

WOMEN'S EDUCATION DES FEMMES

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Women's EDUCATION des femmes

OLDER WOMEN AND EDUCATION

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SUBMISSIONS

WEdf invites all readers to submit articles, ideas, humour in all forms, commentary, reviews and resources. Due to a backlog, poetry submissions will not be accepted until further notice. Please send submissions care of the Editor, WEdf, 47 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4E 2V6.

Material should be non-sexist, non-racist and about women written with a feminist perspective. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope to have materials returned. Writer's guidelines are available.

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WOMEN'S

ÉDUCATION DES

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Perspective from the West: Life-long Learning for Older Women



*Jenny Shaw, co-editor for this issue of **Women's Education des femmes**, is an adult educator, specializing in gerontology. She lives in Vancouver.*

BY JENNY SHAW

As an "older woman" who has been actively involved in formal and informal education specifically targetting the senior population for the past six years, I have become increasingly aware that the term "education" can be applied only minimally to learning within an academic setting. In fact, most of what we learn from the time we are born comes to us through everyday experience, observation and social interaction. The tendency to label the current generation of older women as "under-educated" - even illiterate - is, to say the least, misleading. Yes, it is helpful to be able to read well, and to use a computer. But these skills are hardly more valuable or useful than the skills our foremothers had - reducing fever with herbs from the garden, telling stories learned "by heart"; knowing how to "read" the stars and clouds for weather signs; and the care-giving and the guidance women have always given.

All this is not to belittle the value of formal education for women. I encourage the efforts of those who are still struggling to alleviate the difficulties encountered by many older women as they re-enter the education system, often after years of homemaking and care-giving. Unfortunately, education for women is still often considered a privilege and not a right, or a necessity. Especially for women over 50. In spite of "free" university and college tuition for seniors (65 usually being the starting age), there are so many seemingly insurmountable bureaucratic hoops to jump through (registration, eligibility, etc.) that it is surprising that there are as many older students in the system as figures indicate. Exceptions may be the Elderhostel and other programs which have been specifically designed for the older age groups. Programs which meet the specific needs of older women are harder to come by.

Another important issue, which adult educators still have to come to grips with, is the question of accessibility to programs by older women who face the further barriers of discrimination due to colour or ethnocultural group, low income and/or physical disability. As an editor of this special issue of **Women's Education des femmes**, I am conscious that women who are doubly and triply oppressed are not well- represented within these pages. This silence must be addressed.

Finally, I would like to comment on ageism in education from the perspective of a gerontologist. An overwhelming majority of the people working in this field are, like myself, middle-aged (between 45 and 60 years old). Our intention is to improve quality of life for the generation our mothers, and grandmothers, belong to. They are the "subjects" of our research projects which allow us to live comfortable lifestyles. We use them as we have always used our mothers, to fulfill our own needs. Barbara MacDonald, co-author of **Look Me in the Eye: Old Women, Aging and Ageism** (1983, Spinsters' Ink, San Francisco) would call this another example of oppression of mothers by daughters. These older women, who give us their time and expertise, often at real cost to themselves, physically and financially, rarely benefit from the results. We take away the questionnaires, analyze the data, publish an article or two and usually forget to send them a copy, or even a note of thanks. For another look at ageism in gerontology, see Leah Cohen article, on page 31.)

Despite all of these negatives, it has been encouraging to work on this project. The many excellent submissions relating personal experience in the field of education indicate that opportunities for lifelong learning, however rare, do exist and are being utilized. I would like to congratulate and thank all the women who contributed to this issue, including the Advisory Committee members who helped gather and select the final material for publication, which you will read in the following pages.

ÉDITORIAUX

L'apprentissage ininterrompu des femmes d'un certain âge

PAR JENNY SHAW

En tant que "femme d'un certain âge", qui, depuis six ans, s'occupe activement de l'éducation formelle et informelle des personnes du troisième âge, je prends chaque jour davantage conscience que le mot "éducation" ne s'applique que très partiellement à l'apprentissage scolaire. En fait, presque tout ce que nous apprenons dès notre naissance découle de notre expérience quotidienne, de nos observations et de nos échanges avec autrui. La tendance qui veut qu'on étiquette la génération actuelle des femmes d'un certain âge comme étant sous-éduquée, voire analphabète, est pour le moins erronée. Certes, il est utile de savoir lire et se servir d'un ordinateur. Mais, ces compétences ne sont guère plus précieuses que celles que possédaient nos grands-mères et arrière-grands-mères, c'est-à-dire faire tomber la fièvre en concoctant un élixir à base d'herbes, raconter des histoires apprises par cœur, savoir reconnaître les étoiles et les nuages pour prédire le temps, prodiguer des soins et des conseils.

Jenny Shaw, rédactrice associée de ce numéro de **Women's Education des femmes**, est éducatrice des adultes, spécialiste de gérontologie. Elle habite à Vancouver.

Ce qui ne revient pas à dire qu'il faille minimiser l'importance de l'éducation formelle des

femmes. Je défends les efforts de ceux et celles qui luttent pour aplanir les difficultés auxquelles se heurtent beaucoup de femmes d'un certain âge qui reprennent des études après tant d'années passées à s'occuper de leur foyer. Malheureusement, l'éducation des femmes, et en particulier celle des femmes de plus de cinquante ans, est trop souvent encore considérée comme un privilège, et non comme un droit ou une nécessité. En dépit de la gratuité de l'université et des collèges (en général à partir de 65 ans), il existe tant d'obstacles, en apparence insurmontables, (inscription, admissibilité, etc.) qu'on est surpris par l'important effectif d'étudiants du troisième âge inscrit à des cours. Une seule exception peut-être les Elderhostels et autres programmes qui ont été spécifiquement conçus à l'intention des personnes d'un âge avancé.

Il est une autre question importante que les éducateurs et éducatrices adultes doivent s'efforcer de résoudre, celle de l'accessibilité des programmes pour les femmes d'un certain âge qui se heurtent à une discrimination encore plus grande en raison de leur couleur, de leur appartenance ethnique, de leur maigres revenus et/ou d'un handicap physique. En tant que rédactrice de ce numéro spécial de **Women's Education des femmes**, je suis très consciente que les femmes doublement et triplement désavantagées sont mal représentées dans ces pages. Il faut rompre ce silence.

Enfin, je voudrais traiter du vieillissement dans le domaine de l'éducation selon l'optique d'une gérontologue. La majorité des personnes travaillant dans ce secteur sont, comme moi, des femmes d'âge mûr (entre 45 et 60 ans). Notre but: améliorer la qualité de vie de la génération de nos mères et grands-mères. Elles font l'objet de nos recherches, lesquelles nous permettent de mener une existence confortable. Nous nous servons de nos mères comme nous l'avons toujours fait, c'est-à-dire pour satisfaire nos propres besoins. Barbara MacDonald, co-auteure du livre **Look me in the Eye: Old Women, Aging and Ageism** (1983, Spinters Ink, San Francisco), dirait qu'il s'agit d'un autre exemple de l'oppression que les filles exercent sur leurs mères. Ces femmes âgées, qui nous ont consacré leur temps et légué leur expérience, souvent au prix de sacrifices physiques et financiers, tirent rarement parti des résultats obtenus. Nous ramassons les questionnaires, analysons les données, publions un article ou deux et, en général, oublions de leur en envoyer un exemplaire ou, mieux encore un mot de remerciement. (Consultez l'article de Leah Cohen à la page 31 pour avoir une autre optique de la gérontologie et des femmes d'un certain âge.)

En dépit de tous les problèmes, j'ai trouvé des sujets d'encouragement au cours de ce projet. Parmi les textes proposés, nombre d'entre eux relataient des expériences personnelles faites dans le domaine de l'éducation et montraient qu'il existe des possibilités (rares certes, mais que l'on saisit) pour poursuivre toute sa vie son apprentissage. Je voudrais féliciter et remercier toutes les femmes qui ont participé à l'élaboration de ce numéro, dont les membres du comité consultatif qui ont rassemblé et choisi les articles publiés dans les pages qui suivent.

Perspective from the East: Learning to Educate Older Women



Mary Beaudry, co-editor for this issue of **Women's Education des femmes**, is the coordinator of the Gerontology Program at the Collège Marie-Victorin in Montreal.

BY MARY BEAUDRY

Many older women today tend to look upon their later years negatively and with much trepidation. I am inclined to agree when I look at sociological trends.

A large percentage of women over the age of 65 live below the poverty line for many reasons: private and public pension plans discriminate against women; women in general earn less than men and hold lower-status jobs; women have different working patterns than men as they often work for shorter periods of time, and interrupt their paid work, due to responsibilities in the home.

The difficulties of aging are manifold for older women who must often face the stress and pain of widowhood and divorce, a lack of social supports, along with a lowered income and changes to our health and our bodies. Emotional distress, loneliness, loss of self-esteem and, at times, helplessness are not uncommon.

How can the field of education and we as educators respond to these difficult social realities?

Studies by Perry (1980) and Szinovacz (1982) found that women who planned for retirement and carried out their pre-retirement plans reported high retirement satisfaction.

Pre-retirement education began in Canada in the 1950s. Large companies and government offices have held such programs. Today, with slashed budgets, many companies which previously offered these useful courses have discontinued them, leaving women who could have participated, out in the cold.

Educational and social institutions have responded in part to this concern by providing programs for seniors at all levels of education, from high school up to university. Educational programs for older women do exist. The questions are: "do older women participate in them?" and, if they don't, "what is stopping them?"

Our challenge is not only in convincing women that education is available, viable and beneficial. Educating older women about education, reaching women who ordinarily would not join a social or educational program and educating educators about the special needs of older women are issues to be dealt with before we can "sell" our programs.

It is my hope that this issue of *Women's Education des femmes* will help promote awareness and understanding surrounding issues of older women and education.

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ÉDITORIAUX

Améliorer l'éducation pour les femmes âgées

PAR MARY BEAUDRY

À l'heure actuelle, beaucoup de femmes d'un certain âge envisagent la dernière tranche de leur vie avec une vive inquiétude et de façon négative. Les tendances sociologiques me poussent à être d'accord avec elles.

Un pourcentage élevé de femmes âgées de plus de soixante-cinq ans vivent pour maintes raisons sous le seuil de pauvreté: les régimes de retraite privés et publics sont discriminatoires à l'égard des femmes; en général, les femmes gagnent moins que les hommes et occupent des emplois subalternes; les femmes travaillent différemment des hommes car elles occupent un emploi pendant des périodes plus courtes et interrompent leurs activités professionnelles en raison de leurs responsabilités familiales.

Vieillir comporte beaucoup de difficultés pour les femmes d'un certain âge: elles doivent souvent surmonter le stress et la douleur que leur cause leur veuvage ou un divorce, elles manquent socialement de soutien, leur revenu baisse, leur santé se détériore et leurs corps

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change. Détresse, solitude, perte de confiance en soi, voire quelquefois l'incapacité de s'en sortir, sont courantes.

Comment le monde de l'éducation et nous, les éducatrices, pouvons-nous remédier à cette grave réalité dans notre société? Les études de Perry (1980) et Szinovacz (1982) indiquent que les femmes qui planifient leur retraite et mettent à exécution leurs projets tirent beaucoup de satisfaction de cette période de leur vie.

Au Canada, on a commencé à mettre sur pied des cours de préparation à la retraite dans les années cinquante. Les grandes compagnies et la fonction publique en offrirent à leur personnel. À l'heure actuelle, en raison des coupures de budget, beaucoup de compagnies ont été obligées de mettre un terme à ces cours utiles, laissant ainsi en plan les femmes qui auraient pu les prendre.

Les établissements scolaires et les institutions sociales ont en partie pris la relève en offrant aux personnes de l'âge d'or des programmes éducatifs du niveau secondaire au niveau universitaire. Il existe donc des programmes éducatifs pour les femmes. La question qui se pose à ce propos est la suivante: "Est-ce que les femmes d'un certain âge y participent?" et sinon "qu' est-ce qui les arrête?"

Le défi qui se pose à nous est de persuader les femmes qu'il existe des cours durables et utiles. Avant de pouvoir "vendre" nos programmes, nous devons mettre au courant les femmes sur les cours disponibles, atteindre celles qui normalement ne s'inscriraient pas à un programme social ou d'apprentissage et indiquer aux éducateurs et éducatrices quels sont les besoins spéciaux des femmes d'un certain âge.

J'espère que ce numéro de *Women's Education des femmes* permettra de sensibiliser nos lectrices à toutes les questions ayant trait à l'éducation des femmes d'un certain âge.

Perry, Glenys (1980). *The Need for Retirement Planning and Counselling*. **Canadian Counsellor**. 14:97-98

Szinovacz, M. (1982) **Women's Retirement**. California: Sage.

Gaining Visibility: Older Women and Education

***I am luminous
with age***

***Meridel LeSueur,
"Rites of Ancient
Ripening" from
Ripening: Selected
Works 1927-80***

BY SHARON HAROLD

During the past three years of studying and working in the area of education for older adults, I have become aware of the general "invisibility" of older women, although in fact, they are the fastest growing sector of the Canadian population and far outnumber older men. By the 21st Century, there will be anywhere from 3.75 to 4 million women 65 and over in Canada - about 14-15 % of the total population (Statistics Canada, 1985). Due to our greater

longevity, women outnumber men increasingly as we age.*

A huge proportion of older women in Canada are living in poverty (between 60 and 78%, Gee and Kimball, 1987). Inflation and the lack of affordable housing make the problem of poverty for Canada's aging women all the more devastating (Task Force on Older Women, 1983). The increasing number of older women and their high rates of poverty, unemployment and health risks are a challenge to governments to develop resources and services that will contribute to their well-being. However, many of the problems women face in the later years have less to do with aging itself, than with the inequities women experience throughout their lives. We have to re-think what it means to be "old" and to be "female" in our culture. Until we do, aging and old age will be predominantly a "women's issue" (Gee and Kimball, 1987; McDaniel, 1989; Roebuck, 1983).

Comment rendre leur présence plus manifeste

Les recherches que Sharon Harold a effectuées sur les femmes d'un certain âge lui ont fait prendre conscience que ces femmes étaient absentes des recherches en sciences sociales et des services sociaux. Bien que ces femmes représentent le segment démographique dont l'effectif augmente le plus rapidement (les femmes d'un certain âge sont beaucoup plus nombreuses que les hommes d'un certain âge), on ne s'est pas préoccupé jusqu'à présent de leurs besoins et de leurs problèmes.

