

## ***What have been the challenges in your involvement in education for social change?***

### ***How have you met these challenges?***

I haven't had any obstacles lately but early in my career it was the jobs for the boys mentality

Curriculum coordinator - rural secondary school (1)

Keep breathing :)

Principal

- Always resistance from men - why don't we have men's support groups as well type of argument.
- Limited professional development in recent times, although issues like Girls and IT are on EQ agenda.
- Professional development and resources regarding position of women tend to be dated.

Principal -Band 7 (1)

Number one obstacle has always been the lack of long-term commitment to issues.

Social change is a long-term process.

I have often been frustrated by the quick fix/tokenistic approach.

Project Officer (1)

I have not been in any AWE  
PD or association activities.

Senior Policy Officer (1)

- Too few people to carry things forward.
- We have many who are seriously interested in social justice issues however this needs to be seen as important by 'leaders'.
- There are so many issues and priorities - people lack the energy and time more so than the will. Burn out is an issue for those who are truly committed.
- I do not believe the obstacles are overcome.
- There is no simple response.
- Committed leadership may help.

Education Officer Curriculum - Publications and Special Projects (1)

I have always been determined to act in an open, transparent and ethical manner. Therefore, I ask questions continually, and support leadership from the grass roots in all that I do. I am always grateful to those leaders who have reached out to me on a human level - who have shown warmth and encouragement. As a Principal, I now mentor other new and acting Principals - and I have found this to be a powerful relationship builder on the part of the mentor and mentee.

Secondary school principal (1)

At work I do a similar job as my husband but get half the pay. The PD is in the same industry and we have all the same issues.

The only obstacle would be the high level of competing demands and limited resources such as time and money!

Deputy Regional Director (1)

I have been very active in my home country but here the language and familiarity with the system and the ways around the city is still an obstacle to overcome.

I really enjoy political participation but connect this with your daily work in some way or work in a place that can tolerate political engagement is

## Funding for programs

How to evaluate programs to get more funding...

Ph. D. Student and volunteer for girls in ICT (1)

As an ED student the curriculum is a major obstacle.

Student (1)

I remain involved as much as I can - in the last couple of years the SA group has not been functioning.

Chaplain (1)

## Obstacles –

- Patriarchal society

## Meeting challenges –

- Organising Women's Liberation events on IWD
- Forming Gender Equity (formerly Counter - Sexism, a much more powerful name) Committees on various school staffs
- Writing up 'Gender Equity at Canberra High School' and having it published 1986.
- Writing/ teaching curriculum for gender studies at school and university

Social Policy Committee Member - National Foundation for Australian Women (1)

## Time to undertake research and develop a program;

## working in my own time...

Business & Technology Co-ordinator - Urban secondary school

Unfortunately operating independently is a quiet little unheard voice!

Lecturer and Co-ordinator – TAFE (1)

The hardest challenge is changing people's attitudes and beliefs. I have found a lot of discrimination occurs due to genuine ignorance. People don't know what they don't know. Helping them (gently and with dignity intact) see another perspective is hard work but very rewarding. (Through conversations, research, in the field activities, etc).

Principal – Townsville (1)

I am unable to define particular obstacles and challenges at the moment. However, I focus on doing what I thought was good in my education, and I focus on getting tertiary students to think for themselves and critique ideologies to enable them to be informed and independent.

Lecturer in Curriculum and Teacher Education (1)

In brief the main obstacle is that gender justice is not the core business of the schools I work in partnership with. That has created the challenge of finding ways to make it relevant, meaningful and efficient for them to partake in gender justice in their particular context and all its constraints.

The factors that have enabled me to meet these challenges have been the specific funding and resources for my role, the program and for the schools.

School Program Coordinator - Prevention of sexual assault (1)

The ability to balance commitment to the 'now' pressures of family with the challenging of building a better future for my family and community was compounded by financial pressures as a single mum and a keen desire to take on leadership roles. I don't think I have done a great job of finding the balance and try to structure my life as much as possible to make myself commit time to each on a priority basis. Saying 'no' is very difficult and I suppose that 'me' time is probably the lowest priority for me.

Deputy Principal – rural (1)

**Minimal opportunities to attend PD in this area and it isn't seen as a 'hot' topic or flavour of the decade so it is kept below the carpet as such.**

HOD Senior Schooling (1)

*An ongoing challenge is people's mindsets. 'Lifting the veil' and moving people into new ways of being and doing motivates my practice and leadership as an educator. As innovators, we need to model that we can move beyond the perception of a given and received world. I work on multiple levels... with students, teachers, teacher education students, school and tertiary systems... but accept that change happens essentially on an individual level. Being a partner in a person's learning journey and change is very special and motivates me to keep going in finding better more humane and sustainable ways of living and learning.*

Lecturer (1)

Quite honestly, I have met few obstacles in my career other than a recent challenge indicating that my "rise" to seniority had been too rapid... I sense this is a generational difference in perspective - the tension between an older, staid view of sticking with your career and what I would see as a career where the learning happens through a range of diverse experiences in different positions.

Regional Director (1)

- *Obstacles: area of expertise IT - little opportunity to demonstrate to wider community the skills, school leaders have most contact with Maths, Science, and English teachers.*
- *Partially Overcome: took a two-year secondment to a country school as Deputy Principal. Moved to Qld to take a permanent Deputy Principal position.*
- *Health issues - difficult to ignore that assumptions are made about abilities when walking can be difficult.*
- *Overcome: by always having a positive attitude, manner, expectations etc and ignoring what does not contribute to achieving goals.*

Deputy Principal (1)

Sorry I don't have an answer to this ... the main obstacle for me with anything is time... not enough time to commit to activities outside of the direct focus of my current senior leadership role... except through working with individual female leaders in my sphere of influence.

Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education (1)

**Discrimination. Ignorance. Fear.**

**Medication helps.**

Secondary teacher (1)

One of the biggest obstacles is how women in a competitive workplace thwart gender equity.

Women becoming like their male leader (counterparts) in behaviour etc (to advance their individual station) allows the present status quo to remain.

Meritocracy perhaps is about taking on the dominant persona/culture and being 'rewarded' for this and in doing so ensuring the gulf or divide remains among genders.

Lecturer (1)

There have not been any direct obstacles. It is just addressing the general inequities and under currents of equality for men and women. We need equity for students in teaching is discussed and researched in classes.

Secondary teacher (1)

*The main obstacles were not being able to be mobile before the merit process was introduced.*

Executive Director Schools (1)

1. Leading Social Change project. (2009). The Association of Women Educators. [www.awe.asn.au](http://www.awe.asn.au)
2. Piecing it Together: Understanding the Construction of Gender Training Module. (1996). Education Queensland.