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# HEADQUARTERS RESPONSE TO WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

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Report of a Conference  
October 25, 1978

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Sponsored by  
Subcommittee on Women in Development

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American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service Inc.

October 25, 1978

The Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive, New York City

"A world profile of women using selected economic and social indicators reveals that women  
(a) constitute one-half of the world population and one-third of the official 'labor force'  
(b) perform nearly two-thirds of the hours worked but  
(c) according to some estimates, receive only one-tenth of the world income and possess less than one-hundredth of world property.  
...out of over 800 million illiterates, 600 million or three-fourths are women; together with children, they constitute again three-fourths of the undernourished.  
In the Third World, about 80 percent of the age group from six to sixteen that is without any schooling are women. Of those who drop out from school, women are an overwhelming majority; in rural areas 75 per cent of the agricultural laborers are women. These inescapable facts could be multiplied. But the important point is that the hard core of the development problem is constituted by women. In an unequal world, women are the most unequal even among the unequals."

---Krishna Ahooja Patel  
"Another Development for Women"

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## SUMMARY

The objectives of the Conference on Headquarters Response to Women in Development Concerns were:

- o to increase knowledge of women in development concerns among agency headquarters staff;
- o to share information on agency programming and staffing, and highlight their interrelations.

It was a time of taking stock of how women are faring in the voluntary agency community, both as program participants and as agency staff members. Thus the agenda was divided between programming responses and staffing responses.

Data on agencies' policies and programs affecting women were gathered by means of a questionnaire. The information was summarized for consideration at the conference, and was expanded on by panelists and speakers.

Findings were that greater attention to the headquarters level to women in development concerns is required to achieve improved participation of women and consequently, improved programs.

Among the recommendations was the resolution that the ACVAFS Executive Committee encourage member agencies to review performance in key areas of

- policy
- projects
- activities
- field staff sensitization
- funds
- recruitment
- professional enrichment
- staffing
- salary levels
- maternity-paternity leave

as the first step toward implementing creative strategies aimed at improving development by strengthening women's active participation in it.

## BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE

The Subcommittee on Women in Development convened the Conference on Headquarters' Response to Women in Development Concerns in the belief that it is important and timely for voluntary agencies working overseas to look at women's role in their programs and on their staffs.

Elaine Edgcomb, Chairperson of the Subcommittee, noted that women constitute the majority of those we are trying to reach with programs aimed at the poor, at rural areas, and at basic human needs; consequently in large part we are trying to develop ways to reach women.

Since 1975 the Subcommittee on Women in Development has worked to improve the effectiveness of voluntary agency programming in order to increase women's participation in the development process, thereby raising their status in their community and society. That effort has included the formulation of criteria against which to judge projects, a continuing exchange of information among members on programs and projects, the promotion of training activities for field staff overseas, and linkage with other groups and organizations throughout the world dedicated to the same ends.

Now, almost four years into this work, the members felt it was time to convoke a meeting of agency executives and key programming and personnel staff to reflect together on what progress we have made, to exchange information on programming and staffing responses, and particularly to consider the role headquarters plays in supporting new and creative strategies to assist poor women in their search for "another development." Charles MacCormack, Chairman of the Council's Development Assistance Committee, noted that in a time of great change in the world society, the change in the role of women is the most significant.

Both he and Ms. Edgcomb focussed on the interrelationship of events in developing countries and in our own society. Similarly, the agenda was built on the presumption of a direct relationship between the quality of WID program performance and the status of women within any given agency. The day was divided equally between program responses and staffing responses of agency headquarters to WID concerns.

As a means of taking stock of women's participation in voluntary agency programs and on their staffs, a ten-point questionnaire was devised by the Conference Planning Group, approved by the

full Subcommittee, and sent to 53 member agencies of ACVAFS and PACT. Responses were compiled for use at the Conference.