Certaines des difficultés qu'éprouvent les femmes d'un certain âge, dont la pauvreté, le chômage et le fait d'être tenues à l'écart, relèvent moins de leur âge que des inégalités qu'elles ont connu toute leur vie en tant que problèmes de la vieillesse sont étrangement semblables à ceux auxquels se heurtent les femmes et plongent leurs racines dans notre société ou le sexisme et le manque de respect des vieux et vieilles sont bien ancrés.

Il n'existe presque pas de programmes éducatifs conçus spécifiquement à l'intention des femmes d'un certain âge. Les programmes pour les personnes du troisième âge mettent davantage l'accent sur les besoins récréatifs de ce groupe d'âge, au lieu de s'attacher à leurs besoins concrets, cont perfectionnement professionnelle et acquisition de

compétences. Sharon Harold propose un programme pour se pencher sur les besoins en matière d'éducation des femmes d'un certain âge.

The Invisible Majority

Aging women are still the "invisible majority" of elderly in Canada, despite their increasing numbers. Until the 1970s, older women had gone virtually unrecognized in academic literature in gerontology, sociology and women's studies. Aging research has paid little attention to sex differences, and research on sex differences has rarely included the later years (Gatz et al, 1984). Research on aging and sex differences have ignored the reality of older women's lives, ignoring in turn how sexism and the social construction of old age has contributed to older women's low morale, diminished self-esteem and lack of confidence.

The social sciences have been dominated by a male middle-class bias, and this has served to invalidate the unique experiences and perspectives of women. Studies on aging have usually considered older men and women as a homogeneous, asexual group, as Dulude (1988) has stated,

"The ultimate irony, for women, is that after a lifetime of having a multitude of mythical qualities and failings attributed to them because of their sex, they are suddenly told that these differences between the sexes no longer exist." (P. 204)

Feminism has begun to correct this bias, but most research on women has concentrated on younger and middle-aged women, just as most active feminist lobbying has focussed on issues as they affect women's early and middle adult years. No doubt, changes made now will positively affect the lives of future older women, but the process is a slow and indirect one. McDaniel (1989) has suggested that combining the sociology of aging with the sociology of women will result in more and better research on older women, while the increasing pressure from women, especially "greying" feminists, will force policy-makers to consider the needs of older women.

Ageism is Sexism

Age and sex, being the two dominant ways of organizing people in most societies, are used to define appropriate roles, behaviours and attitudes, as well as to bestow privileges, positions and sanctions upon individuals. Many of the "problems" of older age are uncannily similar to the "problems" of women, and are rooted in our ageist and sexist society. Depression and loneliness are all too characteristic of many women's experiences in their later years.

In a broader social context, growing old returns individuals to the "private" world of domesticity and isolates them from the social and economic relations of the "public"

world. In this sense, ageism encountered by elderly men may simply introduce them to the fact that they are now treated "more like women": as increasingly dependent, vulnerable, and marginal. Aging is, for the most part, a "feminized state" (Roebuck, 1983), characterized by low status, economic vulnerability and social exclusion.

Educational Provision for Older Women

Current educational opportunities for older women are almost nonexistent. The majority of social, recreational and educational programs designed for later life are based on a personal growth concept that is highly individualistic and directed toward the "expressive" needs of seniors. These programs are normally provided through seniors' centres, continuing education departments and community centers, and offer hobby, fitness, artistic and literary activities. In themselves, these programs provide an opportunity for social and personal development but fall short of being instrumental in significantly altering the well-being of aging women or changing either personal or societal concepts about old age and old women. Although studies have indicated that older women prefer expressive activities as opposed to instrumental ones (like career advancement), the reasons for this are not entirely clear. We know that for many elderly women, education has not figured positively or prominently in their lives. Older women have been socialized to have low expectations of what is available to them in the way of educational programming. And older women often have low expectations of themselves - they experience feelings of being "too old", "too dumb" or of it being "too late".

Educational gerontologists support an approach to "senior" education which focuses on helping seniors to make the transition into later life. Consequently, older adult education is geared either to leisure-oriented, expressive activities or to programs designed to help the elderly cope with late life transitions related to health, family and retirement.

Older women, for the most part, do not participate in women's self-help groups or feminist-related educational activities (Borkman, 1982), although their feminist numbers are growing. They are more often found in seniors' advocacy groups or health-related organizations. Volunteer work figures prominently in the lives of aging women where the care-giving role - a familiar one - is continued.

However, given the current and difficult situations that older women find themselves in, the need for resource development through education is crucial. There are many active, informed and educated older women involved in seniors' advocacy groups and many of the concerns that they are voicing are concerns of *older women*, although they are voiced under the neutral banner of "seniors' rights". Given the current political climate of anti-feminism, perhaps this is a wise, if perhaps unconscious, strategy. The danger in this, however, is that, as the most highly serviced of any age group, older women are viewed as being the beneficiaries and consumers of costly social programs.

Until older women strike at the heart of the discrimination against them, in the form of negative valuing and lack of recognition for their past and potential contributions to society, little change can be expected. The role of education in directing and encouraging these changes may be a slow but inevitably powerful one if we begin to develop truly educational opportunities for older women.

Recommendations

Educational programs for older women:

- Programs assisting midlife and older women in developing vocational skills and career advancement.
- Appropriate and accessible personal, academic and career counselling.
- Educational opportunities for developing individual and collective strategies to counteract ageism and sexism.
- Programs designed to assist with transitions related to the aging process, including health, relationships, finances, and retirement.
- Education to develop management, organizational, and leadership skills for personal advancement and for public and political advocacy roles.
- Funded outreach and recruitment incentives to involve isolated and hard-to-reach groups of older women in community education programs.

Programmes éducatifs dont ont besoin les femmes d'un certain âge

- Des programmes permettant aux femmes d'âge mûr et aux femmes plus âgées d'acquérir des compétences professionnelles et de progresser dans leur carrière.
- Des services de counselling individuelles, scolaires et professionnels pertinents et accessibles.
- Des occasions d'apprentissage pour élaborer des stratégies individuelles et collectives de façon à neutraliser le sexisme et l'attitude négative à l'égard des personnes vieillissantes.
- Des programmes visant à aider les femmes à procéder à une transition due au vieillissement, dont santé, relations, finances et retraite.
- Cours d'éducation pour perfectionner les compétences de femme en matière de gestion, d'organisation et de leadership de façon qu'elles puissent se perfectionner et jouer publiquement et politiquement un rôle de défense.

Opening up Our Future

Older women deserve a tremendous amount of respect and appreciation, particularly from those of us who stand on the threshold of our own middle and old age. Never has a generation of women experienced the degree of change and upheaval in their social and personal lives as has the current cohort of women who are now in their 60s, 70s and 80s and older. These are not "disadvantaged" women, but women whose accomplishments, talents, perseverance and strengths have gone unnoticed, often unappreciated and undervalued. The situations that many older women find themselves in are often the result of social forces beyond their control. Educational opportunities have not kept pace with the demands and challenges they have faced and continue to face in negotiating phenomenal personal and social transitions during the later period of their lives. In exploring these issues with our mothers, grandmothers and older friends, younger women have much to learn. Unless we ask, their knowledge will be buried in silence. It is all too easy for us to forget that old age is the common territory of everyone and that the current generation of elderly women are the pioneers of what will inevitably be our inherited homeland. As we help to open doors to their present lives, we are, in turn, opening the doors to our own future.

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Education for Public Awareness

- Presentation through the media of positive images of older women to dispel negative stereotypes.
- Education of employers about the abilities and potential of older women as persons with multiple and transferable skills, and incentives for employers to hire older women.
- Incorporation of age and gender issues into disciplines such as social science, economics, history, etc.
- Research on income, housing, transportation and employment issues related to age and gender.

Policy and Funding Issues

- Advocacy at all levels of government to develop and promote equitable policy in employment, health care, pensions, domestic relationships, and education for older women.
- Educational funding through scholarships, apprenticeships and subsidies for older re-entry women.
- Financial support for developing cooperative enterprises, community networks

and shared resource exchange.

- Recognition and support of caregivers and caregiving roles for and by older women through funding, respite services, education and compensation.
- Promotion and funding of research on women's aging through grants and scholarships.

Campagne visant à sensibiliser le public

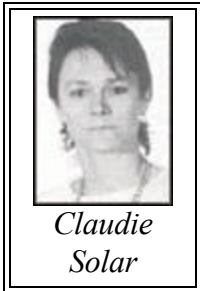
- Présentation par l'intermédiaire des médias d'images positives des femmes d'un certain âge et les inciter à embaucher des femmes d'un certain âge.
- Traiter dans les matières scolaires, comme les sciences sociales, l'économie, l'histoire, etc., de questions portant sur l'âge et les deux sexes.
- Procéder à des recherches sur des questions relatives au revenu, au logement, au transport et à l'emploi par rapport à l'âge et au sexe.

Mesures et subventions à envisager

- Faire pression tous les niveaux de gouvernement pour promouvoir une politique équitable à l'égard des femmes d'un certain âge dans tous les domaines.
- Dans le domaine de l'éducation, octroi de subventions par le biais de bourses, de stage d'apprentissage et de subsides pour les femmes réintégrant marché du travail.
- Appui financier pour mettre sur pied des entreprises coopératives, des réseaux communautaires et des échanges de ressources.
- Reconnaître et appuyer les personnes qui prodiguent des soins aux femmes d'un certain âge.
- Grâce à des subventions et des bourses, promotion et financement des recherches effectuées sur le vieillissement des femmes.

Parcours de formation

PAR CLAUDIE SOLAR



Si l'on est Québécoise et que l'on a cinquante ans ou plus en 1990, cela veut dire que l'on est née en 1940 ou avant. En termes politiques, cela signifie que l'on est né à une époque au Québec où les femmes n'avaient pas le statut de citoyenne, bien qu'elles l'aient eu au niveau fédéral où elles étaient reconnues comme des personnes.

Au niveau de l'éducation, cela signifie qu'elles étaient enfants quand l'instruction publique devint obligatoire en 1943 et l'enseignement secondaire du cours classique gratuit en 1945. Elles ont fréquenté l'école avant la démocratisation des années 60 et la réforme scolaire qui a suivi le rapport Parent. Surtout, elles ont grandi alors que l'instruction des filles était encore jugée sans importance. C'est donc dire que les femmes de cinquante ans et plus ont sûrement suivi une formation qui:

- ne dépasse pas le primaire
- est teintée par l'enseignement religieux et les travaux ménagers¹
- se déroule dans les instituts familiaux ou "écoles du bonheur"²
- prépare professionnellement au secrétariat, aux soins infirmiers ou à l'enseignement
- valorise essentiellement les rôles de mère et d'épouse.

De toutes façons, la formation repose sur le principe qu'il existe une nature féminine³ ce qui teinte bien sûr le contenu enseigné mais aussi la relation pédagogique. Ce principe entâche les valeurs transmises du sceau de la soumission et du dévouement aux autres. La formation possède un caractère masculin⁴ qui s'inscrit dans un système patriarcal.

Certaines femmes connaissent un parcours différent puisque les religieuses leur ont ouvert les portes des collèges classiques⁵ et que les universités leur ouvriront progressivement les leur emboitant le pas par la suite les établissements professionnels.⁶ Mais ces femmes appartiennent à l'élite de la classe riche ou tout au moins aisée car la formation est coûteuse. Elles sont donc peu nombreuses celles qui ont connu une formation générale semblable à celles des garçons.⁷ Encore fallait-il qu'elles puissent se servir de cette formation⁸ sur le marché du travail.

Older Quebec Women's Education

BY CLAUDIE SOLAR

Older Quebecois women, this article reminds us, were born into a time in Quebec history that denied women the rights of citizenship. And they were 'educated' in a society and a school system that did not consider girls' education to be important.

As a result, most of today's older Quebecois women would have received, as girls, a short and ghettoized educational experience. If they had professional training, it was most often in preparation for secretarial work, teaching or nursing. But for the most part they were trained to be wives and mothers, while the reality of women's lives, and their history, were ignored.

For all of these reasons, and more, women who worked outside the home come to the work force ill - prepared. But women had few options for improving their skills. Some entered institutions for adult education where they encountered yet another patriarchal system, which did no more than send capable women (back) into a work force that exploited women in low-paying job ghettos and refused their advancement.

For women seeking learning opportunities other than professional training, there was little available. Women established their own non-institutional networks to teach themselves, and other women, what they needed to know. They formed community groups, feminist groups, groups for social change. It was in these groups that many women, now older, had their first brush with feminism.

Many women who did not find their way into groups found learning opportunities on their own. They sought their learning through books, films, conferences, talks with friends and other forms of culture. In this way, women could develop the skills of their choice, based specifically on their own needs.

One by one, group by group, many Quebecois women came into feminist consciousness, drawing the links between the realities and oppression in their own lives, and in the lives of other women.

Claudie Solar is inspired by the ingenuity of these older women in finding the education they needed, without institutional or social support. She notes, however, that as feminist knowledge filters into the patriarchal institutions of learning, it will continue to reach more and more women.

Parmi les conséquences de cette formation, mentionnons une éducation générale limitée (histoire, géographie, économie ou sciences) et une absence totale de connaissances sur les femmes, leurs contributions et leur histoire. Le savoir transmis est un savoir d'hommes sur leur monde et sur la façon dont ils voient ce monde.

Si nombre de femmes se sont mariées et ont arrêté leurs activités professionnelles dès le mariage⁹ ou à la naissance de leurs enfants, d'autres ont dû assumer seules leur subsistance. Même parmi celles mariées, beaucoup ont été obligées d'intégrer le marché du travail.

Quelle que soit la raison, ces femmes ont été handicapées sur le marché du travail en raison de leur formation limitée, voire déficiente. Il ne leur restait qu'à se perfectionner, à se recycler ou à recommencer. C'est ce que nombre d'entre elles firent sur les bancs des établissements d'éducation des adultes. Cette formation est à son tour teintée par sa masculinité. Les institutions de formation ont profité avec cette clientèle peu exigeante d'une manne lucrative. Elle a profité aussi au milieu du travail qui a bénéficié d'une main d'oeuvre à bon marché bien qualifiée. En revanche, les femmes n'ont pas eu accès ou peu à des postes intéressants ou n'étaient pas promues comme elles l'ambitionnaient parfois. Cette formation ne faisait que rendre le marché du travail accessible ou ne permettait aux femmes que de se maintenir en emploi.

