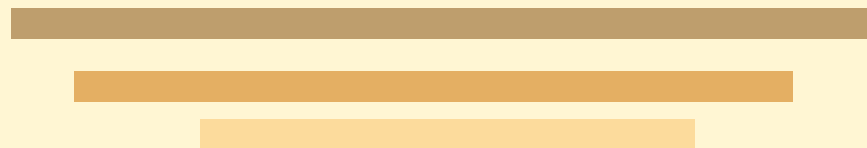


# NUR & femSTEP Photovoice Exercise

*Female participation in higher education:  
Challenges and solutions*

June 2011



# Participants

NUR Sociology students attending the third year  
Research Methods class

With Prof. Jean- Paul Habineza and Dr. Simeon Wiehler

In partnership with

FemSTEP of McGill University, Canada:

Drs. Myriam Gervais and Claudia Mitchell, and Lysanne Rivard

# Exercise Topic

- Presentation of photovoice method:  
Theoretical perspectives and practical implications
- On-site practical exercise of the photovoice method: *Challenges and solutions of female participation in higher education*

# Context and Background Information

## Secondary school statistics

- Only 13% of men and 11% of women reach secondary school level, with only 1% of the general population reaching higher education levels.

*(Ministry of Education, Kigali, 2009)*

## Higher education

- Only a small number of girls are admitted in higher learning institutions and few complete their studies as there are many gender barriers and challenges to the participation of female students.

# Context and Background Information

## Gender barriers in Education

- Although poverty and low levels of achievement are the main reasons of primary school dropout, girls who, as a result of traditional gender roles, are given household responsibilities, consistently underperform at school.
- Many girls are victims of rape, defilement, become pregnant and are forced to get married before they complete their studies.
- The girls who reach higher education face challenges linked to gender based violence, discouragement, unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and STDs leading too many to drop out of school.

# Research Method: Photovoice

## What is Photovoice?

- Photovoice is a participatory research methodology where the participants themselves take photos in order to further explore the topic of research.
- Based on the belief that photos can help to better explore complex or sensitive topics, photovoice enables the research participants to reflect on their daily lives, to identify problems as they perceive them and to facilitate the formulation of their own solutions to these problems.

*(Gervais & Rivard, 2010)*

# Photovoice Activity with NUR Students

- Where: NUR Sociology students attending the third year Research Methods class
- When: June 2011
- Participants: 80 students
- Questions: *What are the challenges to female participation in higher education? What are the solutions?*

# Photovoice Activity with NUR Students

Step 1: Learning how to use the camera





# Photovoice Activity with NUR Students

Step 2: Discussion of ideas and taking pictures



# Photovoice Activity with NUR Students

## Step 3: Sharing the results



# Results

## Cause

- “Lack of adequate boarding facilities”



## Solution

- “Providing proper dormitories”



# Results

## Cause

- Gender based violence or harassment on campus



## Solution

- Teachers promoting equality between female and male students



# Results

## Cause

- “Sugardaddies”



## Solution

- Saying “No”



# Results

## Cause

- Unwanted pregnancies



## Solution

- Staying in school



# Results

## Cause

- Shortage of girls in class



## Solution

- Government supporting female participation



# Observations

- Social sciences students understand the photovoice method as demonstrated by their ability to implement a practical exercise on an issue of concern.
- The students are capable of analyzing and communicating their suggestions of solutions.



# Contributions

With special thanks to the NUR Authorities and the professors of the department of Social Sciences for the opportunity given to femSTEP/McGill University (Canada) to present the photovoice research method.

With special thanks to NUR Sociology students for their participation to this photovoice exercise.

femSTEP is a multidisciplinary research project led by McGill University researchers who study gender and rural poverty in Africa. <http://femstep.mcgill.ca>