Opening remarks by the Moderator, Elizabeth Palmer, summarized the survey results and indicated that the major problem is the lack of involvement of those for whom programs are designed. Headquarters executives from Save the Children Federation and Catholic Relief Services were panelists on Program Responses; Church World Service, CARE and World Education panelists discussed Staffing Responses. They outlined their agencies' experiences and perspectives and led discussion on problems, successes and issues. Reaction to the panel on Program Responses was given by Assistant Administrator for Africa Goler Butcher from the perspective of the Agency for International Development.

## CONFERENCE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Questionnaire on Agency Policies and Programs Affecting Women was devised to update and expand on an earlier evaluation of agency program responses to the Criteria.+ In addition to five questions on programming, there were five on staffing. The number of questions was purposely limited to the most significant indicators in order not to unduly burden the respondents. The members of ACVAFS and PACT, numbering fifty-three, were invited to participate; 36 agencies responded. Of these, 27 completed the questionnaire; 4 acknowledged invitations without returning questionnaires because of lack of personnel to fill them out; 5 replied "they have no such programs", "no such policy", or are "involved only in refugee and migration." To further facilitate response, the questionnaire was designed as an informal instrument, and assurance given that replies would remain anonymous. The responses were summarized with a bias toward the positive, including both achievements and intentions to undertake measures to bring women into fuller participation in programs and on staffs.

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSES ON PROGRAMMING

Question 1: "Does your agency have a policy regarding the role of women in development? If so, please state or attach copy of formal policy statement."

Yes: 14 - with formal statement or guidelines: 2  
- no formal policy but program relates to women: 1  
- no formal policy but adopt Subcommittee criteria: 2  
No: 9 - "question has not arisen; most of the executive officers and managers are women."  
Not applicable: 3  
No answer: 1

Question 2: "Has your agency supported any project(s) with the specific purpose of advancing the status of women"? How many? Of these, indicate how many were primarily designed by women agency staff; by women staff of intermediary agencies; by women beneficiaries."

Yes: 16 Projects range from 1 to 75 in number;  
Number of agencies reporting on projects primarily designed by:  
- women agency staff: 2  
- intermediary agencies' women staff: 2  
- women beneficiaries: 2  
- combination of the above: 3  
- none of the above: 1  
No: 7  
Not applicable: 3  
No answer: 1

+Criteria for Evaluation of Development Projects Involving Women.  
Prepared by Subcommittee on WID in 1975. Evaluated in 1976-77.

Remark: One agency indicated in response to Question 1 that it has a policy to promote the status of women through project activity but has not reported such activities.

Question 3: "Has your agency been involved in any other activities designed to promote the status of women? If so, indicate nature: training programs; conferences; publications; research; other (please specify)".

Yes: 17	- Training programs: 13
	- Conferences: 11
	- Publications: 11
	- Research: 9
	- Other: "promotion of national women's organizations", "entire program devoted to opportunity for personal growth, community leadership and social justice", "participation in international women's conferences," "assistance to women's groups," "special consultancy" or "technical assistance."
No: 4	
Not applicable: 3	
No answer: 3	

One agency reported that it has "no project selected solely on the basis of their impact on women."

Question 4: "Has your agency undertaken any special efforts to make field staff sensitive to WID concerns? If so, indicate nature: dissemination of materials; training activities; other (please specify)".

Yes: 15	- Dissemination of materials: 12
	- Training activities: 10
	- Other: conferences, workshops; on-site visits; "program strategy for women;" discussion of issues through correspondence; hiring of women staff overseas; consultants to field staff; study of women in agriculture.
No: 5	- One agency reported that "however our field program emphasis on nutrition is toward pregnant and lactating women, and infants." - Another agency reported that it made no special effort but its "field staff is sensitive to the needs of women and all projects are reviewed on basis of positive or negative impact on women."
Not applicable: 3	
No answer: 4	

Question 5: "Do you set aside any funds especially for WID programs and projects?"