La formation n'a pas toutefois pour but unique le marché de l'emploi. Nombre de personnes veulent acquérir de nouvelles connaissances pour le plaisir d'en savoir plus, pour améliorer leurs compétences autres que professionnelles (musique, peinture, art.), pour acquérir des compétences sur l'éducation des enfants, la nutrition, etc. Enfin, certaines cherchent à mieux comprendre le monde dans lequel elles vivent. Pour toutes ces raisons, les femmes ont eu à recourir à des réseaux de formation souvent non institutionnels car les connaissances qu'elles cherchaient ne sont pas inscrites dans les savoirs officiels ou y sont discréditées¹⁰.

C'est sans doute dans ces réseaux non institutionnels que les femmes ont été le mieux servies. Non gérée par des pouvoirs masculins, élaboré en fonction des besoins des femmes, la formation dans les groupes communautaires et dans les groupes de femmes a été pour les femmes de 50 et plus, communautaires et dans les groupes de femmes a été pour les femmes de 50 et plus, et est encore aujourd'hui pour les plus jeunes un lieu où la formation est adaptée à leur demande. C'est dans cette optique qu'il faut voir la formation offerte par les groupes de femmes. Que ce soient l'AFEAS¹¹, de la FFQ¹², le Cercle des fermières, Nouveau Départ, les Cercles de lecture, etc., tous ces organismes ont pour objectif d'outiller les femmes en fonction de leurs objectifs de vie. Ils respectent leur rythme et leurs besoins. Ils ont aussi pour particularité de transmettre un savoir revu et corrigé en fonction de la situation des femmes et de transmettre des connaissances sur les femmes et leurs réalités quotidiennes. C'est donc dans des groupes de femmes que des milliers de femmes ont reçu leur première formation féministe, laquelle s'est conjuguée aux efforts politiques des gouvernements canadiens et internationaux.¹³

Toutes les femmes n'ont pas nécessairement fait des - démarches collectives, de groupe. Certaines ont mené leur quête de formation de façon autonome et seules. Ce sont alors les livres, les films, les conférences, leurs dialogues avec des amies, le théâtre, les chansons qui ont été leurs cahiers de formation. Elles y ont puisé les connaissances qu'elles recherchaient. Quête parfois systématique une fois les questions devenues claires et quête aussi au hasard de la découverte selon le parcours de vie. Elles ont également appris à travers leurs actions, chemin faisant.

Ce parcours d'autoformation, je l'ai étudié auprès de dix femmes¹⁴, militantes féministes dans des groupes de femmes. Trois d'entre elles avaient 50 ans et plus. Elles ont acquis leurs connaissances sur les femmes précisément de cette façon-là: en lisant, en écoutant, en regardant, en questionnant, en dialoguant, en contestant, en apprenant à voir ce qu'elles ne voyaient pas auparavant. Parfois seules, parfois en groupes, pas nécessairement de femmes ni féministes, parfois dans l'action politique ou encore au travail.



Au Collège Marie-Victorin à Montréal

La démarche féministe de ces trois femmes contraste avec celles des plus jeunes car elle a été plus douce. La transformation s'est faite sans révolte, sans rupture abrupte. Elle s'est faite au fil des jours en mutation, de concert avec la transformation des rôles sociaux des femmes. J'en conclus qu'elles ont été éduquées selon un modèle de femme qui existaient encore largement à cette époque. Qu'elles l'ont expérimenté pour ensuite l'analyser, le critiquer. Qu'une insatisfaction croissante

les a amenées à un questionnement global et qu'elles ont entrepris de trouver une place sociale qui leur convient mieux et correspond davantage à leurs aspirations et à leurs croyances. Elles ont surtout développé un savoir qui correspond à leur réalité et à la réalité des femmes en tant que groupe social fondamental dans leur démarche féministe. Il en constitue le pilier central. Il cimenter l'ensemble des connaissances sur les femmes en un tout cohérent. Il galvanise des connaissances autrement éparpillées.

Que dire en conclusion de ce bref survol des parcours de formation des femmes de 50 ans et plus. D'abord que, les parcours sont multiples au cours d'une vie. Ensuite, que la formation institutionnelle, scolaire, a souvent été étroite, toujours limitée, jamais respectueuse de l'histoire des femmes et de leurs apports. Elle a rarement servi les femmes. Et puis, il faut reconnaître l'ingéniosité des femmes, leur persévérance à trouver ou développer des savoirs et à les transmettre. Enfin, il faut noter les parcours d'autoformation et leur importance puisqu'ils offrent à la femme la possibilité de développer sa propre expertise selon l'orientation qu'elle a choisie. C'est une démarche dont la femme est la seule juge; elle l'évalue en fonction de ses critères et en fonction de ses besoins propres.

D'ailleurs, aussi longtemps que les savoirs féministes n'auront pas pénétrés subversivement les institutions de savoir et de formation, ils ne pourront être acquis que

dans des parcours autonomes, ce que j'appelle des démarches féministes.

Claudie Solar occupe le poste de conseillère auprès du recteur sur le statut des femmes à l'Université Concordia, à Montréal.

END NOTES

¹ CLIO (collectif) (1982). **L'histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles.** Montréal: Quinze.

² Thivierge, Nicole (1983). *L'enseignement ménager. 1880- 1970* dans Fahmy-Eid, Radia et Dumont, Micheline. **Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d'école.** Montréal: Boréal Express. 119-142.

³ Fahmy-Eid, Nadia et Thivierge, Nicole (1983). *L'éducation des filles au Québec et en France (1880- 1930): une analyse comparée* dans Fahmy-Eid, Nadia et Dumont, Micheline. **Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d'école.** Montréal: Boréal Express. 191-220.

⁴ Solar, Claudie (1985). *Le caractère masculin de l'éducation.* **Revue des sciences de l'éducation.** Vol XI. No 2.277-294

⁵ Le premier collège classique féminin, le Collège Marguerite Bourgeois, ouvre ses portes en 1908.

⁶ En 1930, c'est la médecine et la comptabilité; en 1941, le droit; en 1956, le notariat.

⁷ Spender, Dale (1981b). *Education: The Patriarchal Paradigm and the Response to Feminism* dans Spender Dale. **Men's Studies Modified** Oxford, New York: Pergamon Press. 155-173.

⁸ Des Carries-Bélanger, Francine (1980). **L'école rose...et les cols roses.** Laval: Albert Saint- Martin & CEQ.

⁹ Dans certains milieux, les femmes n'avaient plus le droit d'exercer leur profession une fois mariées. C'était le cas notamment à la CECM qui n'abolit ce règlement qu'à la fin des années 60. ¹⁰ Pour s'en convaincre, il suffit de regarder le sort et le statut réservés aux activités dites socio-culturelles en éducation des adultes en milieu institutionnel. L'ensemble de ces activités doivent règle générale s'autofinancer et ne reçoivent en conséquence peu de budget, voire aucun. La situation est forte différente pour la formation professionnelle.

¹¹ Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale.

¹² Fédération des femmes du Québec.

¹³ Il faut garder en mémoire que les femmes dont nous parlons plus spécifiquement dans cet article avaient 26 ans et plus lors de la réforme du système scolaire, 35 et plus lors de l'année internationale des femmes, 45 et plus à la fin de la décennie des femmes.

¹⁴ Solar, Claudie (1988). **Les connaissances liées à la transformation du cadre de référence dans la démarche féministe.** Thèse de doctorat. Faculté des études supérieures. Université de Montréal.

Social Health Education with Older Women

BY GRACE HODGINS

This article is about an innovative, educational programme designed for, and in collaboration with, older women. The Social Health Outreach Programme (SHOP) has helped middle-aged and older women increase their sense of self through a strengthening of their personal and social resources. SHOP provides an educational model which can inform program planning initiatives geared toward increasing the independence and self-esteem of older women.

SHOP originated as a program of the First Mature Women's Network Society in Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Beverly Burnside, one of the society's founding members, initiated SHOP as a means of addressing the depression evident in many women seeking membership. She developed and tested SHOP as a social 'treatment' for depression. Burnside (1990) has authored two comprehensive SHOP manuals which are geared to both leaders and participants. One is a background resource manual and the other is a leader's 'how to' guide. These manuals provide a wealth of useful information relevant for those planning educational programs for older women.

Although SHOP originated as a social therapy for depressed women, it can be readily adapted to a wide range of groups. I had the opportunity to modify the basic SHOP format and conduct two 20 session programs with a total of 15 women aged 58 to 76. This article outlines the aims and content of my version of SHOP. In addition, I will highlight program features which, in my view, contribute most to its effectiveness as an educational program for older women.

The Rationale for SHOP

SHOP is based on two main premises. The first is that all people have a basic need to identify themselves as valued members of society. Value or status is conferred through achieved, rather than ascribed, roles. Those who lack opportunities to participate in achievement roles have a vulnerable social identity (Sarbin, 1970). Helping participants achieve a healthy social identity is the aim of SHOP.

The second premise buttressing SHOP is that a large personal social network, with ties to the wider community, will contribute to a healthy social identity.

Un programme éducatif destiné aux femmes d'un certain âge

Cet article met en relief le bien-fondé, les objectifs et le contenu d'un programme éducatif destiné aux femmes d'un certain âge. Le Social Health Outreach Program (Programme d'extension sur la santé sociale), qu'a élaboré Beverley Burnside, vise à aider les femmes à prendre conscience de leur valeur personnelle et à exercer un contrôle plus grand sur leur vie. Ce programme repose sur une idée clé : chaque personne a fondamentalement besoin de croire qu'elle est précieuse à la société. Le but du programme est d'aider les femmes d'un certain âge à se doter d'une identité sociale nette en consolidant leurs réseaux de soutien personnels.

Grace Hodgins a dirigé un atelier de vingt séances s'inspirant de ce programme. Parmi les sujets abordés, citons : Qu'est-ce que la santé sociale?; Optiques divergentes sur les causes de démoralisation et dépression; insomnies; les médicaments, les précautions à prendre et les problèmes de sécurité. Les participantes se sont "réoutillées" en acquérant ou en affûtant certaines compétences (résolution de problèmes et savoir communiquer dans une situation difficile, par exemple).

Grace Hodgins estime que le programme est un outil éducatif précieux car il aide les femmes d'un certain âge à tirer parti de leurs propres expériences pour se doter de nouvelles compétences, lier des amitiés et créer les réseaux sociaux dont elles ont besoin pour se sentir bien et exercer un contrôle plus grand sur leur vie.

Program Goals and Outline

The main aim of SHOP is to help women build or maintain a healthy social identity. This is accomplished by helping them to augment their personal social networks and to increase their participation in rewarding social roles. SHOP goals are listed below.

Goals of SHOP

To help participants:

1. Define social health and understand what contributes to it.
2. Gain knowledge about issues related to demoralization and depression.
3. Evaluate the health of their social networks using a mapping technique.
4. Establish goals for augmenting their social networks.
5. Develop or refurbish the skills needed to reach their social goals.
6. Identify a community role that is of

interest to them.

The twenty session version of SHOP included the following topics:

- Introduction to SHOP.
- Social Roles, Participation and Selfworth.
- Introduction to the Social Network.
- "Self Talk": What it is and How to Monitor it.
- Differing Views on the Cause(s) of Depression.
- Enhancing "Self Talk". Thought Stopping Techniques.
- Medications: Precautions and Safety Issues.
- Dealing with Sleep Problems.
- Introduction to Communication.
- Increasing Your Success in Social Communication.
- Communicating in Difficult Situations.
- Social Networks.
- Social Networks and Health.
- Problem Solving.
- Goal Setting.
- "Taking Stock" - Strengths Inventory.
- Rediscovering Interests and Abilities.
- Volunteer, educational and recreational
- Evaluation and Wrap-up.

What makes SHOP effective with Older Women?

Part of the developmental work of SHOP has been to evaluate and revise the program based on observations and feedback from participants. I had the opportunity, while conducting SHOP over a seven month period, to consider which program features are particularly useful for older women. These are highlighted below.

The knowledge component of SHOP provides a framework for women to analyze their experience. They clarify which social roles they occupy and analyze how their roles have shaped their day-to-day social "space" or environment.

"What I have learned coming to SHOP is that I can think."

From there, they reflect on how their social environment influences their identity and sense of self worth. They consider the view that self-worth is shaped by contextual, rather than individual, factors. This introduces the notion of looking outward, instead of inward, for a way to prevent or resolve demoralization and depression. For many of the SHOP participants it was empowering to stop blaming themselves for feelings of low morale and uselessness.

In SHOP women create their own definition of social health. From there, they move on to learn or hone skills which enable them to feel and act like valuable and effective participants in their social world. Throughout the sessions the personal social network is emphasized. Early in the program women create a map of their own network. Later in the program each participant evaluates her network to identify any gaps or deficiencies. The women are then encouraged to set social goals to strengthen their networks and to increase their participation in rewarding roles.

Some of the women's comments reflect their response to the knowledge and skills component of SHOP. One woman said, "What I have learned coming to SHOP is that I can think". In relation to the network mapping exercise the women commented as follows: "just looking at this map makes me realize I've got some building to do"; "I've realized I'm relying too much on my daughter for support" and, "I need more community involvement". Almost all of the women reported that setting social goals, or any goals, for themselves was a new and difficult experience. The consensus was that in their lives planning for themselves had been contingent on the needs of others.

Many of the women did not come to SHOP For their own well being but because they were bored and looking for an interesting activity to structure their time. Several women emphasized that they appreciated "SHOP's learning activities as challenging but something they could handle. One woman noted that she felt very aware of her lack of knowledge from not having been as much of a reader as the others. However, she reported feeling comfortable in the group and attendee all but one session.

The learning activities in SHOP build on the women's life experiences. Through reflection on their own experiences participants reframe their view of themselves from 'the one to be blamed' to 'the one who has endured, often through trying and hostile life circumstances'. One woman wrote that SHOP was helpful because "it encouraged or forced me to think and remember positive events and some successes in my life which rarely if EVER think of as important at all." Another woman commented, "you know, I learn so much from listening to these other women. I feel like I was shut out from the world for so many years due to illness." In the problem-solving session women work together to identify problems and create strategies for resolving them. After this session one woman observed "I wish I had known this before."

Group interaction adds an essential mutual support dimension to SHOP. There is relief in realizing one is not alone with a problem. As one woman said, "when I came to SHOP I was desperately anxious to see someone ... I thought I would learn something helpful and that just coming to the group would be helpful... others would have somewhat the same experience." Participation in group discussions enabled women to, literally, strengthen their voices. Three of the women had difficulty expressing themselves verbally when they started SHOP. All of them improved their voice fluency and power as the program progressed. The group discussions and coffee breaks enabled the women to get to know each other and exchange support. Four of the women took noticeably better care of their appearance as the program progressed. Some of the women from both groups are still keeping in contact with each other.

