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Report of the Fourth Meeting
of the
Working Group on Women's Programs
May 23, 1979
New York City

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The fourth meeting of the Working Group on Women's Programs was held May 23, 1979 at the offices of the Carnegie Corporation in New York City.

Kristin Anderson, chairperson, began the meeting with a brief review of the history and work of the group thus far. She then reported that no definite action had been taken on the plan, suggested at the last meeting, to hire a consultant to write a document which could be used as an educational tool to inform a variety of groups (policy makers, funding agencies, program personnel) about women's programs and their relationship to development. Kristin, working with the members of the steering committee, explored the feasibility of putting the plan into action but reached the conclusion that the plan was not workable for two reasons. Since the Working Group on Women's Programs is not a formal group:

1. It is difficult to ask someone to write or publish a complex piece without having a particular agency or group responsible for its content and conclusions.
2. It is difficult to obtain the needed funds to support the project.

Clarification of Goals/Procedures of Working Group on Women's Programs

Type of Program

The issue was raised as to whether members wanted the group

to remain an informal group or to become a formal organization. The members decided that at the present time it would be best for the group to remain informal. It was felt that the informality of the group is one of its strengths in that it has allowed a free exchange of ideas between members and has provided a support group for women working in this field. It was also pointed out that the members already belong to a number of formal or professional organizations and could work through their structures to create a greater awareness of women's programs.

Goals

The point was raised that the group came together originally to discuss evaluation strategies for women's programs but over time has broadened its goals to include other aspects of women's programs. It was discussed that the group has had difficulty in deciding on more specific goals because of the continuous changing nature of the group. The outcome of the meeting seems to depend in a large part on the particular people present at the meeting. This is due to the fact that so many of the members must travel frequently and therefore, it is not possible to have the same set of people attend each meeting.

At this meeting, the members decided that as a first goal it was important for the Working Group on Women's Programs to disseminate information about women and development from a woman's perspective to a large audience. Several suggestions were given on how to approach this task.

It was agreed that creating a concrete product with a specific focus would be a valuable strategy for further activity. Judith Bruce suggested that a special issue of Studies in Family Planning might provide a vehicle for a wide dissemination of information about women and development and could be identified as a product of the Working Group on Women's Programs. (For example, a special issue on rural women will be forthcoming this fall.) This proposed special issue of Studies in Family Planning could be a compilation of case studies of programs provided by members of the Working Group. The following plan of action was suggested and discussed by all of the participants:

1. Judith Bruce will propose the idea to the editorial board of Studies at the Population Council. Carol Weiland is the current editor of Studies.
2. This issue would follow the publication of Judith Bruce's article on "Women Oriented Family Planning" which should be completed shortly.
3. In preparation for this idea Judy Helzner would survey all members of the group as to:
 - a. if they would want to participate in such a project.
 - b. if they would like to participate, the type of case study they would like to present along with the following information:
 1. a brief discussion of the study.
 2. why this study is important.
 3. the project's current status and if it can be written about for a journal article. (points discussed: it is important to secure permission from the project to write about it because some programs do not want to be identified by name or do not want all aspects of the program described.)
 4. the mechanics (procedures) members would have to go through at their agency to contribute the article to a journal.
 5. an indication as to whether the member would need additional funds to prepare the article.
 6. an outline of the case study.
4. The following issues were suggested for possible case studies:
 - a. women in family planning programs.
 - b. field training - approaches to clients.
 - c. sex role stereotyping in information, education, and communication materials - e.g. content analysis of materials used in a national program.
 - d. pregnant teenagers.
 - e. how family planning relates to women and development.
 - f. inadequacies of current reporting and evaluation measures.

5. Members planning to contribute a case study would bring a summary of their projects, along with a one page outline for a journal article, to the September meeting. Members not planning to contribute case studies would act as resource people. The group would meet with Carol Weiland, editor of Studies. Plans would then be made with Ms. Weiland or a special editor if needed on how to work with the individual authors as well as the group to develop articles for this special issue.
6. Judith Bruce will be responsible for writing the proposal for this project.

Adrienne Germaine suggested using the Cycle Series of the Ford Foundation as another possible means of disseminating information. This would also provide a way of integrating the work of the group into existing projects, and would provide a good distribution route with an established mailing list and an established mechanism for printing materials. Adrienne stated that she would discuss this idea with William Sweeney who is in charge of this project at the Ford Foundation.

Christina Brinkley Carter suggested another possible route for the dissemination of information: the group could propose a section at the Population Association of America (PAA) meetings next spring. Papers could be developed around a specific topic area and presented at the meeting with someone like Ruth Dixon as a discussant. Chris noted that it is important for the group to introduce program content into academic settings. Judy Helzner mentioned that she had been in touch with Judith Senderowitz about the possibility of a round-table session at the American Public Health Association (APHA) meeting this fall, on some women in development issue. However, since the deadline for the final program items would pass before the survey of members could be carried out, it was decided that this could not be a project of the Working Group.

Judith Helzner stated that she would poll the members about all of these suggestions (special issues of Studies in Family Planning and/or Cycle Series, PAA meeting) as well as about future topics of discussion for the meetings and the most convenient date for the fall meeting. (Suggested dates were September 11 and 12 or 18 and 19.)

Summary and Conclusions

The participants at this meeting decided that the Working Group on Women's Programs should remain an informal group. Its present goal should be the wide dissemination of information about women and their relationship to development. Several suggestions were made as to how to develop and disseminate this information:

1. A compilation of case studies about women's programs to be published in a special issue of Studies in Family Planning.
2. Presentation of women's programs and the issues surrounding them in the Cycle Series, published by the Ford Foundation.
3. A proposed section on women and development at the PAA meetings

Judith Helzner stated that she would survey the group members on these issues. Judy will work with the Steering Committee to plan the September meeting according to the information received from the survey.

Participants

Kristin Anderson (Chairperson)
Christina Brinkley Carter
Judith Helzner
Adrienne Germaine
Judith Bruce
Freya Bicknell
Olivia Nordberg
Vera Plaskon (Rapporteur)
Eve Soldinger (Guest, MPH student studying with C. Brinkley Carter)