Yes: 8 - all funds for women's projects: 1  
 - 1/4 of funds for women's projects: 1  
 No: 15  
 Not applicable: 3  
 No answer: 1

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES ON STAFFING

Question 6: "Does your agency have a policy to foster the recruitment of women at headquarters and/or overseas? If so, please state or attach copy of formal policy statement."

Yes: 19 - no formal policy: 1  
 - has affirmative action or equal opportunity policy: 8  
 - has implicit intention to recruit female staff": 1  
 - has 50/50 balance of men/women professionals": 1  
 No: 8 - two agencies reported that they have or have had women directors overseas.

Question 7: "Does your agency have a program offering educational assistance or professional enrichment? If so, indicate whether for all employees; all professional employees; restricted; other (please specify)."

Yes: 18 - for all employees: 12  
 - for all professionals: 1  
 - restricted: 1  
 - other: .case by case: 2  
 .employees may take leave of absence to further education: 1  
 No: 5  
 No answer: 4

Question 8: "Please provide the following information on your agency's overall staffing pattern."

On	Number of Agencies Reporting on Percentage of Women					
	0%	10% or Less	25% or Less	50% or Less	75% or Less	100% or Less
Board of Directors	2	2	14	6	2	1
Headquarters Staff						
President	3	-	-	-	-	-
Vice President	2	-	-	-	-	-
Executive Director	24	-	-	-	-	1
Associate/Deputy/ Asst. Exec. Dir.	11	-	1	3	-	3
Director/Dept. Head/ Management	3	-	5	14	2	4
Professional	2	-	3	6	10	2
Administrative	-	-	-	-	1	-
Clerical Support	1	-	-	2	6	17
Overseas Staff						
Management/CountryRep.	-	1	1	-	-	-
Professional	5	1	1	10	2	3
Clerical/Support/ Technical	-	-	-	3	7	3

No staff or full-time staff overseas: 3

No answer: 1 - because it is "inappropriate to the purposes of the workshop."  
The same agency did not reply to Question 9.

"Do these statistics represent a change from those prior to 1975?"

Yes: 14 - only in relation to reduction of staff: 2  
"If so, what significance do you feel this change has for your agency?"

- "Agency is increasingly aware of the need to encourage the participation of women in all phases of its work and has made a commitment to that. It has appointed a women's program consultant."
- "Agency gains new outlook from a very active woman Associate Director."
- "Has grown larger but no change in relative position of women."
- "More women are employed."
- "2 clerical employees promoted to administrative positions."
- "A conscious effort to prepare and identify women leaders."
- "Attach no particular significance to greater number of women field workers. However, the addition of a woman to headquarters' executive staff is some indication of the resolve to gradually increase the number of women in key positions."
- "In last 2 years 50% of professional staff hired are women; goal is 40% by December '78."

No: 9

No answer: 4

"How many of your current professional staff have been promoted from clerical positions? How many of these are women?"

Number of Agencies/Percentage of Professional Staff who are Women:

	0%	10% or Less	25% or Less	50% or Less	75% or Less	100% or Less
No. of Agencies Reporting	-	-	-	3	2	14

No staff promoted from clerical to professional positions: 6

No answer: 2

Question 9: "How many of your staff earn over \$20,000 per year? How many of these are women?"

Percentage of Staff Earning Over \$20,000/yr. who are women:

	0%	10% or Less	25% or Less	50% or Less	75% or Less	100% or Less
No. of Agencies Reporting	9	1	4	7	2	1

No staff earning over \$20,000: 2  
 No answer: 1

"How many of your staff earn less than \$12,000 per year? How many of these are women?"

Percentage of Staff Earning Less than \$12,000/yr. who are women:

No. of Agencies Reporting	0%	10% or Less	25% or Less	50% or Less	75% or Less	100% or Less
	1	-	-	9	4	12

No answer: 1

Question 10: "Does your agency have a policy on maternity leave? If so, please state or attach copy of formal policy statement."