Setting up SHOP programs at two different seniors' centres enabled the women to forge some links with the community. A representative from both centres met with the women, both in class and informally, to discuss opportunities for involvement in educational or recreational programs and volunteering. The women responded positively to this. In the second group, three women - previously uninvolved at the centre - had already started a new educational program before the SHOP sessions ended.

To conclude, SHOP has much to contribute as a model for educational programming with older women. This article suggests that the aspects of SHOP which contribute most to its effectiveness with older women are: the knowledge component which provides a framework for women to gain some new insights about their experience; the learning of skills which enable women to take greater control of their lives; the reflection on and learning from their own experiences which help women reframe their view of themselves; the group interaction which provides encouragement, friendship and support; and finally, the non-formal community setting which promotes links to the wider community.

Grace Hodgins is a graduate student in the department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia.

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Woman's Song
by Gert Beadle

I want to go for broke.
I want to risk it all,
feel the day I'm in,
hear tomorrow call.

The kernel in the straw
is what I'm after,
I want to peel the orange
and crack the nut of laughter

I want the love in loving,
I want the salt in tears,
I want the sweat in striving,
I want no wasted years

I want to walk beside you,
matching you, stride for stride.
I want to be separate, together,
not half of a dream that died.

*Learning people:
an older woman's education through activism*

BY VI THOMPSON

***"We decided to
work together
to get more
women elected
to Parliament
and Women for
Political Action
was born."***

"You don't learn anything at Nursery School" the boys jeered. "Yes I do" retorted Chris, "I learn people." Chris at four years old knew that learning people was basic to all education.

I became an older woman in the late sixties. Haphazardly a new phase of education began for me. It all started at a workshop on Quebec and its right to self-determination. I remember very little about the political discussion; that weekend my learning was personal. For four days no one asked if I was married, if I have children, or if I worked. They related to me as a person, a woman in my own right.

I began attending Friends' House, the Toronto meeting place of the Quakers where there is no paid minister, no set order of services, no prayers or hymns. Everyone is expected to listen and ponder what is I said. Here I learned good listening skills.

I joined Friends' Peace committee and participated in a group focusing on equality of women. The same thoughtful listening operated within this group.

It was at Friends' House that I learned about a meeting called by Kay Macpherson and Moira Armour for February 5, 1972 to discuss "the various ways of improving the proportion of women MPs in a total of 264."

Women for Political Action

About forty women attended the meeting. We decided to work together to get more women elected to Parliament and Women for Political Action was born. And for the first time I began to consider myself a political activist.

Women for Political Action (WPA) met weekly to flesh out goals, policies and principles. We avoided Roberts' Rules of Order. There was no designated president. We took turns chairing the meetings. My turn came. The room was crowded and there were many new faces but I went ahead knowing that no matter what mistakes I made, what hesitations, there would be friendly understanding and support. Only two years earlier I would blush to raise my hand to second a motion at my local Ratepayer' and Residents' Association.

L'apprentissage à travers l'activisme

PAR VI THOMPSON

En 1972 je devins l'un des membres fondateurs de l'organisme s'appelant " Les femmes pour l'action politique ", lequel vise à augmenter le nombre des députées à Ottawa. Cette année-là, le FAP présenta aux élections fédérales deux candidates indépendantes. En participant à une campagne féministe, j'ai appris les méthodes lorsqu' on mène une campagne politique et j'ai découvert, au fil du démarchage électoral, certaines réalités à propos de l'oppression des femmes.

Les résultats de l'élection de 1972 nous ont fait comprendre que, pour arriver à faire élire des femmes, il fallait travailler au sein d'un parti politique.

J'ai pris une part active au Nouveau Parti démocrate, en particulier au Comité des femmes du NPD de l'Ontario, lequel s'attachait à faire changer la politique du parti et à atteindre l'égalité dans tous les comités du parti.

Au cours des campagnes électorales, j'ai rempli différents rôles. En tant que membre de l'association de ma circonscription, j'ai travaillé à différents postes. En tant que déléguée du Conseil provincial, j'ai étudié le budget de la province, assisté à nombre de séances sur les politiques et me suis familiarisée avec maintes questions.

"We spoke of a society where men would not dominate women, where one person would not dominate another and where no group or nation would have dominion over another."

In our discussions on principles and goals we spoke of a society where men would not dominate women, where one person would not dominate another and where no group or nation would have dominion over another. I was overwhelmed. This was an ideal I could work for. Suddenly I wrapped feminism around me for it meant more than a liberation of women: it meant equality between peoples and nations. With equality and no domination, where would be the need for war?

We studied the policies of the three major political parties and found them wanting. We decided that if we wanted to run on a platform that would emphasize women's concerns, we must run independent candidates. Kay Macpherson and Aline Gregory agreed to stand as candidates for the federal election. Kay ran on a platform of peace, environmental and women's issues. Aline chose a straight feminist platform.

We asked Desmond Morton to lead us in a weekend workshop on the running of a political campaign. We learned about the designing of leaflets, we practised canvassing, and we learned necessary details of the Canada Elections Act.

Aline Gregory asked me to work on her campaign. A friend loaned us the use of her basement. We installed a telephone with a call-forward device and we phoned everybody we knew to ask for help and for money. We designed leaflets, silk-screened lawn signs and canvassed. We asked, "May I speak to the woman of the house?" Too often a man answering the door would respond "You don't need to talk to her, I know how she's going to vote" or "She's busy getting dinner" or "She's putting the children to bed". But many women answering the door greeted our message gladly and said "It's time."

I was hooked. Political action had become an addiction. I was already a passive member of the New Democratic Party so at the annual general meeting of my riding association in 1973 I nudged my neighbor and whispered "Please nominate me for member at large."

Meanwhile, WPA continued meeting and working. A national conference was called for June 1973. We studied deterrents to women in politics, the writing of briefs, how to deal with the media and native women's rights. We defined a feminist as being "someone having an acute awareness of the inequality of the status of women in society and a dedication to changing the attitudes and barriers which stand in the way of equality of women". The high point of the conference was the speech Rosemary Brown made to the plenary session. Her statement that "until all of us have made it, none of us have made it" is truly the goal of feminism.

Metro (Toronto) NDP Women's Committee was formed after a 1973 conference in Bolton, Ontario. We held workshops and conferences but, like the provincial women's committee, we had no status within the larger party structure.

"I knocked on doors with one petition and was surprised to hear a woman say, 'Yes, I agree with that, but I'll wait to talk to my husband before I sign.'"

The provincial committee has grown and prospered since that time and now has members on the executive from across Ontario and representation from every region. The result is that the NDP has excellent policy on women's concerns and has achieved parity on all party committees and the executive. In the most recent election, an affirmative action program was in place for women candidates and minorities. And in Ontario, a record number of women (11) are members of the Cabinet.

Running for Office

After the federal election of 1974 WPA friends urged me to run for East York Borough Council. I wrote my own literature with much editing from my committee. I asked for help and criticism of my public speaking and I knocked on doors. I will always remember the first door of that campaign. A man opened the door and seeing the leaflet in my hand said "Politicians! You're all alike" and slammed the door in my face.

I learned firsthand the difficulties facing women candidates running for office. I could not afford to take time off from work so I would finish a full day's work at the daycare centre, rush home, grab a bite and go out for two or three hours of canvassing. I was exhausted when election day came. My committee consisted of WPA members, riding activists and friends from my local Ratepayers' and Residents' Association. We finished the campaign with 20% of the vote and no debts.

In 1978 I retired from my work with small children. I missed them but looked forward to all that wonderful time to use as I pleased.

I looked at the possibility of getting a university degree but I did not think I could mix depth of study with political action. I took a weekly morning class in creative writing and even here politics invaded, for my stories often had a feminist theme.

Now as a senior citizen I became a member of Voice of Women (VOW) and learned to demonstrate, to write letters to MPs and to petition. I knocked on doors with one petition and was surprised to hear a woman say "Yes, I agree with that, but I'll wait to talk to my husband before I sign".

In my work with my riding association I have served as president, membership secretary and as provincial council delegate. At provincial council I looked at provincial budgets, debated strategies and attended policy sessions. I have become comfortable with a microphone, leading workshops and speaking to groups. Had I chosen a university course I wonder if I would have become familiar with all the issues that concern us as people - as women - or if I would merely have achieved a greater depth of knowledge in English Literature or history? Through political action I have learned people.

Vi Thompson, born in 1913, former daycare worker, has spent the last twenty years working in women's organizations and in the New Democratic Party.

Learning to Help Ourselves: Support Groups for Older Farm Women

BY OLLIE MILLER

Ella¹ couldn't come to the village for the support group ². I wanted to find out what was keeping her from coming.

So, at twilight I drove to her farm to hear her story - thirteen kilometers north over snow drifts on a grid road, then west, past the few occupied farms, until the road ran out. I felt isolation creep over me as I drove. When I arrived at Ella's, I knew the isolation had come to live with her many years ago.

She was gracious, yet over-eager in her welcome; it had been so long since she'd had company. She spoke hurriedly, as if time would run out before she'd have time to tell me enough.

Ella left home at fifteen to escape an abusive farm family, only to marry into a similar one. *"After forty-one years of marriage, shoveling grain and hard farm work seven days a week, I feel forgotten, swept under the rug. Our age group has been too busy and too isolated on the farm."*

As she told her story, I became aware that Ella's marriage had been a grinding wheel of abuse. It began with her husband putting her down, correcting her, calling her names. Then after her only child was killed and Ella suffered a breakdown, he kept telling her she was "crazy". Threats followed: "If you ever walk out of this house, don't come back." Where can she go? Geographic isolation has her cornered. And so has her husband, who holds the keys to the truck. The telephone party-line limits what she can share with distant neighbors and relatives.

Les cultivatrices d'un certain âge

Ollie Miller se rend chez Ella pour que celle-ci lui parle de sa vie. Ella, qui a cinquante-sept ans, habite dans une ferme éloignée de la Saskatchewan. Elle se sent seule : son mari la menace, la tourmente émotionnellement et financièrement. Ses voisins sont loin et la concurrence de l'industrie agricole la sépare encore davantage d'eux. Ella ne peut avoir recours à aucun système pour l'aider à survivre ou à partir.

Que peuvent faire les femmes se trouvant dans la même situation qu'Ella pour se suffire à elles-mêmes? Elles n'ont aucune éducation et peu de compétences professionnelles à offrir sur le marché du travail. Comment peuvent-elles prendre confiance en elles-

mêmes? Les occasions d'apprentissage se multiplient grâce aux cours d'enseignement par satellite, l'éducation à distance et les collèges régionaux, mais seuls les régions peuplées en tirent parti car elles possèdent un équipement compliqué et cher. Les services existant quant été coupés les listes d'attente sont longues.

Y a-t-il de l'espoir? Nombre de femmes sont fortes, émotionnellement stables, capables de faire face à la réalité et de changer leur existence. Il existe aussi des réseaux de soutien informels, comme ce groupe qui confectionne des courtepointes dans un halte-accueil pour personnes du troisième âge. Quelquefois, les églises guident les groupes de soutien. Et, il arrive que dans les petites villes, où les veuves de cultivateurs sont nombreuses, on crée des groupes d'entraide. Des organismes, comme le Syndicat national des cultivateurs ou les associations de cultivatrices, disposent de groupes qui font pressions pour que surviennent des changements politiques et sociaux.

Le Conseil oecuménique des chrétiennes du Canada a publié un manuel *Sowing Circles of Hope*, qui indique les façons dont les groupes de soutien peuvent enhardir les cultivatrices d'un certain âge. Le Conseil est également en train de préparer un film vidéo qui aura le même titre. On peut commander le manuel et le vidéo auprès du Conseil oecuménique des chrétiennes du Canada, 77 rue Charles Ouest, Toronto (Ontario) M5S 1K5.

"So what can I do to support myself?" Ella asks me. "I have no education and at fifty-seven years of age, I have no job skills beyond driving a grain truck. But worse than that, I have no self-confidence to find work, even if it were available in the dying village." So Ella is reduced to asking her husband for money, dependent up- on him for an allowance.

Where can women like Ella, women who live in isolation in rural Canada, go for support? I want to say: "Find a group with whom you can share your story." But after years of learned self-sufficiency and isolation, it is often difficult for farm women to share personal family issues. How can Ella share herself openly and honestly when she fears the judgments of other people? Would other women think that she was mentally ill? Would they tell her she "shouldn't feel that way"?

Many people believe that farm families look after one another. And in many instances this is true. But the spiraling stress that comes from farm life is felt doubly by the woman who must often cope both with her own stress, and with the abuse that may be misdirected at her and her children by the male farmer. So to whom can the older farm woman turn for support?

Unfortunately, not to her neighbours. The stereotype of farm neighbors helping neighbors has worn thin with current trends in agriculture. Farm economics have forced farmers to compete cruelly with their neighbours for scarce markets. Besides, depopulation and the

trend towards larger farms have significantly increased the distance between neighbours.

Solidarity among farm women is not as common as we might hope. Younger women neighbours are often employed off the farm and experience a vastly different lifestyle from the older farm woman. The older woman's peers may be unskilled at communicating or they may be threatened into silence about "private matters" by their husbands.

Forced to be socially "independent", the older farm woman is often forced to be economically "dependent" on her husband. Although she has worked the land alongside him, it is the male farmer who is considered master. He can, and often does, make important decisions with no input from the older woman, she who has worked tirelessly without pay, without pension and without recognition.

We might ask in frustration why women like Ella don't upgrade their education so that they can get off-farm work like their younger neighbours? Thankfully, educational opportunities are increasingly available through satellite programs.



But these programs require sophisticated and expensive equipment. Regional colleges are found in seven areas of Saskatchewan alone, but the nearest to Ella, for example, is about 140 kilometers away. And her husband still holds the keys.

"We might ask in frustration why women like Ella don't upgrade their education so that they can get off-farm work like their younger neighbours. "

There is hope for the support networks that enable farm women to help each other.

Again, we might ask why women like Ella don't use existing social services. And yes, in some areas across rural Canada, Interval Homes provide refuge to women. But the lists are long and funds are decreasing. Often the remote, isolated woman has no way to get to the services. Public transportation is poor in many rural areas, when it exists.

So where is there hope for older farm women like Ella? In the criss-crossing of rural Saskatchewan, I discovered much about these amazing women. Their physical resilience, spiritual security and their ability to face reality are exemplary. Many women make room for change in their lives, frequently mediating in family conflicts, and providing child care for grandchildren, thereby enabling young mothers to work off the farm.

