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Ecoco Exchange Newsletter

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Enclosure Golden Leaflet listing project materials.
Green leaflet about distributing project materials.

The All-age Celebration

On May 22 about 100 people celebrated the conclusion of the first Crow Collection Living Library Project. The purpose of the gathering was to launch the video, booklets and photographic exhibition.

It was a celebration for people of every age. The little children had a party and some older school children (as well as a team of adults) helped them to enjoy it. Secondary students proudly showed their exhibition of photographs and word pictures of women who have helped to establish children's services in the Western Region. Some people watched the video but most wanted to use the occasion to talk to each other. There was a number of unexpected reunions, and some opportunities to meet new people.

The guest speaker, Louise Glanville, spoke on "The Past, Present and Future of Children's Services". The formalities closed with several folk songs from Robyn Lester.

Although this first Living Library Project has officially concluded that is not its end. Far from it ! The project has resulted in :-

- * Three sets of project material which can be used well into the future (see enclosures).
- * Helped to developed new community networks between secondary schools and the Victoria University of Technology, between community organisations and local government, between young people and older people, and, helped to revitalise existing networks.
- * Provided a blue print for future Living Library Projects.

The Project Report is republished on the next page.

HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN THE WESTERN REGION

("Putting Magic in the Lives of Children and Participation in the Lives of their Parents" - a project funded by the Lance Reichstein Charitable Foundation.)

PROJECT REPORT BY SHEILA BYARD AND CHRISTINE CAROLAN

This report describes the History of Western Region Children's Services project conducted by the Crow Collection Association in conjunction with the Victoria University of Technology.

Funding of \$10,000 from the Lance Reichstein Charitable Foundation was awarded in mid-1991 on the basis of an application which proposed an interactive, community based history project, designed to help residents in the West, especially young people, link present issues in children's services with source material from the Crow Collection, so as to assist in planning for the future.

The funding application used the title "Putting Magic in the Lives of Children and Participation in the Lives of their Parents" to place the project in its historic setting. "Putting Magic in the Lives of Children" was a slogan from the early 1940s used to popularise the need for preschool education. Thirty years later the community child care movement of the 1970s emphasised the need for parent involvement in the services provided for their children, via "Participation in the Lives of Parents". The project design aimed to reexamine these notions at a time when the demand for publically funded services outstrips the ability of government to provide.

This title has been retained in the name of this project report but for most people who came into contact with the project it was known as "the Reichstein project" or "the Western Region History of Children's Services project".

The Crow Collection Association has as a primary role the encouragement of teaching and research based on the materials in the Crow Collection in the University Library on the Footscray Campus. The Association came into existence because those who had worked with Ruth and the late Maurie Crow in various ways were concerned to see that the Crow archive should not become stale but rather be a stimulus for the type of research and activity with which the Crows had always been associated.

Through a system of project committees and project advice, members of the Association provide assistance to researchers of every level working within the collection. Members of the Association share an interest in building up the capacity of communities to find solutions to their own problems and in linking amateur and professional researchers; this interest led to the setting up of the Association after the Crow archive came to the University in 1990, and to the evolution of the Living Library concept.

For the three hundred subscribers to the Association's ECOSO Exchange Newsletter throughout Australia and overseas, this Reichstein project is merely the first in a series of Living

Library projects which will enable proper use to be made of the resources of the Crow Collection.

Whatever the desire of the members of the Crow Collection Association, such bridge-building could not occur without the willing and generous support of the parts of the University which provide the institutional setting for the activities sponsored by the Association, namely the University Library and the Department of Humanities and the Urban Studies Unit within the Faculty of Arts. Staff from within these sections, including Brian Hubber, Susan Jennison, Barbara Braun and Moira Simcock, have provided significant input to the Project, especially through the steering committee.

The success of the project has depended on the willingness of senior staff of the University - Ms Doreen Parker (University Librarian), Professor Rodger Eade (Head, Department of Humanities) and Mr Des Eccles (Head, Urban Studies Unit) - to be willing to offer hospitality to the Association, to accept the Reichstein funding and to locate the project officer, Christine Carolan, as a sessional member of staff within the Urban Studies Unit.

The University's predecessor institutes made community access to the libraries a mark of the way in which further education in Victoria's western metropolitan region would link itself to its regional community. The transition to university status came at a time when some further education libraries have felt the need to put up shutters against the increasing and unfunded demands upon their time and resources being made by school students.

One of the objectives of the Living Library approach has been to assist in finding ways of catering to the increasing demand for information and raw data for research from senior secondary - Victorian Certificate of Education - students without overtaxing the resources of the library. An important aspect of funded projects was seen to be the opportunity to generate both fresh material and reprints which would facilitate access to the Collection, and be of continuing use within the Region. The experience of the Library in relation to the Westdoc/ Access to the West/Windows on the West projects offered a significant guide and the steering committee was grateful both to Olwen Ford of the Living Museum of the West and to Morag Loh for advice in promoting accessibility.

Minutes of the steering committee and the regular Project Bulletins were circulated both to children's service officers in the municipalities of the region and to others in schools, universities and colleges, and the wider community who were judged to have an interest in the project and its outcomes.

Although early meetings of the steering committee identified the desirability of picking up the diverse childcare concerns of the Region, from old established services facing restructuring to the relatively serviceless areas at the urban fringe, it became apparent that it would be necessary to focus the project on schools and communities which were interested in the collaborative possibilities the Project offered them.

In this process of focussing it has been crucial for the success of the project to have had regular contributions from Western

Region workers including Sue Parsons (City of Sunshine), Susan Thompson (City of Footscray), Lyn Henderson (City of Werribee), Louise Glanville (formerly Social Planner, Western Region Commission, now Department of Social Work, Victoria University of Technology) and Janet Alewood (Shire of Bacchus Marsh).