Yes: 20 - two agencies have maternity/paternity leave policy.  
 Duration of leave:

- 6 weeks: 1
- 3 months: 1
- 4-6 months: 5
- 12 months: 2
- according to need: 1

Benefits:

- with partial pay: 5
- with health insurance: 6
- without health insurance: 1

No: 7

One agency indicated that it has a formal policy on WID but reported it has no maternity leave.

Satisfaction with the number of positive responses (ranging from about 20% on funding to 30-40% on programming, to 50-55% on staffing) depends on expectations. Some participants felt that the Subcommittee's work on WID programming and government stress on equal employment should have yielded better results. Others, realizing that change is not an overnight matter, look on the situation as a challenge to renewed efforts.

Panel presentations and discussion on Program Responses acknowledged the interrelationship of programming and staffing. People spoke of the integration of women as being at the stage of "first steps, finding out how to turn agencies around, interest and concern but no official policy," and "at least not worsening women's condition."

Problems encountered by various agencies included "how to communicate WID policy to sponsors, finding new roles for women motivators, new forms of income-generating projects, the lack of uniformity in attention to WID issues across regions, the limited participation of women, cultural constraints, lack of organization among women, a primarily male staff," and "lack of information."

General discussion focussed on income-generating projects and raised a number of issues:

- how to increase productivity of traditional projects
- how to avoid fostering child labor
- how to provide management training
- how to increase replication of effective projects
- how to bring men along so they do not stop or take over successful projects
- how to cut the high costs of successful projects
- how to provide adequate attention to marketing
- how to avoid raising women's expectations, then having them disappointed.

Refugee and migration programs are deeply involved in questions of women's participation, in spite of the feeling of several questionnaire respondents that the topic Women in Development had no relevance to them. Refugee programs foster leadership among the refugees themselves, and this is the basis for development. When people are in refugee situations, the role of women becomes a key factor in the well-being of the family. Relationships between men and women change as men's claim to status in the family is damaged by having a job that is not transferable to the new setting, while women's role remains constant and takes on even greater importance.

Agencies need assistance in developing WID policies. One participant drew up a list of actions which his agency might consider, and asked for guidance on implementing them. (See Appendix: Heifer Project's Proposed Action List).

The current status was summed up by Mrs. Butcher as challenge, one shared by the Agency for International Development and the voluntary agencies. In her experience in AID/Bureau for Africa it has been a challenge. In spite of having good-hearted men on the staff, in spite of the Percy Amendment, and in spite of the direct relevance of basic human needs strategy to women, especially in the Africa region, there are still no completely satisfactory answers to the question of how women are integrated into development through all AID Africa Bureau programs. Women in Development is a misnomer; Women in Development as set up by the Percy Amendment has become known as a special concern. Development is what we are really talking about. The quality of people's lives depends on the role of women in development. A better informed and more sustained push is needed. The issue is: how are women integrated into development policies, strategies and programs across the board. Games are still played subconsciously; women may be accorded power which is only an illusion, and useful only as long as they don't push. It is important to get women and minorities into all levels of operation; otherwise it is not likely that programs will have the right perspective.

The three afternoon panelists gave their agencies' perspectives on hiring women. All would like to hire women; the current status at

CARE	38% of US management staff are women 25% of overseas " " " "
Church World Service	37% of the NCC* executive and professional staff are women

\* National Council of Churches

**World Education**

50% of professional staff	are women		
50% of consultants		"	"
33% of Board members		"	"
33% of management team		"	"

Panelists agreed that women staff are more effective in reaching women, and tend to have a different program perspective than men. One agency noted that where the field representative was female, more programs for women were generated.

While everyone said they wanted to hire women, two agencies spoke of the problems in finding and keeping qualified women. Women don't know of the opportunity (in the case of an agency with an affirmative action program). Women with technical qualifications (agriculture, water, forestry) are scarce. Single parents have problems overseas. Women drop out to get married; wives follow their husbands. There are social constraints on women. And lately, the limited number of openings available, plus the extensive experience often required by counterpart agencies, limits opportunities for women.