There is hope for the support networks that enable farm women to help each other. Informal groups do exist - quilters meet in seniors drop-in centers; older mothers gather in long-boarded-up rural schools. Church groups sometimes become safe places for sharing with sensitive leadership from clergy or lay-ministers. Widowed farm women retiring into

small villages, which are largely populated by widows, offer encouragement to one another. Organization such as the National Farmers' Union and agriculture groups specifically for farm women have formed support groups which have even become groups which lobby for change.

A handbook, **Sowing Circles of Hope**, has been written to identify ways in which older farm women can benefit from their participation in support groups. Through the stories of women heard across Saskatchewan, with information on support groups and a resource list, the book offers hope and celebration. A video is being produced with the same name, using a documentary drama format to bring the issues clearly and understandably into view. Both the handbook and the video can be order from the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, 77 Charles Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K5 or by telephone (416) 922-6177. (Handbooks \$3.25 including postage. Video will be available for \$20.00 including postage and handling).

NOTES

1. Ella is a pseudonym. The location of the farm has been concealed to protect her identity; this is a true story.
2. This was a gathering held for a project of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, Support Groups for Older Farm Women in Saskatchewan, funded by the Seniors Independence Program (SIP)

*Ollie Miller is a gerontolgoical social worker living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Her fifteen- month project, **Support Groups for Older Farm Women in Saskatchewan**, ends December 31, 1990.*

PROFILES

Lives Full of Learning:

Four older women from across Canada share their personal stories

Lilja Stefansson, Saskatoon

I was born to an Icelandic family on February 4, 1921, in a farmhouse at Nestfold, P.O., Manitoba. I was a sickly baby, but my mother's insistence that I must live, and her constant care, got me through some perilous times in my first two years.



*by Trudy
Binder*

My formal education began at age seven, the year I learned to speak English. School was two miles away, a fair distance for a lame little girl to walk, so my Dad or older brother tried to drive us to school in inclement weather.

As soon as I was able to read I became totally fascinated with learning. By the time I was 12 years old, my school closed due to lack of students. By then I had finished Grade VII and had read every book in the library, even the Encyclopedia!

I finished Grade VIII at home through correspondence courses with the help of my brother and sister. I recall crying bitterly because my parents could not afford to send me to high school. Since they had had no formal education themselves, they felt Grade VII was enough schooling. Many years later, after a disastrous war marriage left me alone with two children, I moved to Saskatchewan. Here a divorcee could get a Mother's Allowance, which was not possible in Manitoba at that time.

Eventually, I went back to learning again through correspondence courses. In three years I had full Grade XI and five subjects in Grade XII. Then I went out as a study supervisor in a rural school. There I remarried and became a farmer's wife.

I did manage to finish my Grade XII. The first year the Saskatchewan Government offered a scholarship of \$500, I applied and won. So, in spite of having another small child as well as my two older children I managed to attend Teacher's Training College for a year.

To my great disappointment I found teaching was not for me. I ended up in Insurance and Motor Vehicle Licensing and my last job was a very challenging one in the Head Office of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office.

I had difficulty adjusting to retirement until I became involved with the Senior University Group and took some courses. Then I began to feel good about myself again. So here I am, nearly seventy, embarking on a new career in writing, and loving every minute of it.

Doris Burns, Montreal

IN CONVERSATION WITH LANIE MELAMED

"Then I asked myself, 'What do people do when they retire?' I decided to go into the antique business."

Brought up in England, Doris went to a convent school where she remained from the age of 7 until 17 *"It wasn't even high school. In England high school wasn't something you did."* This might have been the end of her academic career but for a series of "happenings" along the way.

Doris came to Canada in 1934, secured the first job she applied for, then got married and stopped working for pay. During the war, she worked as a secretary, but she returned to work in the home when her husband returned from the war.

After her husband died in 1969, Doris decided to return to the paid work force. She was in her 50s at the time and thought it best to brush up on her secretarial skills. She went to Lasalle College where she took courses in the electric typewriter and the dictaphone (which were just coming in at that time). She found a job working in the library at McGill University. *"The job was wonderful. I loved the atmosphere and being in charge of the department. When I got to be 65, I had to retire."* (Had she been able to wait one more year, the mandatory retirement law would have changed.)

Retirement in Doris' case meant starting a new venture: *"Then I asked myself, 'What do people do when they retire?' I decided to go into the antique business. One thing I knew a great deal about was french glass paper weights. And that's what I did. I became the only [person] in Canada to sell paperweights. I travelled, gave talks, and even wrote a book. I was known as 'the paperweight lady'. It was very ego - building."* After 9 years the work become too demanding and she sold the business.

At about this time Doris read in the newspaper that Concordia offered a course for senior people where they didn't have to write exams. She was 71 at the time and hadn't a clue about what to study. Her first choice was a Women's Studies course. *"One thing I did know something about was women's history, having lived through the late Victorian era and the changes for women through the 30s, 40s, and 50s. I never had so much fun in all my life!"*

Her major was English with a minor in art history. The first year Doris took a lot of different courses. *"It gave me a feel for the university, how it worked, what the proofs*

were like, how I would relate to the other people in the class. Those are important things to know for a senior person going into education, especially how they would relate to the other students because of the age difference."

Seven years ago the Elderhostel program was started at Concordia and Doris was asked to be on the committee. Today she is serving her third year as campus coordinator of the entire program.

"I am continually learning all the time. My mind is completely open to everything that is going on. I don't always agree with everything but I can at least listen and learn about it. I am interested in all the modern technologies: computers, word processors, fax machines, anything that has to do with making life smooth, not just washing machines and dryers. I always want to know how it works and why it works and what you have to do to learn. I'm continually learning."

"My experience with the Notre Dame de Grace (NDG) Citizens Council, of which I am co-president, has taught me a lot. This organization has opened my eyes and my mind to the problems that senior women of my generation have to deal with. Most older women are very poor.. .and getting poorer all the time... They are terrified of bureaucracy of all kinds.. timid about trying to get what they should have. They are afraid to disturb the status quo. I'm talking about my generation.. . Women of my generation generally have very poor health, they won't go to doctors, and are frightened of hospitals (I don't blame them). .It really is very sad. (As women get older) there is no place for them to go... Working with the Council has been a learning experience that opened my eyes to something that I never knew existed."

Mary Adele Andrew, Nitassinan

Throughout my lifetime I have both witnessed the good time and bad. I am now 58 years old with 15 surviving children; altogether I have 35 grandchildren. I am very glad to say my first thirty years of life were most happy and rewarding. We, my parents, sisters and other brothers always, year after year, spent 11 months of the year in the country. At times life was hard but we always managed to pull through. We travelled into the country by canoe and as our family got bigger, we used two canoes. Ever since I was six I walked on my own two feet on those endless miles of portages we have encountered. And in my life time I have travelled thousands of miles on our land we Innu call "Nitassinan". Like I said, times were hard but the sense of accomplishment surpassed all feeling of tiredness. As seasons changed we changed our mode of travel from canoe to snowshoe and toboggan, pulling gear and children, trying to reach our final destination, our hunting territory. We moved on when my parents felt we should hunt in another area where animals were more plentiful.

"... our children were schooled to learn another society that was foreign to us and our children..."

Come spring we hunted the geese and ducks and fished. Innu survival in the country depended on the caribou, bear, beaver, rabbit and partridge. Later down the years I was married and had 13 children. My first 4 children were the ones that were very fortunate because they have learned to live off the land with us.

But as the missionaries and governments moved in we were housed and our children were schooled to learn another society that was foreign to us and our children...

Then the flooding at Michikamo happened. My , husband, my parents and my people lost many belongings and canoes. But to me today it really hurts me when I mention that our people's graves were also flooded over. All we Innu could do was bow down our heads in frustration while millions of dollars was flowing out of our land to the government. Next came that the caribou we have been dependent on for thousands of years were suddenly outlawed against us. Many hunters and my husband did not listen to these foreign laws. They kept on hunting caribou to feed their families. But the enforcers of laws kept on raiding camps, Innu homes, charging, arresting and finally jailing Innu hunters. We said to ourselves, "What is wrong with our life-style?" We did not understand. I guess (the governments) were trying to make us dependent on them.

But today our children understand, and that's why we elders are fighting side by side with our children and grandchildren. I guess to this day no elder will die with a broken heart because we see our children trying to do away with the injustice that has been done to us elders, to themselves, to our grandchildren, our culture, our history and our land.

The final blow to the Innu people came to me, the militarization of our land. Life as it is now in the country is very unbearable and when NATO comes, that will be the end of us Innu. We will not be able to live off the land the way our ancestors have for thousands of years. Without land and animals there's no such thing as being Innu. I guess next time you want to see us will be at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, once the governments get their way.

- reprinted with permission from the
Native Women's Resource Centre newsletter,
Women Spirit

Mieke Nyenhuis, Toronto

It was in 1976 that I entered university. I had worked for pay as a teacher and with travel organizations. But in 1976, when my youngest son entered high school, I felt it was time to think of my future. I was 43, had at least 20 working years left in me and thought 'what better way to enter the work-for-pay world than with a degree?' While my children were at elementary school, I had become involved in their education, as an active member of the parents' movement. As president of school committees I realized I needed more information to be able to meet the administration (school and school board) on an equal footing. So it was that in 1976 I entered university and took my first course towards a master's degree in Educational Administration.

"I wonder how much formal university education will contribute towards (economic independence once you've reached a certain age."

The class consisted mostly of teachers who were aspiring to become principals, a few nurses who wanted to become involved in professional development, a school board member and me. All of them, except me, were earning money.

The professor who admitted me to the program assured me: "If you apply yourself there should not be any problem." And did I apply myself! I worked hard, taking one course at a time, writing position papers, doing statistics and gearing up for the finale - the thesis. Meanwhile, I presented briefs for local groups at provincial hearings on adult education and on the restructuring of the elementary school system. I graduated in 1982, ready to tackle the world.

The work world, however, wasn't ready for me. I found that jobs were hard to come by. I was close to 50 and had no tangible experience. I was competing with people who had 15 to 20 years of educational slogging behind them. Any network I might have developed was uprooted when my husband was transferred and I went with him. The jobs I did manage to find were - you guessed it - part-time and low paying. I was a hostess for Elderhostel; I taught English 120 at a local university; I did research for the provincial Status of Women council. I loved the work but the pay did not reflect the time and energy involved.

At CLOW we talk about education leading to economic independence. That is a worthwhile goal, but, in light of my experience, I wonder how much formal university education will contribute towards that goal once you have reached a certain age. Can we reasonably expect an employer to hire someone with no practical experience at the age of 55? If you want the satisfaction of an earned degree, of acquiring new knowledge, of an opening up of the world, take courses and enjoy them. But if your goal is economic independence, I would suggest you look for market-oriented courses, usually available at the community college level. And if taking courses isn't for you, why not try the kinds of learning women have been doing for a long time through fundraising, political involvement at local, regional and national levels; and advocacy for those in need. We don't learn by degrees alone.

About Us: Challenging the Stereotypes

BY BEVERLYJEAN BRUNET

I am a slender, not very tall, older woman. But, I am not a little old lady! Chances are, you aren't either.

If you are fifty-five years of age or older, you probably learned very early on that your role as a female was to look after the needs of others without complaining about any "little" concerns that you might have. Since we often believe ourselves to be insignificant beings, it is not surprising that society continues to support the myth that women, and particularly older women, are unimportant. This is the stuff of which little old ladies are made.

The Example of the Workplace

During interviews for a recent research project on older women and employment, most respondents who were potential employers seemed to value older women workers. A few, however, were outspoken in maintaining that older women should remain invisible, with comments like "What do they have to work for? Their families are all grown up!" and "They can do volunteer work, if they want to, but why don't they just stay home and make cookies?"

We must not allow ourselves to be defined by insensitive and inappropriate stereotypes. We are, after all, persons who have the same basic requirements for life and living as anyone else. We must not allow ourselves to be forgotten or made invisible either. In a document entitled **Older Workers: an Imminent Crisis in the Labour Market** (1985), the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council decided to ignore the concerns of older women: "...in the end, Council felt that this report would deal only with the situation of older workers generally and not delve in to the special problems faced by disabled persons, women and other disadvantaged groups in this age category." In other words, this report, which ultimately led to the federal government's program called "Programs for Older Worker Assistance", only deals with men and any other people who are not considered "disadvantaged".

Contester les stéréotypes

Beverly Jean Brunet étudie la façon dont le mythe de la vieille dame fragile, qui dispose de temps et de loisirs, a contribué à maintenir dans la pauvreté beaucoup de femmes dans les dernières années de leur vie.

La recherche et les programmes sociaux ne se préoccupent souvent pas des besoins spéciaux des femmes d'un certain âge, tandis que le milieu de travail ferme ses portes à celles qui cherchent un emploi rémunéré. Elles décrochent des emplois à temps partiel, mal payés et jonglent souvent entre les responsabilités leur incombant en tant que mères et les soins qu'elles doivent prodiguer à leurs parents vieillissant.

Beverly Jean Brunet estime que les femmes d'un certain âge doivent en toute vérité se raconter leur vie, et la raconter aussi à la société. Elle suggère qu'on atteigne d'autres femmes d'un certain âge qui font partie de groupes communautaires et d'organismes de femmes (comme Older Women's Network) ou qui prennent des cours. En unissant leurs efforts, les femmes d'un certain âge peuvent exiger que surviennent les changements sociaux, juridiques, politiques et économiques dont elles ont besoin, ainsi que tous ceux dont tireraient parti les jeunes filles, les femmes et la population dans son ensemble.

"The reality of many older women's lives is poverty."

Similarly ignoring the needs of older women is **Transitions**, an Ontario government program which offers a grant of up to \$5,000 over a two- year period for employment training for older workers who have been laid off due to plant closures. This program does not take into account many older women's need for income while they are training for a new job.

The reality of many older women's lives is poverty. Often older married women are financially abandoned by spousal death, divorce or desertion. At least one third of Canadian women over the age of 55 lives in poverty. Recently, a non-profit organization in Toronto wich counsels newly single women, reported that almost half of its clients were women over fifty years of age. Many of these older women are living in extreme poverty. In the last year, the number of their clients with incomes of less that \$12,000 a year has doubled due to the increasing number of older women entering its doors.

Meanwhile, the workforce is closing its doors. Older women, we are told time and again, should not get paid employment because we take jobs away from younger people who have the right to work. This is, of course, a myth. Evidence gathered by the United States Department of Labor shows that young people do not fill vacancies left by retiring workers. But, according to studies by Canada Employment and Immigration, older women have learned their lessons well. They are giving up job searches before younger workers, often because they are concerned about taking jobs away from younger people.

