will for change.

The aim of the course is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the links between development and gender relations, and to show how equal relations between women and men is both an end and a means of development. The analysis is grounded in Latin America, but looks into Costa Rican domestic approaches and policies, as well as trends in the international arena, and those unfolding in today's globalized scenario.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Introduce students to the values and principles of development by exploring the links between gender equality and development.

1. Discuss the main approaches concerning women's issues and gender equality in development and their implications for Latin American women.
2. Provide students with an understanding of development challenges in Latin America and how gender relations must be taken into account in designing public policies and strategies.
3. Analyze the demands, responses, and proposals of Latin American women to development strategies currently implemented in the region.
4. Special attention will be given to the Costa Rican case and the shifts toward sustainability. Students will be invited to develop their own country report/case study material for discussion and analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Topics will be introduced by the professors. During the semester there will be group discussion, class group work, pair work, independent homework, in-class debates, student oral presentations, possible guest speakers, quizzes, site visits, independent research work, and a final exam.

Students will present one reading session/student seminar during the semester and lead the discussion in the class. Reading and active class participation is encouraged. The first part of the class might be dedicated to presentations and the second part may include videos, debates, discussion of newspaper articles and clips, etc. Students are encouraged to approach reality from a critical standpoint by means of participatory activities and the analysis of case studies. Students are expected to conduct independent research in relation to gender dynamics in the Latin American context.

## **CONTENTS**

### **UNIT I: APPROACHES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER RELATIONS**

Feminist theorising has flourished in the last two decades. In this context, conceptual frameworks and competing approaches to the development process must be assessed and useful analytical categories for the evaluation of public policies need to be understood.

- Feminist theories and concepts for the understanding of gender relations
- History of women's participation in social struggles for gender equality: the case of Latin America
- Main international mechanisms and instruments on women's rights:
  - CEDAW
  - UN World Conferences for Women
  - Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action
  - Organization of American States: Belem do Pará Convention
  - UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

### **UNIT II: VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN DEVELOPMENT THOUGHT**

Development goes beyond economic growth. It must be aimed at enhancing individual opportunities and freedoms. The pioneer work of Amartya Sen raises the importance of grounding development strategies in the value of justice and thus, issues of equality become a priority in development thinking and strategizing. This approach offers new trends to explore in development thought.

This unit discusses the values and principles linked to the idea of development and gender equality. The analysis is meant to clarify the ethical grounds for including a gender analysis to economic, social, and political concerns.

- Women in Development / Women and Development / Gender and Development
- The public/private spheres debate
- Gender inequality and justice
- Gender and accountability

### **UNIT III: CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA**

By the turn of the new century, it had become clear that Latin America had not met the development goals set over the last two decades of the XX century. The results have fallen short in terms of growth, poverty alleviation, democratization, and security to name some of the most pressing issues the region has not been able to solve as desired. Rather than the prevailing optimism of some years ago, today the region faces an unpredictable future that demands the creative thinking of development planners and practitioners. Gender equality is at the core of this challenge. Growth requires an active and equal involvement of women in the labour force, in business, participating in decision-making processes at national and local levels. In striving for peace between men and women, between groups and nations, women's voices have grown stronger and offer a new understanding of conflict and violence.

- Expressions of gender inequalities in Costa Rica and their implication for development:
  - The family: The Time Use Survey
  - Economic and labour rights
  - Violence against women in Costa Rica
  - Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking
  - Sexual and reproductive rights
  - Women and the environment
  - The advances and opportunities of international sustainability frameworks.

### **UNIT IV: PUBLIC POLICIES, INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND WOMEN'S DEMANDS IN LATIN AMERICA**

The status of public policies for gender equality is the core of this last unit. The objective is to look at the advances made in Latin America especially during the last two decades, to assess the results, and to draw recommendations for policy and action.

- The human development index: The case of Latin America
- The Millennium Goals: The case of Latin America
- Gender indicators to measure the state of development in a country:
  - The World's Women Report
  - The Global Gender Gap Report
- National mechanism for the advancement of women (INAMU)
- National public policy for gender equality (PIEG)
- Women's organizations in Costa Rica and their demands
- Political participation of women in Costa Rica
- Challenges in public policies for gender equality

<b>EVALUATION</b>	
Attendance, <b>classwork</b> , and discussion*	10%
Home assignments/plus Mind-maps	15%
Oral presentation/student seminar	15%
Mid-term debate	10%
Quiz	10%
Case study paper	15%
Case study presentation	10%
Final exam/Country Reporting	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* (includes class attendance and participation, as well as attendance to possible field trips).

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

In case of requiring additional time for taking exams or quizzes, or if experiencing any circumstance during the course of the term that would interfere with the student's ability to complete his/her work or take a test, students should let the professor know ahead of time.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students in this course are expected to abide by common sense, normal regulations on Academic Integrity. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy include, but are not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and academic misconduct, including dishonest acts such as tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of an administered or un-administered test/assignment. The intent to violate this policy also represents a violation of this policy.

### **Possible Sanctions for Violating Academic Integrity Policy**

If an act of academic dishonesty is determined to have occurred, one or more of the following sanctions will be imposed, depending on the severity of a first-time offense:

- Reduction of a course grade
- An "F" for the assignment or exam
- Failure for the entire course
- Other action deemed appropriate by the faculty member
- Any of the above sanctions with the inability to withdraw.

The decision about the sanction to apply will be made jointly by the course's professor and ICDS' Academic Director in consultation with home university on-site Director for the program, if applicable. The incident will be reported to the home university and may result in an official conduct record for the student(s).

**Second violation:** A second violation will result in suspension or expulsion from the program, in addition to any sanction issued from the list above.

### **Changes to Syllabus**

The student acknowledges receipt of this syllabus and the information herein by continuing to attend this course. The Instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus if circumstances warrant such change, with previous approval of ICDS' Academic Director. All major changes will be provided to the student in writing.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY – For reference and background texts.**

**(The updated version and texts that we will be discussing during the course will be posted in the course DROPBOX)**

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- Razavi, Shahrashoub & Carol Miller. *From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. United Nations Development Programme, 1995.
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