

WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS
INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of the Newsletter for an International Network of people interested in Women and the Environment. This editorial expresses the hopes we have for the Newsletter and the possible purposes which it might fulfill. "We" are Becky Peterson, Gerda Wekerle and David Morley at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada.

This network emerged out of contacts we made first at Habitat, the U.N. Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver, Canada. We felt that many women who we met there would like to keep in contact with one another, and that there was sufficient vitality and interest associated with this whole area to warrant the initiation of this Newsletter.

Since announcing the network at Habitat considerable interest has been expressed and we are including a list of all the people who have asked to be put on the mailing list to date. In addition, this mailing is going out to a number of people who we personally think would be interested in the network. If you are one of those people and your name is not listed in this issue, please tear off the form at the end of this editorial and mail it to us.

The objectives of the network as stated at Habitat were:

- to increase the level of awareness that women are a separate group of users of any given environment with specific needs
- to demonstrate the inequality and inefficiency associated with many human environments in relation to the needs of women

- to increase the extent to which women intervene directly in the planning, design, and management of environments of particular concern to them
- to increase women's access to those environments in which they are commonly discouraged or excluded.

There are a number of purposes which this Newsletter could perform:

As a vehicle for the sharing of personal experiences in a common area of concern.

As a means for sharing of information on existing groups concerned with women and environments issues; on bibliographies, reviews of books, articles and magazines relevant to these concerns; on ongoing research projects; and on ongoing courses, conferences or other meetings.

To provide information on ongoing intervention projects and policy matters related to women and environments.

To share descriptions of jobs that are emerging in this field or potential sources of funding in this area.

To establish contacts for women travelling and working on these issues.

This is a range of possible objectives. The Newsletter and network are yours and we are waiting to hear what you consider the priorities to be. Which of the above listed purposes would best serve your needs? What other things could be included in the Newsletter that you would like to see?

There are a number of issues to be ironed out in the early stages in the operation of this kind of network. We would like your opinions on how you feel this type of operation should be funded. At the moment we are open to receiving contributions! We have no immediate

source of funds so it may be necessary to establish a subscription fee for the next issue. Is that a good idea in your view? Do you know of alternate sources of funds which we might go after? We are waiting to hear from you. The Newsletter will depend on your responses. Its yours! The next issue of the Newsletter will go out on January 15 and we would like submissions by January 1st.

WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS NETWORK

I am interested in participating in your proposed information-sharing network.

Name _____

Address _____

Nature of interests in women and environments:

Announcing a Book on
WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS

Edited by David Morley
Rebecca Peterson
Gerda Wekerle
Faculty of Environmental Studies,
York University, Toronto, Canada

This is to introduce a prospective book on the subject of women and environments which emerges from the recognition that important changes are taking place in the way women view themselves and relate to their environments. The editors contend that it is necessary to examine the specific environmental needs of women in a wide range of behaviour settings. This provides insights into the rising consciousness of women, and their demands for equality; and to turn around many of the common place issues relating to human environments and open them to new and revealing scrutiny.

This book will be based on four sets of questions:

- 1) To what extent is it useful to distinguish women as a separate group of users in any given environment?...How may we classify such environments?
- 2) If women can be identified as a significant and distinct user group, what assumptions are implicit regarding the roles women will play in the design of particular environments?...What limiting effect does this have on the range of behaviour carried out by women?
- 3) To what extent are women involved in the conscious design and modification of a given environment?
- 4) If women can be identified as an important group of separate users, but are not playing a decision making role in environmental design, how did this discrepancy come about and how can it be modified?
- 5) What are the implications for human environments of a more effective woman's role in their planning, design and management?

We are interested in receiving papers or proposals for papers responding to any combination of these questions. Contributions may take a variety of forms reflecting both completed work or experience, or be exploratory discussions of the issues. They could include:

- reports on original research on women in particular environments, or using women as a general category of users in relation to a variety of environments.
- the results of secondary data analysis on women in social, institutional and physical environmental settings.
- descriptive analysis of intervention in environments by women:
 - as professionals
 - as institutional decision makers
 - as users/consumers
 - as community leaders
- theoretical or conceptual frameworks to guide the study of women and environment.
- reminiscences and recollections - including autobiographical statements.
- photographs, drawings, poems, cartoons, etc.

