



Networking and gender action plans – the solutions to all our problems?

C.M. Goodess

Climatic Research Unit, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia,
Norwich, UK (c.goodess@uea.ac.uk)

All European Union (EU) funded integrated projects and networks in the 6th Framework Programme are required to have a Gender Action Plan (GAP). Lack of specific funding for gender activities means, however, that GAPs are constrained in what can be achieved. Thus the ENSEMBLES GAP (http://ensembles-eu.metoffice.com/Gender_Action_Plan/gap_index.html) focuses on awareness raising (e.g., through role models) and networking activities. Links have also been made with gender activities in other EU projects, including ACCENT - which gives the opportunity to link in to mentoring activities. Based on the ENSEMBLES experience, some ways in which EU gender activities could be improved, particularly with respect to their co-ordination and funding, are suggested. Networking activities at the European level are clearly harder to co-ordinate and organise than more local activities. The potential success of the latter is illustrated by ResNet (<http://www.uea.ac.uk/csed/resnet/>), the network for women in research at the University of East Anglia. While both ENSEMBLES and ResNet demonstrate the importance of networking for women researchers, this may raise some tensions in the desire for mainstreaming of gender issues.