Issues discussed centered on a need to change structures and practices so as to enable women to gain experience on the job. Not identifying the sex of a candidate for a position to prevent discrimination was one suggestion. Analyzing the true qualifications for the job and cutting away superfluous requirements were proposed. Several participants felt that making organizations for people-rather than task-oriented would provide the flexibility needed for the entry of more women. One of the panelists commented that the balance achieved in her agency came about through hiring qualified women who could only work part-time, due to family commitments. Another widely discussed suggestion was that, as women gain places in agencies, they become advocates and mentors for other women. There was some pressure from women participants to re-examine policies against husband and wife teams, or hiring women with the effect of separating families. More and better staff training and development was an agreed necessity, as well as improved communications networks among women.

Questions whether women were more people-oriented than men, or whether women in management modified management practices or were affected by them did not achieve consensus. The attitude was that we have to get enough women into management positions to be able to assess the effects, but that the influence was certainly two-way.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Moderator noted that common concerns of the participants grouped around

- Statement of intent
- Staffing
- Program Design
- Criteria/Evaluation

and that it is the conviction of the conference participants that WID program effectiveness is affected by how we deal with women in our agencies. Since most of the Executive Directors of the agencies were not present at the conference, the Executive Committee of ACVAFS was to be asked to help in bringing these concerns to their attention. A resolution was prepared and presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting of October 31, 1978. The following final resolution was accepted after some editorial changes:

"The participants of the Conference on Headquarters' Response to Women in Development Concerns are convinced that, to carry out effective development assistance, women who constitute the underprivileged majority of the world population, should be given due attention in the planning and implementing of agencies' programs. The survey of present agencies' practices which was undertaken prior to the Conference, and the discussions of the day indicated that since 1975 considerable progress had been made to improve agency programming. However, this progress is not uniform and additional efforts are required.

"Therefore, we respectfully request that the Executive Committee encourage agency members to address the two related questions of (1) the policies and practices of agencies in regard to a more effective role for women in development programs, and (2) agency staffing to achieve this effectiveness including consideration of input by women staff in decision-making and of policies regarding maternity/paternity leave, flexible work schedule, part-time employment, and professional and management development training that would permit more efficient utilization of women's talents."

Other recommendations were made at the conference and subsequently, namely:

- The questionnaire be administered again in the future to see if any changes have occurred.
- Refugee and migration colleagues start a working group on the relation of WID concerns to their programs.
- Assistance in policy formulation be made available to agencies.
- The WID Subcommittee membership be enlarged.
- The WID Subcommittee be elevated to the status of a Committee.
- The WID Subcommittee set up working groups on major issues:
  - . income generating activities
  - . staffing and personnel policies
  - . marketing in cottage industry projects
  - . technical training for women.

A G E N D A

INTRODUCTIONS

Remarks by moderator Elizabeth Palmer, former General Secretary of World YWCAs, using results of survey on agencies' policies and programs

PANEL I:

Program Responses

Case studies with background documentation; policy determination and planning; criteria (formal and informal) used in project design and selection; assessment of non-traditional possibilities; use of regional conferences, briefing, de-briefing; integration or separation of women's projects.

Panelists: Jim MacCracken, Program Director, Save the Children Federation  
Jim Noel, Regional Director, Catholic Relief Services

Remarks on Programming for WID, Reaction to Panel Presentation; Mrs. Goler Butcher, AID Assistant Administrator for Africa

Lunch

PANEL II:

Staffing Responses

Recruiting and staffing problems; personnel policy and criteria problems relating to women employees; gender impact on program effectiveness; effect on local agencies; affirmative action vs. fair personnel policy.