Often the only kind of paid employment an older woman can find, when she can find it, is part-time. According to a 1989 report by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, over 40% of new jobs created from 1983 to 1986 were part-time. Service sector jobs were mostly part-time and mostly held by women (70%). Highly educated women have reported the exploitation of their expertise and experience by some employers who

have figured out that they can underpay and under-employ older women, because no one else will hire them.

But older women are still very much in demand...as care-givers. We are expected to give our time freely, and for free. When we were young women many of us stayed in the home, without pay, caring for our spouses and children. If we were single, perhaps we cared for a physically or mentally disabled sibling And /or aging parents.

Today, as aging adults ourselves, we must meet our own needs, sandwiched between the needs of our growing children, their children and the additional needs of our parents. A woman of the "sandwich generation" needs flexible working hours, but she is the only one who seems to realize this. How can she keep from thinking that her struggles are somehow her own fault? All along she has been led to believe that her responsibilities will disappear as she grows old; that she should slow down to enjoy her "twilight years"?

This is not the truth about our lives. In order to begin to have our needs acknowledged, we must tell each other how it really is with us.

Some strategies

Many older women who refuse to be marginalized as "little old ladies" have found sharing thoughts and feelings with other women to be the first step towards a positive self image. Reaching out is perhaps the most difficult part because the hurt, the bewilderment, and the frustration which brings us to the point of speaking out can make us feel like we're the only one. What a surprise and relief it is to discover that the woman with whom we have decided to share our concerns smiles knowingly and says, "yes, I know what it's like, I've been there."

***But, you ask,
who is this
sympathetic
woman for me?***

But, you ask, who is this sympathetic woman for me? Who can I trust? Others have found success in a letter to an old friend with whom they've kept in touch, writing this time about more than the weather, the garden and other people. Some women have allowed themselves to go and explore until they find someone who will talk and who will listen. Sometimes they will move on to another group, another situation, another pen pal, until they find the people they are seeking.

The Older Women's Network (OWN) is an example of what can happen when like-minded older women come together. Within three years of its origin, this group has begun work on a housing co-op and held a creative craft festival. We have started to - archive the oral histories of extraordinary women who consider themselves to be ordinary. We have held forums on a number of issues and we have lobbied in many ways for social, legal, political and economic changes which will benefit older women, girls and women, and



people in general.

When we were very young we were taught to behave in a way which satisfied other people. Our life experiences have taught us that in order to live with self-esteem and dignity, we must be the people we really are. Only when we act on our perception of ourselves as worthwhile human beings will we begin to discover that slowly, as they learn, others will regard us in the same way.

So, if anyone should see you or me sitting in a rocking chair, sipping tea from a bone china cup, let it be because this is what we want to do right now and where we want to do it; not because this is what we ought to be doing, or because we have no place else to , go.

BeverlyJean Brunet is in the first year of her third career. She is an Action Consultant specializing in issues of concern to women. She lives in North York.

OLDER WOMEN AND GERONTOLOGY:

You Inherit Your Model

BY LEAH COHEN

The study of gerontology has rapidly expanded over the last 30 years in response to the growing numbers of old people, particularly older women. Gerontology originally evolved from the medical model which primarily focuses on individual pathology and decline. And despite criticism, the field has never truly developed as multi-disciplinary. This is a serious failing now and will undoubtedly become even more severe in the future as the aging population is expected to double by the year 2020. Since a large proportion of these will be older women living on their own, the social, political and economic outcomes will dramatically alter our society.

Gerontology as an educational process trains the next generation of practitioners who will work with older people. In responding to this need, gerontology has two distinct options: it can continue, as it has in the past, to produce practitioners who function almost exclusively as caregivers and teachers within the confines of the institution, the community and the family. Alternatively it can educate its students to view themselves as advocates and facilitators whose role it is to empower older women and men. The empowerment model encourages older people to live independently and with dignity within a culture that continues to marginalized and devalue its seniors.

LES FEMMES D'UN CERTAIN ÂGE ET LA GÉRONTOLOGIE :

Le legs du modèle en place

PAR LEAH COHEN

La gérontologie, branche de la médecine en pleine expansion, étudie les phénomènes liés au vieillissement et permet de former la prochaine génération de praticien(ne)s qui s'occupera des personnes âgées. Selon Leah Cohen, on peut opter entre deux genres de formation en gérontologie; on peut continuer de former des praticien(ne)s qui se contentent d'être des pourvoyeurs de soins et des enseignants au sein des institutions, et auprès de la collectivité et des familles; ou, mieux encore, on peut apprendre aux élèves à se considérer comme des défenseurs et des animateurs dont le rôle est de doter les personnes âgées d'un certain pouvoir.

En gérontologie, le modèle appliqué à l'heure actuelle en matière d'éducation restreint à la fois les praticiens et les personnes d'un certain âge. Les praticiens qui exercent en première ligne n'ont aucun statut et on ne leur demande pas d'élaborer sérieusement leurs propres idées, ce qui infantilise ces dernières, leur fait perdre leur indépendance, leur sens de l'utilité et leur dignité.

Hormis les médecins qui sont les garants de ce système, la majorité des étudiants en gérontologie se composent de femmes d'âge mûr. Elles choisissent souvent ce domaine car elles se sont déjà occupées de leurs vieux parents. Le modèle d'entraide actuel multiplie les chances que des femmes oppriment d'autres femmes, que les femmes d'âge mûr se mesurent à celles plus âgées, que les filles soient les adversaires de leurs mères.

À l'automne 1989, l'Institut polytechnique Ryerson a mené une enquête dans le cadre de son programme d'éducation permanente en gérontologie. Ce sondage a montré que 87% des participantes se composaient de femmes dont la moyenne d'âge était 43 ans. Parmi elles, 70% prônaient un changement dans la façon dont la formation en gérontologie était abordée. Les étudiantes se disaient préoccupées par leur manque de connaissances sur des questions clés : économie, droit, défense, rôle spécial des femmes, ethnicité et soins de santé. En réponse à cette enquête, un nouveau programme est en train d'être élaboré.

Une question se pose toujours: la gérontologie sera-t-elle en mesure de répondre aux besoins de ses praticien(ne)s et des ses clients, ou continuera-t-elle à suivre un itinéraire érigé et débilitant?

Il est de la plus haute importance que nous comprenions que notre société est en train de créer une nouvelle classe de pauvres, à savoir celle se composant des femmes âgées qui vivent seules (les femmes vivent plus longtemps que les hommes) sont les plus pauvres de tous les pauvres. Si nous n'agissons pas pour modifier les politiques répressives qui ont anéanti les droits des vieilles personnes, nous hériterons de ce

modèle infantilisant éducateurs et éducatrices avons contribué à perpétuer. Contrairement à d'autres problèmes que nous pouvons fuir, le vieillissement est un phénomène universel. Personne n'y échappe.

It is ironic that the majority of caregivers and practitioners in the field of gerontology tend to be older women themselves, often women between 45 and 60 years old. (The exceptions are medical doctors who are "the gatekeepers" of the system.) For many middle-aged women the decision to pursue a certificate or degree in gerontology is the result of having cared for older parents or relatives. Women who are already in the field of gerontology sometimes return to a gerontology program to upgrade themselves. Middle-aged women are the vast majority of volunteers, servicing seniors in residential care and in the community. For these women, the volunteer experience often leads to an interest in paid employment and hence to accreditation in the field.

In the fall of 1989, Ryerson's Continuing Education Certificate Programme in Gerontology conducted a survey of its students which yielded over a 90% response rate. 87% of the respondents were women whose average age was 43. The survey highlighted the changing orientation and interests of these students. Although they traditionally sought to enhance or acquire clinical skills in the treatment of older people, the respondents expressed a new awareness: an emphasis on their need to understand gerontology within an analysis of the broader societal issues. The students were concerned about a gap in their knowledge about such key issues as economics, law, advocacy, ethnicity, health care, and the special role of women. In response, the program is currently developing new courses to buttress and enhance the existing options.

A graduate of the program who sits on the Gerontology Advisory Committee at Ryerson recently informed the committee that her education had not prepared her to come to grips with the sexist and ageist practices, attitudes and policies that she encounters in her work. After years of studying gerontology, and as both a volunteer and paid employee in the field, she urged educators to seriously re-think their own approach. The system, as a practitioner currently encounters it, is rigidly hierarchical and refuses input from the consumer, from families and from front-line workers.

Many other former graduates have expressed frustration that they have not learned how to advocate on behalf of older people and on behalf of themselves as undervalued workers in the field. As the number of old women and men doubles over the next 30 years, there is an opportunity to change the focus of gerontological education, to make it a truly multi-disciplinary field, including such areas as political science, economics, women's studies and public administration. At the present time gerontology is more narrowly focused on behavioural sciences such as psychology, social work, nursing, and perhaps most of all, medicine.

The model of education that has evolved is limiting both for the practitioners and for seniors. Practitioners who work on the front lines do not have status within the profession and are not asked to seriously develop their own ideas, based on their experience. Theirs is a helping role. This serves to infantilize older people, diminishing their sense of autonomy, usefulness and dignity. The current "helping" model fosters the potential for women to oppress other women, pitting the middle aged against the old; daughters against mothers.

Older women are entering the area of gerontology in hopes of pursuing a career in mid-life that is both satisfying and financially viable. The challenge for the educational process is to respond to their real needs, to blend women's experience and clinical knowledge, so that the current and next generation of students will enter the field in a realistic and meaningful way. What is most interesting, at least in the case of the Ryerson survey, is that the students already overwhelmingly identify the problems with their education. If they are given the opportunity, the survey indicated, approximately 70% would embrace a systemic, "realistic" approach to the issues. The question remains, will gerontology respond or remain grounded in its narrow path?

It is critical to understand that our society is in the process of creating a new underclass of poor old women. Since women outlive men, over 60% of us end up living the last quarter of our lives below the national poverty line. Single mothers and old women living on their own are the poorest of the poor in Canada. Unless we act to change the repressive policies that are destroying the idea of entitlement in old age, we will inherit the very model of infantilization and disempowerment that we have helped to perpetuate, both as practitioners and educators. Unlike other issues from which we can abstract and absent ourselves, aging is a universal. No one escapes.

*Leah Cohen is the Coordinator of the Gerontology Certificate Program at Ryerson and is the author of **Small Expectations: Society's Betrayal of Older Women** (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart).*

TO MY HUSBAND

by Alma Stevens

I left you for two minutes.
Why didn't you wait?

I wanted to hold your hand;
I wanted you to know I was there.

Your funeral
was strictly family.

On your casket
wildflowers and tears
held all my love.

I prayed
only to you.

Your chair near the window
Where you sat to paint;
The paint box open,
Three jars for washing brushes,
Prepared paper,
Sketched outline...
All that's missing is you.

Unlearning the stereotypes

BY JEAN M. BUZAN

The basis of all my teaching and writing is to explode many of the myths of aging and thus free older people to fulfill their potential and enjoy their lives to the maximum possible. And this is NOT possible if they are inhibited and frustrated by the acceptance of untrue stereotypes which become self-fulfilling prophesies.

'Stereotype' is defined in one dictionary, in the sense we are using it, as " A person possessing or believed to *possess* (my italics) characteristics or qualities that typify a particular group". So, if we stereotype a person by the term 'old age' we pre-judge that

person by the characteristics and qualities that we believe older people possess.

One of the interesting things I realized when studying stereotyping was that, so far as I or anyone else I have asked can see, whenever one stereotypes a person they always belong to a group to which the stereotype will never belong. But the reverse is true when stereotyping according to old age, as this is a group to which most people will eventually qualify for membership!

One of the phrases which I am constantly striving to have eliminated from our daily language is the seemingly innocuous term, "the elderly". It is constantly used when referring to groups of older adults. But think of the contexts in which it is used; it is usually lumped in with "the poor " and/or "the sick", marginalised and disadvantaged people. If we are described as, and considered marginal, then we will be treated, and we will see ourselves, that way.

After some years of proselytizing about the use of this word "elderly" I looked it up in the dictionary. To my surprise and delight I found it is not a noun but an adverb! So the phrase "the elderly" is incorrect anyway. Later, a letter to an editor brought up the same issue with regard to the word "disabled". The writer pointed out "the word 'disabled' should not be used as a noun, hence the inclusion of the word 'person' after the word 'disabled'." This letter gave me insight into the reason *why* the incorrect phrases are so belittling. For example, if you had never seen me but had been told I was one of "the elderly", whatever description of that group came into your head (based on your learning, experience, etc.) would subconsciously be applied to me, even though it might be nothing like me at all. If, however, I was described as an 'older woman', the second word automatically becomes the noun - what I am -and 'older' is just one of many hundreds of adjectives that could be used to describe me. Some may be complimentary, some not, but altogether they create a complete picture. In the same way using 'disabled' as a noun creates an image of a person with only that characteristic.

Se défaire des stéréotypes

Cet article traite des stéréotypes négatifs dont font l'objet les femmes d'un certain âge et des effets désastreux que ces derniers peuvent avoir sur leur vie. Jean Buzan montre comment notre vocabulaire et notre humour perpétuent ces mythes et empêchent les femmes de s'épanouir pleinement et de profiter de leur vieillesse.

Jean Buzan choisit comme exemple le mythe selon lequel les personnes d'un certain âge ne peuvent plus apprendre et perdent leurs capacités mentales, mythe qui les empêche de profiter pleinement de la vie.

Jean Buzan estime qu'en dévoilant la vérité à propos de leurs capacités aux personnes d'un certain âge et en les incitant à tirer parti des occasions d'apprentissage existant, on peut ouvrir à celles-ci des portes pour qu'elles mènent une existence mieux remplie.

Stereotypes inevitably become part of our attitudes, and they in turn can affect our behaviour and reinforce myths. Take this common example. We have all heard, and perhaps more or less accept, the adage "You can't teach an old dog new tricks". This frequently translates into such ideas as "I'm too old to learn something new" or "one becomes less intelligent as one ages", ideas which can affect our ability and our desire to learn. The problem, however, is larger still. Because, if, as the myth goes, you can't teach an old dog, then why would a society establish learning opportunities for older adults?

Recent research on the brain and learning have shown that it is **not** true that the aging brain necessarily deteriorates. It is also now known that one can continue learning all of one's life, barring of course actual brain damage, which can occur at any age.

Many older people have more leisure time and more opportunities to learn than ever before. Most have always wished they had the opportunity to learn more. Many have felt disadvantaged because of negative experiences in their youth.