We hope that the book will include papers from a range of disciplinary, professional and personal standpoints. If you have worked on this topic or are carrying out work, please contact us for further information. We hope to put together the book early in 1977. If you are interested in your work being represented in the book, please complete the attachment and mail it to us. The deadline for proposals and outline drafts in response to this statement is December 15, 1976.

To: David Morley
Becky Peterson
Gerda Wekerle
Faculty of Environmental Studies,
York University, 4700 Keele St.,
Downsview, Ontario. M3J 2R2.

I am interested in contributing to the proposed book
WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS which you are editing. My
submission is entitled _____

and would cover the following ground:

I enclose an outline and could submit a draft by

Name _____

Address _____

REPORT FROM HABITAT FORUM -- UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
CONFERENCE, VANCOUVER, JUNE, 1976 -- SESSIONS ON
WOMEN IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Sessions which dealt with issues relating to women in human settlements included "Women and Human Settlements - Opportunities and Challenges for the Future" with a keynote address by Margaret Mead; "Women: The Neglected Resource" with Rosemary Brown, member of the legislative assembly of the province of British Columbia, Canada. Both sessions attracted large audiences of approximately 500 persons. Smaller workshops were also held on the topics of "Town Planning and Women" with Vivienne Hotz and Jean McHardy and "Women and Environments" with Rebecca Peterson, Gerda Wekerle and David Morley. This is only a report of two sessions we attended and we invite further discussions of these and other sessions at Habitat.

Continuing themes raised in these sessions, and in others not focussing specifically on women, related to women's right to representation in planning decisions which affect their environment and daily lives and the social costs borne by women who must cope with the deficiencies of Human Settlements. Many women noted the almost total absence of women on official delegations to the UN Conference (approximately 30 women out of 500 delegates) and a manifesto was drafted and submitted to official delegations which called for increased participation by women in all decision-making processes, but particularly those related to settlement policies, at every level of government.

Margaret Mead pointed out that women's tasks have historically related to food storage and production, children and house. As women move into policy-making and the design and planning of human communities, they must bring these traditional concerns with them. She emphasized that it is the women who suffer when villages are located far from fuel and water. Because women are concerned about food storage, childrens' safety, and how settlements can accomodate future population growth, their participation in the planning processes can bring these issues to the fore.

At the same session, Mr. Iskanda from UNICEF gave some examples of international aid agencies which have tended to unconsciously export male-dominated models of organization to developing countries. In the Philippines, women are active in managing the household money and marketing, while technology tends to be male-dominated.

When experts from the U.N. set up agricultural co-ops, males were placed at the head of them and women were excluded (based on the western model of agriculture).. The co-ops ran into difficulties when money was mismanaged by men who had little experience with money-management -- traditionally a female role.

Our session on Women and Environments provided an opportunity for a lively discussion and exchange among the approximately 100 participants. The discussion centred on the segregation of environments by sex, the extent to which women are involved in the conscious design and modification of environments, and the priorities for women in human settlements in terms of environmental needs.

Discussion focussed on the physical segregation of women in the home and how this is related to their segregation in the labour force and lack of power. One participant pointed out that women in the Third World often plan the houses or set them up, but they do not have power in other realms. In developed countries, women try to take back into their hands the power to create the home environment, but this does not mean that they are integrated into the planning function or the general and societal power structure. Another participant felt that the segregation of women occurs because of the separation of work and home. She felt that the main emphasis should be the redefinition of the home as a place of work which would affect not only the role of women, but also the scale of cities, energy use, and so forth. She also called for greater attention in settlements planning to the relationships of services, e.g., shops to homes and the needs of women. A woman associated with H.U.D. in the U.S. felt that zoning was very important as it affects women in New Towns, businesses in the home, family daycare. A number of women emphasized the need for women to be involved in planning at the local level, on planning boards and to become planners and architects, as male town planners, architects, and engineers find it impossible to put themselves into women's shoes and plan for their needs.

Basic issues related to the needs of rural women in current settlement planning are the supply of basic services, ie., the location of water and availability of appropriate technology to assist in garden production of food, food preparation, carrying fuel. In the past aid programs to developing countries have often exported western views of male dominance which only exacerbated the problems of rural women.

Recent publications:

Mayra Buvinic. Women and World Development: An Annotated Bibliography. Overseas Development Council, 1976, \$2.50. Irene Tinker and Michele Bramsen. Women and World Development. Overseas Development Council, 1976, \$3.50. Includes articles on the role of women in agriculture, the adverse impact of development on women; women in cities.

Overseas Development Council, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 501, Washington, D.C. 20036.