Panelists: Donald Sanders, Special Assistant to Director of Overseas Operations, CARE  
Paul Yount, Director for Overseas Personnel, Church World Service  
Mary Rita Zakele, Resident Representative for Africa, World Education

Summary of Panels I and II

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT  
and  
PLANNING GROUP

American Friends Service Committee	Eva Mysliwicz
American ORT Federation	*Joseph Pihas
Baptist World Alliance	Eleanore Schnurr
CARE, Inc.	Merton Cregger, Vice Chairperson
Catholic Relief Services	*Elaine Edgcomb, Chairperson
Christian Children's Fund	David J. Herrell
Church World Service	Midge Meinertz Vivian Ponniah
CODEL, Inc.	Barbara Magner
Community Development Foundation/ Save the Children Federation	Penny Levy
Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific	Elizabeth Silverstein Stanley Hosie
Lutheran World Relief	*Elizabeth Gibbons
PACT, Inc.	*Esther Lafont
Young Men's Christian Association	Agnes Pall
Young Women's Christian Association	Rosalie Oakes
Staff:	Dao Spencer

\*Members of the Conference Planning Group

PARTICIPANTS

Moderator: Elizabeth Palmer  
 Speaker: Goler Butcher

African American Institute  
 CARE, Inc.

Catholic Relief Services

Christian Children's Fund  
 Church World Service

Consultants in Development  
 Consultants in Overseas Development Education  
 Experiment in International Living

Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific

Heifer Project International  
 International Rescue Committee  
 International Human Assistance Programs

International Women's Tribune Centre  
 Lutheran World Relief

New TransCentury Foundation

PACT, Inc.

Save the Children Federation/Community  
 Development Foundation

Technoserve

World Education  
 Young Women's Christian Association

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 Yvonne Lekoy  
 Mary McMurtry  
 Elizabeth Silverstein  
 Terry Ford  
 Harold Grimes  
 Jesus Lopez  
 Dolores Morrill  
 Jim Paton  
 Martita Midence  
 Bernard Confer  
 Elizabeth Gibbons  
 Ove Nielsen  
 Brenda Eddy  
 May Rihani  
 Loren Finnell  
 Esther Lafont  
 Carolyn Stremmlau  
 Penny Levy  
 James MacCracken  
 Pat Neu  
 Sue Goldmark  
 Karen Ann Simmons  
 Mary Rita Zakele  
 Rosalie Oakes  
  
 Dao Spencer  
 Mary Ellen Burgess  
 Carolyn Nomura  
 Jane Meskill  
 Fran Cohn

HEIFER PROJECT'S PROPOSED ACTION LIST

by Terry Ford

1. Create a formal policy regarding the role of women in development relative to the objectives and policies of Heifer Project International.
2. Construct and implement a definite policy to foster the recruitment of women within headquarters, regional office and overseas program areas.
3. Develop a staff resolution and proceed on its implementation to upgrade the role of women in all program/project communities.
4. Develop within the orientation program for all new staff, including overseas staff, orientation on the role of women in development.
5. Insure that the organization's personnel policies include a program of professional growth, educational assistance and/or professional enrichment which facilitates advancement of women within the organization.
6. Initiate among the staff an on-going education process which focuses upon the role of women in development.
7. Develop social progress criteria for program/project areas that remains significantly concerned with the effects on women in all phases of the development project.
8. Initiate a new direction in program understanding that seeks knowledge of the social environment within which development in a program/project area is to take place.
9. Wherever policy program design is being developed the intent of that design should seek to improve the status of women within the project communities.
10. Evaluation design should be developed to specifically seek the impact on and involvement of women in program/project areas.
11. Insure that in program and project areas training and educational opportunities must be provided for and involve women, especially in management training.
12. Insure that the organization has an appropriate policy for maternity leave that is equitable in continuing health care benefits and provides financial assistance during the leave period.
13. Until these policies, processes, programming and staffing goals are achieved establish at the Board of Directors level a committee on women's policies.