Learning should be a joyful experience, though it may not have been so in the past. Older women, perhaps alone and bored, are kept from going to classes because of the 'old dog' myth. If they could be convinced that classes could open new doors for them, and be an adventure, think what it would mean. Longer, happier lives, I'm sure. The life-enhancing possibilities are endless and the door is open - as long as we keep it from being slammed shut by the acceptance of untrue and negative myths.

Jean Buzan, Dip. Ad. Ed., M.A., attended university for the first time while in her fifties. She studied at the University of British Columbia. Thereafter she became Chairperson of Gerontology at Douglas College and initiated studies in the subject in 1973. She 'retired' in 1981 and at 65 is now a freelance consultant and lecturer in Canada and abroad. She is currently writing a book about gerontology.



Older Women Learning: Now and Always

BY MARGARET KIDD



There are a great many doubts to be dispelled about learning and older women. Since the increase in the number of universities in our country in the 50s and with the advent of community colleges in the 60s, there are more opportunities for learning. There are now many alert, older women attending both credit and non-credit courses and completing formal and informal learning programs. Older women CAN and DO learn!

Unfortunately there are still employers and personnel managers who will not accept women over 50, claiming that they are too old to adjust to a new job.

The research tells a different story. Studies now challenge beliefs long held by scientists and the public, and suggest that among those who remain physically and emotionally healthy, intellectual growth can continue throughout a person's life. Research also suggests that declines in intelligence can be reversed in some instances. This view emerges from a broad range of current studies, from recent literature in the field and from interviews with gerontologists, psychologists and researchers in related health sciences. Some have compared the brain to a muscle: it improves with use, and older people who use their brains continue to learn!

Unfortunately social attitudes change slowly and older women have been exposed to "traditional attitudes" for many years. Women over 50 years old in 1990 went to school in the fifties, when they were taught to believe that their participation in the workplace was temporary. Middle class women were expected to stay home and raise families. Working class women were shuffled into low-paying, female job ghettos. Women gave little thought to education required for some career planning and long term goal setting. There was little counselling in those years. School was an experience you lived through; never a means to fulfilment, either personal or economic. Few women came to appreciate the excitement of learning and develop real motivation to continue.

S'instruire encore et toujours

PAR MARGARET KIDD

Il existe tout un éventail de mythes qu'il faut dissiper à propos de l'apprentissage chez les femmes d'un certain âge. Ces femmes peuvent-elles encore s'instruire? À l'heure actuelle, beaucoup de femmes dynamiques appartenant à ce groupe d'âge prennent des cours à unités et des cours non crédités à l'université ou dans des collèges. Aucun

doute: nous avons encore la faculté d'apprendre.

Malheureusement, on rencontre encore des employeurs qui n'acceptent pas d'embaucher des femmes âgées de plus de cinquante ans sous prétexte qu'elles ne sont plus en mesure de s'adapter à un nouvel emploi.

Les recherches vont à l'encontre de cette attitude. Les chercheurs ont prouvé que l'intelligence humaine ne décline pas beaucoup, voire pas du tout, à l'âge d'or. Contrairement à ce qu'on a cru pendant longtemps, le cerveau humain peut assimiler des connaissances pendant presque toute l'existence d'une personne.

Toutefois, tous ces faux concepts n'ont pas encore disparu et continuent d'empêcher les femmes d'un certain âge de tirer parti des occasions d'apprentissage. Bien que les mentalités changent petit à petit, beaucoup de femmes âgées de plus de cinquante ans, ont été amenées à croire que leur participation à la main d'œuvre était temporaire. Très peu de femmes d'un certain âge ont eu l'occasion d'apprécier leurs études et de se sentir motivées à poursuivre celles-ci.

Beaucoup de femmes d'un certain âge affirment que les cours d'éducation des adultes les ont fait sortir de leur torpeur et leur ont fait comprendre qu'elles avaient non seulement les facultés de s'instruire, mais aussi qu'elles n'étaient pas totalement ignorantes!

Pour nombre de femmes d'un certain âge, un nouvel apprentissage ne signifie pas pour autant trouver un emploi rémunéré. Quand leur conjoint meurt ou disparaît, ou au moment de la retraite, les considérations économiques sont cruciales. On ne s'étonnera pas dans ce contexte que, parmi les groupes de pauvres au Canada, les femmes d'un certain âge représentent celui qui augmente le plus rapidement.



Many older women credit adult education experiences as having awakened them to the belief that they have the capacity to become knowledgeable, and that, indeed, they already know something.

Older women, and perhaps most women, need to develop confidence in their own ideas. School, as older women knew it, was a place where you listened. The good, female student tried to please, to fit in, to accept what was taught.

One of the exciting results of women's increasing emancipation is that now many women know that their apparent lack of achievement in formal schooling is not a true predictor of mature academic or "professional" competence. Older women have long organized and

participated in community affairs. We learn on the job, when given the opportunity. We line up to take courses, outnumbering men in part-time and evening programs. We balance and juggle our tremendous responsibilities, in , the home, and in the work place, to fit in educational opportunities. But all too often, our expertise and our skills, the things women bring to the workplace and into the home are undervalued, underpaid and ignored.

The reality of many older women's lives is that new learning opportunities do not always mean paid employment. And, as they adjust to the death or disappearance of a spouse, or to retirement, economic considerations are crucial. Not surprisingly, older women are one of the fastest growing groups of poor Canadians (along with single mothers and their children). Learning is a major tool towards changing this picture.

Societal expectations of older women's learning potential are changing. This is evident in the age range of students in our post-secondary institutions. These educational institutions are beginning to adapt to the increasing needs of older women. Courses leading to employment and to enhancing the quality of life are being offered across the country. The development of Distance Education has made such possibilities available even in more isolated corners of Canada. Increasingly employers as well as unions are providing learning/training opportunities for their staff members. This may not only engender a new sense of accomplishment for older women; it may also lead to a new awareness of the options open to them.

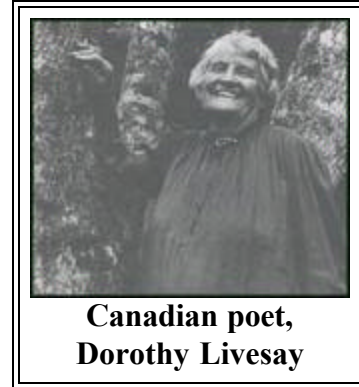
Women are becoming more skilled, more self-confident, and more empowered, yet all the battles for opportunities and advancement are not yet won. Employers still subsidize 34% of men's training compared to 14% for women. Certainly equal pay for work of equal value may be a recognized idea, but it is not an actuality.

In our changing world, very few people will spend all of their lives in the same work or profession. Adaptation to change is an imperative. Having adjusted over the years to the many changes which circumstances have thrust upon them, older women are showing the strength of their learning.

Older women are not all the same, although some regard us as a peculiar assemblage!
Some of us were part of that strong group of Pensioners who forced concessions from Prime Minister Mulroney.
Older women can learn.
Older women do learn.

Women must not only convince others that this is so. We need to believe it ourselves.

Margaret Kidd returned to graduate school 30 years after obtaining her first degree in Sociology. She has taught Early Childhood Education and has many years experience as a child-care worker. She is currently involved with New Directions, a Toronto agency for separated, divorced and widowed women.



**RESOURCES
/RESSOURCES**

Educational Opportunities for Older Women Across Canada

NATIONAL GROUPS

ELDERHOSTEL

Founded in 1975 as a non-profit organization, it exists to encourage older adults to develop new interests for the years ahead. Elderhostel offers academic programs in a variety of settings at a very reasonable cost. Programs are usually a week long (except for those overseas). The program material is of general interest to both sexes. However, the majority of participants are single women.

Participants enjoy close contact: they sleep in dormitory-type housing, they eat together and they attend classes and they plan social activities together.

Elderhostel fulfills a need for the older, single woman travelling alone, offering her a comfortable way to see new places in an inexpensive way, with the assurance of friendship and welcome on arrival at the site.

To find out more about Elderhostel, and to get on to their waiting list, write: Elderhostel, 33 Prince Arthur Avenue Suite 300 Toronto, Ontario M5R 1B2

-submitted by Doris Burns

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OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK

The Older Women's Network is a national feminist group which focuses on the issues which particularly affect older women, namely housing, economic security and health.

Membership is open to all women 55 years and older who support the mandate of the Network:

- to raise consciousness of members through the study of feminist literature
- to initiate and support public discussion on issues relevant to the well-being of older women
- to monitor the media so that the image of older women is projected in a positive and realistic way
- to support young women's rights to: equal opportunity; freedom from discrimination, abuse and exploitation; reproductive choice
- to support the needs of children
- to ally with movements for social justice in Canada and abroad

OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK

For more information about the Older Women's Network (OWN), and about membership, write to: Older Women's Network P.O. Box 317 Postal Station Z Toronto, Ontario M5N 2Z5 (416) 483-3234

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ONE VOICE: SENIORS NETWORK CANADA

One Voice is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring a high quality of life for all elderly Canadians. For more information about One Voice, and its services and publications contact: 901-350 Sparks Street Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7R8

NATIONAL FUNDING

NEW HORIZONS PROGRAM

Sponsored by the Department of Health and Welfare Canada, this program encourages Canadian seniors to share their skills and experiences through government-funded projects in the community.

For a complete list of eligibility requirements and to apply, contact the regional office in your province or territory (see the listing under your own region). Or write: Information and Liaison Unit New Horizons Program Health and Welfare Canada Brooke Claxton Building Tunney's Pasture Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5 (613)957-2880

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SENIORS INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

Sponsored by Health and Welfare Canada, this program provides funding to non-profit groups and organization for projects designed to enhance independence and quality of life for seniors.

For a list of eligibility requirements and to apply, contact: Seniors Independence Program Social Services Programs Branch Health and Welfare Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5 (613) 952-9530

SENIORS INDEPENDENCE RESEARCH PROGRAM (SIRP)

This program is designed to encourage and support research on the health and social issues affecting seniors' independence.

For more information contact: Rebecca Bélanger SIRP Coordinator Community Health Division Health Services Directorate Health and Welfare Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B4 (613)954-8089

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MAIRI ST. JOHN MACDONALD SCHOLARSHIP FOR WOMEN RETURNING TO LEARNING

This \$500 scholarship, offered by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) is offered every year to help a Canadian woman return to school to complete her high school education.

Applicants must:

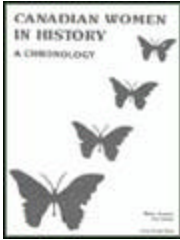
- be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants,
- not have attended school full-time for at least three years
- be in a program leading to high school completion
- be at least 19 years old



For more information and to receive applications, write to: CCLOW 47 Main Street Toronto, Ontario M4E 2V6 or call (416) 699-1909

CANADIAN WOMEN IN HISTORY: A CHRONOLOGY

by Moira Armour and Pat Staton



This chronology has over 1600 entries and is 173 pages in length. Organized by date from 1007 to 2020, there are 43 classifications ranging from 'Abortion' to 'Workplace Hazards'. Compiled principally from the publications of Canadian women historians and from archival materials, the chronology is a wonderful reference tool for researchers, students, educators, organizers and journalists.

For more information or to purchase the chronology, write Green Dragon Press 135 George Street S. Toronto, Ontario M5A 4E8 or call (416) 368-1747

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OLDER, STRONGER, WISER

National Film Board of Canada film recounts the lives of five older Canadian Black women who have struggled for and celebrated their strong commitments to Black cultural heritage in Canada. These are women, the film tells us, who "Because they were black and because they were women, their stories have been hidden from us." This wonderful film reveals to us the power of women's work and Black women's struggles.

Available from the National Film Board of Canada, or order it from your local library. Available on video.

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SMALL EXPECTATIONS: Society's Betrayal of Older Women

Published in 1984, this book by Canadian author Leah Cohen, is a wonderful examination of what it's like to be a woman growing old in Canada. Chapters include: Self-Image and the Cult of Sexuality; Older Women and Health: The Hazards We Face; Living at the Edge: Older Women and Housing; Violence Against Older Women; To Be Old, a Woman and Poor; along with many personal profiles.

Small Expectations: Society's Betrayal of Older Women, by Leah Cohen (McClelland and Stewart, 1984), available in paper back, \$5.95.

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COMMUNICATING IN PRINT WITH /ABOUT SENIORS

Published by the Seniors Secretariat, Health and Welfare Canada, this booklet provides easy-to-follow information about how to produce text for seniors. It is available from the Minister of Supply and Services, Government of Canada, Ottawa K1A 0K9. There is no cost.

SENIORS GUIDE TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Published by the Seniors Secretariat, Health and Welfare Canada, this is a sourcebook of programs and services that are available to senior citizens through the federal government

It is available at no cost from: Seniors Secretariat Health and Welfare Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9 (613) 957-1968

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NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON WOMEN IN AN AGING SOCIETY, PROCEEDINGS

This conference which was held in October 1988, in Halifax and was sponsored by the Seniors Secretariat of Health and Welfare Canada and Status of Women Canada. The proceedings are available from the Minister of Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1B5. Refer to catalogue number H88-3/5-1988.

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ATELIER NATIONAL "LA FEMME DANS UNE SOCIÉTÉ VIEILLISSANTE" , COMPTE RENDU

Cet atelier du 20 octobre 1988 à Halifax produit ce compte rendu, disponible du Ministre des Approvisionnements et Services Canada, Ottawa, K1A 1B5. No. H88-3/5-1988.

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WOMEN AND AGING IN CANADA: MULTIDISCIPLINARY ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 1975-1989

by Denise Bélisle Gouault

This bibliography is available by contacting: Joint Chair in Women's Studies University of Ottawa /Carleton 143 Seraphin Marion Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

LES FEMMES ET LE VIEILLISSEMENT AU CANADA: BIBLIOGRAPHIC ANNOTÉE MULTIDISCIPLINAIRE 1975-1989

par Denise Belisle Gouault Contacter: Chaire conjointe en Etudes des femmes Université d'Ottawa/Carleton 143 Séraphin Marion Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 .

