

## TALKING GENDER

**A MILESTONE** in the struggle of women has been reached at the University of the Western Cape, where a pioneering series of workshops with the theme "Talking Gender" is attracting interest from adult educators in West, East and central Africa.

The first week-long workshop, hosted by the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (Cace), brought together 40 women educators from literacy, service, health, development and religious organisations and trade unions in South Africa.

This month the two-part series - the first national, residential workshop of its kind held in the country - will end with a three-day session for the women who attended the initial workshop in October.

In the interim Cace director Shirley Walters attended the Second Assembly of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) in Mauritius, where key African educators asked to be kept informed of developments.

These included the Kenyan co-ordinator of an African feminist network called Femnet, a representative of the UN agency Unifem, and delegates from Gambia, Uganda and Mali. A similar series of workshops for women within the AALAE network may be held in future.

The first Cace workshop deployed popular education methods - drawing on women's own day to day experiences - to encourage active, collective, creative participation as questions like the following were explored:

- How do we ensure that women's subordination is not simply carried over into the next



Researcher Nontobeko Mofokeng, left. Althea MacQuene of Ilrig and Miza Matwana of Cace, right

**By Liz Mackenzie**

for a living wage. Women's oppression is not taken seriously as part of that, but it is an essential part of fighting for a new order."

Both she and Tasneem Essop of the South African Municipal Workers Union said that an important element of the workshop series was experiencing the support of a network of women committed to eradicating gender inequalities.

Essop added that the first workshop had started to challenge old ideas and "made real inside you the things you couldn't articulate before".

Because this workshop was the first of its kind here, the planning group felt it was important to confine it to women initially. This would empower a national core group of women to take this work further, using participatory methods.

International says Walters

"We asked for a response or to be trained to act on their organisations."

## A VITAL

Cace works with Conway. At the gender studies workshop and the workshop's main focus of running projects.

Her clarification process enabled her to be the first to

She emphasised the "women's