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**A FRIEND INDEED
FOR WOMEN IN THE PRIME OF LIFE**

This is a newsletter for women in midlife, focusing mostly on health issues, such as menopause and sexuality. For more information or to subscribe (\$30 for 10 issues), write: A Friend Indeed Box 515 Place du Parc Station Montreal, Quebec H2W 2P1

REGIONAL RESOURCES

NFLD. / LABRADOR

Services to Senior Citizens Department of Health Confederation Building West Block
P.O. Box 8700 St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 4J6 (709) 576-3551

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Canada Employment Centre Job Re-Entry Program for Women P.O. Box 12051,167
Kenmount Rd. St. John's, Newfoundland

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SENIORS' RESOURCE CENTRES:
St. John's: 120 Torbay Road Suite 104 737-2333

Gander: 320 Elizabeth Drive 256-2333

Marystown: Marystown Mall P.O. Box 687 279-3662

Corner Brook: 29 Wellington Street 634-9913

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Iris Kirby House P.O. Box 6208 St. John's, Newfoundland 722-9230

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Career Exploration for Women Avalon Community College St. John's Campus 50 Parade
Street St. John's 753-2440

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Multicultural Women's Organization P.O. Box 1274 Stn C St. John's 754-2726

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Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women 131 LeMarchant Road St. John's
753-7270

P.E.I.

DIVISION OF AGING & EXTENDED CARE

P.O. Box 2000 Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 7N8 (902) 368-4980

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WOMEN'S DIVISION

Fact Sheet #4, on Older Women in Prince Edward Island



This four page fact sheet gives statistical information about older women in P
.E.I.

For copies, write to: Women's Division Department of Labor P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7N8 (902) 368-5570

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RESOURCE SENIORS

Through this program, seniors contact people who are about to retire to advise them of
services in the community. Contact: Helen Herring, Charlottetown, (902) 894-4228

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BEGINNING EXPERIENCE

A weekend program for newly separated, divorced and widowed people, designed to
provide hope. Contact: Gema Keough, Summerside, 436-6263; or Elaine MacCormack,
Charlottetown, 566-2874

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ADULT NIGHT SCHOOL AT HOLLAND COLLEGE:

Contact: Student Services Officer at Charlottetown Centre: 566-9517 Royalty Centre:
566-9300 Summerside Centre: 436-7261 West Prince Centre: 853-2200 Montague: 838-

4096

UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (U.P.E.I.)
offers many courses for seniors at no tuition or book cost. Contact: the Registrar's Office,
U.P.E.I. 566-0608

NOVA SCOTIA

NOVA SCOTIA SENIORS SECRETARIAT
P.O. Box 2065 1740 Granville Street 4th Floor Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2Z1 (902) 424-
4649

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EXPERIENCE *UNLIMITED*

Experience *Unlimited* is a resource bank of talented and active seniors
who wish to share their knowledge with the community. Contact: 454-6897

NEW BRUNSWICK

OFFICE FOR SENIORS

Department of Health and Community Services P.O. Box 5100 Fredericton, New
Brunswick E3B 5G8 (506) 453-2480

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LEARNING UNLIMITED

A lecture/discussion series for seniors. Watch for details in the seniors column on
Thursday in the **Daily Gleaner**

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

UNB offers free tuition for any of 60 years of age. For more information, call 453-4864

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ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

St. Thomas offers free tuition to anyone over 60 years of age. Call 452- 7700

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NEW BRUNSWICK SENIOR CITIZEN'S FEDERATION

A democratic organization to promote the general welfare of Seniors. Contact:
N.B.S.C.F., Place Heritage Court, Suite 421, 95 Foundry Street, Moncton, N.B. E1C 5H7
857-2842

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TALKING BOOK SERVICE

Provides cassette recordings of print material for those who have difficulty reading. Call
453-5380

QUÉBEC

MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX

1088, rue Raymond-Casgrain Québec (Québec) G1S 2E4 (418) 643-7167 1-800-361-0635

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NOUVEAUX HORIZONS

Programme de subvention pour des programmes d'activités pour les citoyen(ne)s de l'âge
d'or. Santé et Bien-être Canada Complexe Guy-Favreau 200. boul. Dorchester Ouest
bureau 212, Tour Est, 2e étage Montréal (Québec) H2Z 1X4

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FÉDÉRATION DE L'ÂGE D'OR DU QUÉBEC (FADOQ)

Organisme regroupant 18 conseils régionaux, représentant 1200 clubs affiliés. Oeuvre au
mieux-être des personnes âgées de 55 ans et plus, défend leurs droits, les représente
auprès des autorités concernées, préserve leur dignité de citoyen(ne)s à part entière,
revalorise la personne du 3^e âge, et vielle à la démocratie de l'organisation.

FADOQ 4545, ave., Pierre-de-Cobertin C.P. 1000, Succ. M Montréal (Québec) H1V 3R2

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ASSOCIATION QUÉBÉCOISE DE GERONTOLOGIE (ADQ)

Favoriser la circulation de l'information et provoquer des échanges entre personnes et
groupes s'intéressant au vieillissement. Promouvoir la qualité des services offerts aux
personnes âgées. Analyser, critiquer et inspirer les politiques et les législations relatives
au phénomène du vieillissement. ADQ 1474, rue Fleury Est Montréal (Québec) H2C 1S1

ONTA IO

ELDERLY SERVICES BRANCH

Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services 16 Bredalbane Street Toronto,
Ontario M4Y 1C3

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OFFICE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AFFAIRS (416) 965-7981

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SENIORS INFORMATION CENTRE

2195 Yonge Street 1st Floor Toronto, Ontario M7A 1G1

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RYERSON POLYTECHNICAL INSTITUTE SENIOR STUDIES

Ryerson offers a wide range of courses for seniors. For more information, contact Ryerson
Seniors' Studies 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3

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DIRECTION DES SERVICES AUX PERSONNES ÂGÉES

Ministère des Services Sociaux et Communautaire de l'Ontario 16, rue Bredalbane
Toronto (Ontario) M4Y 1C3

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Office des Personnes Âgées (416) 965-7981

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CENTRE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS POUR LES PERSONNES ÂGÉES

2195, rue Yonge le étage Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1G1

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INSTITUT POLYTECHNIQUE RYERSON

L'Institut propose tout un éventail de cours sonnes du troisième âge. Pour de plus amples
renseignements, s'adresser à: Ryerson Senior's Studies 350 Victoria Street Toronto
(Ontario) M5B 2K3

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Also available at Ryerson, an open college course entitled ***AGING AND YOU, an introduction to gerontology*** . This credit course is available on audio cassette, and will be broadcast on



Ryerson's own CJRT-FM, 91.1 F.M. There is a special section on women. For more information: CJRT Open College 297 Victoria Street Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W1

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Seniors courses are also available at GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE. For information, contact: Susan Rudin, (416) 944-4522

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SISTERING

An outreach program and drop-in centre for women. Offers a wide range of programs for older women, immigrant women and poor women. Sistering Write: 181 Bathurst Street Toronto, Ontario MST 2R7 (416) 861-1954

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PORTUGUESE WOMEN FIFTY FIVE PLUS

This support group is aimed at bringing together senior Portuguese speaking women, and offers programs and activities which respond to the needs of its members, They have this to say about themselves:

"When this project first started, we were met with scepticism. Many people were very sceptical of the success of a group of "old ladies", We are very happy to prove them wrong and to be the first organized, independent group of Portuguese women in Toronto, and, possibly, in all of Canada,"

For more information write: Portuguese Women 55+ 84 Rusholme Road Toronto, Ontario M6J 3H6

-submitted by Odette Nascimento

MANITOBA

SERVICES TO SENIORS PROGRAM

Community Services-Interlake 202-446 Main Street Selkirk, Manitoba R1A 1V7 (204) 482-4511

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SERVICES TO SENIORS PROGRAM

Manitoba Department of Health 333 Broadway Ave 3rd Floor Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0S9 (204) 945-6740 4

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MANITOBA SENIORS' DIRECTORATE

450-500 Portage Ave Room 440 Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3X1 (204) 945-2127

SASKATCHEWAN

SENIORS' DIRECTORATE

Saskatchewan Seniors' Secretariat 2151 Scarth Street Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3Z3
(306) 787- 2399

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DISCOVER CHOICES PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS

This program is designed to enable older adults to make informed choices about their health by increasing their knowledge about the factors which influence their quality of life. For more information, request: Discover Choices Partners' Handbook by calling (306) 780-5355

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SENIORS' EDUCATION CENTRE

This centre provides educational opportunities for older adults. Nominal registration fee, and free tuition for people over 60. Choose from more than 70 non-credit Courses.

Senior's Education Centre University of Regina Rm 112 College Building Regina,
Saskatchewan S4S 0A2 (306) 779-4816

ALBERTA

ALBERTA SENIOR CITIZENS SECRETARIAT

Main Floor, Centre West 10035-108th Street Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3E1 (403) 427-7876

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ALBERTA COUNCIL ON AGING (ACA)

Provides programs, conferences, referrals for older adults and advocates on their behalf.
Write: ACA Liberty Building 501- 10506 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2W9

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FULLY ALIVE

A life refresher course for older adults. This course is about the "art of living". For more information, contact the Alberta Council on Aging (address above).

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Offers courses and programs of interest to older women. Write: University of Calgary
Faculty of Continuing Education 2500 University Drive N. W. Calgary, Alberta T2N 4N1
(403) 220-4100

Note two courses in particular, of interest to older women:

*RETURNING TO LEARNING: A WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN CONSIDERING
"GOING BACK TO SCHOOL ., (#13604 & #13624) and COPING WITH CHANGE:
WOMEN IN MID- LIFE TRANSITIONS (#13613) For more information call (403) 220-
4722*

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WOMEN'S PROGRAM AND RESOURCE CENTRE

Faculty of Extension University of Alberta North Garneau Trailer Complex 111 Street
and 89 Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G4 (403) 492-3093

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VINTAGE FEMINISTS

contact: Lois Soderstrom R.R. 1 Westeros, Alberta T0C 2V0 (403) 586-2091

B.C.

B.C. OFFICE FOR SENIORS Ministry of Health 1515 Blanshard Street 6th Floor
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 3C8 (604) 387-3516

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MATURE WOMEN'S NETWORK SOCIETY

Women helping women ages 45-65. Social networking, community information, referral service, discussions, workshops, social events. 411 Dunsmuir Street Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1X4

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EXPERIENCE UNLIMITED

Crisis intervention/advocacy/support for unemployed older adults. Focus on age discrimination and skills obsolescence. (604) 681-7141

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VANCOUVER WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE

Information, workshops referral services for health issues such as osteoporosis, menopause, and estrogen replacement therapy. 302- 1720 Grant Street Vancouver, B.C. (604) 255-8285

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FEMINIST GRANDMOTHERS OF CANADA

contact: Jane Evans RR#3 Noble Road Armstrong ,B.C. V0E 1B0

YUKON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Government of Yukon Social Services P.O. Box 2703 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6 (403) 667-5857

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SENIORS INFORMATION CENTRE

3- 106 Main Street Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2A8 (403) 668-3383

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YUKON COUNCIL ON AGING
Box 5165 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 4S3

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INFORMATION PLEASE
Handbook for Yukon Seniors, 1989 Available from: Government of Yukon Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6 (403) 667-5811

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YUKON PIONEER WOMEN
Bibliography of sources available in the Yukon Archives funded through a grant from
CRIA W

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GOLDEN AGE SOCIETY
310 Wood Street Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2E6 (403) 668- 5538 or Box 17 Dawson City,
Yukon Y0B 1G0

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JULIE CRUIKSHANK BURSARY FOR **YUKON** WOMEN RETURNING TO
LEARNING
This \$200 bursary is offered annually by the Canadian Congress for Learning
Opportunities for Women to a Yukon woman who is returning to learning. For more
information, write: CCLOW Yukon 50 Cedar Crescent Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 4P3

N.W.T.

AGED AND HANDICAPPED COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE N.
W . T. Department of Social Services P.O. Box 1320 Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
X1A 2L9 (403) 873-0131

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in CCLOW is open to individuals, organizations and agencies.

Membership Fees

- Individual (\$25)
- Student/Unemployed/Retired (\$10)
- Organization
 - with annual budget up to \$100,000 (\$35)
 - with annual budget between \$100,000 and \$500,000 (\$60)
 - with annual budget over \$500,000
- Sustaining Member (\$100)

ALL CCLOW members automatically receive the quarterly publication, "Women's Education des femmes".

Subscription Only

to "Women's Education des Femmes"

- Individual \$17.00
- Organization \$30.00

Enclosed payable to CCLOW is my cheque for:

Membership \$ _____
or Subscription \$ _____
Donation \$ _____
Total \$ _____

NAME _____

INSCRIPTION

L'inscription au CCPEF est ouverte aux particuliers et aux organismes ou associations.

Droits d' adhésion

- Inscription personnelle (25\$)
- Étudiante/Sans emploi/Retraitée (10\$)
- Organisation
 - Budget annuel inférieur ou égal a 100 000\$ (35\$)
 - Budget annuel entre 100000\$ et 500 000\$ (60\$)
 - Budget annuel supérieur a 500 000\$ (100\$)
- Membre commanditaire (250\$)

Tous les membres du CCPEF reçoivent automatiquement notre revue trimestrielle "Women's Education des femmes"

Abonnement seulement

"Women's Education des Femmes"

- Particulier 17.00\$
- Organisation 30.00\$

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**Please return this form and payment to
the Canadian Congress for Learning
Opportunities for Women, 47 Main Street,
Toronto, Ontario M4E 2V6.**

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PROFESSION _____

INTÉRETS _____

**Veillez renvoyer le formulaire avec votre
paiement au bureau national du: Congrès
canadien pour la promotion des études
chez la femme, 47 Main Street, Toronto,
Ontario M4E 2V6**

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The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CLOW) was founded in 1979 and is a national, voluntary, feminist organization with networks in every province and territory. CLOW advocates equality between women and men by promoting equal participation in our educational, political, economic, legal, social and cultural systems. To overcome discrimination based on gender, age, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, CLOW focuses on improving educational and learning systems. Our work and research includes maintaining a Women's Learning Resource Centre, publishing a quarterly magazine (Women's Education des femmes), advocacy, program development in local areas and involvement in educational related activities and events.

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Le Congrès canadien pour la promotion des études chez la femme (CCPEF) a été fondé en 1979. C'est un organisme national, bénévole et féministe qui a des réseaux dans chaque province et territoire. Le CCPEF prône l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes en promouvant une participation égale de tous et de toutes à notre système éducatif, politique, économique, judiciaire, social et culturel. Pour surmonter la discrimination qui se fonde sur le sexe, l'âge, la race, la classe sociale, les caractères ethniques et l'orientation sexuelle, le CCPEF s'attache à perfectionner le système éducatif et celui de l'apprentissage des femmes, publie une revue trimestrielle Women's Education des femmes, se fait le défenseur des femmes, s'occupe d'élaborer des programmes dans différentes régions du pays et participe à des activités et à des manifestations dans le domaine de l'éducation.