A consideration in the appointment of project officer had been to find a worker capable of working with selected school community groups in the Region, to link some current issue(s) in children's services with what was available through the Crow Collection. By late October 1991 it became apparent that the Two Tiered Childcare Funding issue would offer an opportunity for the project to provide immediately useful material for trialling in schools.

This stage of the project involved collation of material from four main sources. As the federal government, through the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, moved to introduce a two tiered fee relief scheme, documents were selected from the Collection to provide historical background to the issue. Community newspapers in the region were culled for current commentary. Community Child Care, representing community run childcare organizations, provided some materials. Two interviews were conducted with women who had responded to a request from the Project for information on the likely impact of the cuts. (These interviews were used by several groups in making submission to Federal Minister Staples during the campaign.)

Documents located within the Collection were reprinted as a resource together with the final year B.A. project of Kathleen Codognotto on the history of Footscray's Tweddle Baby Hospital, for which some research had been done in the Collection. The University's Publication Department were of great assistance in this exercise.

Trialling of some of the issue based material with students from Williamstown High School, both at school and at the Footscray campus, led to the generation of the the project publication which has had widest circulation: "The Issue - Federal Budget Cuts to Childcare". This material was presented as an example for VCE unit 3 students to see how they could tackle the Presentation of an Issue Common Assessment Task (CAT). Copies of this material went to every VCE provider in the region.

At this stage the project steering committee saw the importance of the provision of some simple material to explain the nature of the Collection and type of research which might be based on it. Accordingly the decision was taken to have the Project Worker prepare a video about the Crow Collection, called "Scattering Seeds for Change". This twenty-seven minute video tape shows Marnie Statkus, a local secondary student coming to the University Library at Footscray Campus, interviewing Ruth Crow about the way the Collection was created and how it might be useful to her in her studies. Ruth is shown talking about the way in which local government became involved in children's services, and the changes which have taken place over the last fifty years. The work of the University's Educational Development Department was crucial in this exercise; the Project Steering Committee is very grateful to Roger Funk for high level

technical assistance in this matter, especially within the very tight time constraints of the middle period of the project.

The video has been shown to a wide variety of audiences inside universities and TAFE programmes, to community groups and to school groups, as well as being used by individual researchers.

An in-service was held for workers from the City of Sunshine Children's Services section to help them see the impact on contemporary conditions of the historic development of programs for children in the municipality. The Meredith Sussex paper reprinted in the Project series was used in this activity. Noting that it had been possible for the project to publish such material, these workers felt that there were many women in the Sunshine area who had done things for local children; they thought they would like to see the contribution chronicled and began a list of the women they would like to see interviewed. This provided the impetus for the direction of the final stage of the project.

Contact had been made with teachers and pupils of the Sunshine Secondary College Senior Campus when there was an invitation for Christine Carolan to work with an English as a Second Language class. These students had chosen cuts to childcare as the issue they wished to investigate for their CAT. They undertook the exercise of writing letters expressing their opinions on this issue.

It became apparent that there could be a fruitful conjunction between the interests of the photography students of Warwick Page and Roger Funk(Victoria University of Technology) and those of VCE Australian Studies students at Sunshine Secondary College who undertook to interview these women nominated by the City of Sunshine staff, and to write up pen portraits. They could then use the material as the basis of their Australian Studies major project; some decided to write up an interview as a biography while others decided to focus on an issue, such as voluntary work, that arose from the interview material. This work became known as "The Women of the West" sub-project.

From the outset the steering committee had the view that there should be a seminar or celebration at the end of project which would enable a display of the outcomes of the Project, and to provide participants of whatever age and stage with an opportunity to meet each other. The development of the display for the May "Scattering Seeds for Change Celebration " under the auspices of the Project, turned out to be a particularly valuable experience for a number of reasons.

The students, both secondary and tertiary, were able to show the fruits of their research: how, in various periods in the past, women had worked hard on many different childrens' service projects, usually in a voluntary capacity. The women have succeeded in running such things as a holiday program and an art show, a kindergarten and an emergency food relief scheme because they believed what they were doing was important and because they were able to link up with like-minded women.

Thanks to the work of the students, the contribution of these women will be available for public acknowledgement. The

display of photographs and pen portraits has been booked to be shown at six more venues in the West, the print publications of the Project and video tape are available to inform future enquirers.

Staff of the University were given a chance to come closer to contemporary practice in the schools of the region and to test further ways of making the University's research and in particular the collections of the University's libraries appropriately accessible to the community. (Although it might not be wise to repeat the episode which brought all the Year 11 Australian Studies students from a particular school, to visit the Crow Collection in a given week - there turned out to be three hundred of them!)

A feature of the project from the University's viewpoint has been the opportunity for staff to work closely with voluntary collaborators; the appointment of Ruth Crow as an Honorary Fellow of the Humanities Department in 1990 has meant a significant opportunity for members of the University to draw upon her substantial experience in applied social research.

For participating workers in the childrens' services in the municipalities, at a time of considerable pressure, the project is seen as having provided an opportunity to reflect on the principles underlying their work, in a neutral setting.

We thank Louise Glanville for being willing to round off the project with her paper linking the past, the present and the future in this significant area of children's services.

The steering committee is confident that the Reichstein Project has demonstrated the viability of the Living Library concept and made a useful contribution to the History of Children's Services in the Western Region, much to the gratification of those whose contributions have made the success of the Project possible.

As individuals and organizations become involved in finding answers to the future planning and administration of services for children, the project materials - the twelve booklets, the video and the travelling photo display - will provide information, encouragement and example. They are available at cost from the Crow Collection Association/ Urban Studies Unit, Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus).

The Crow Collection and Ecoso Exchange

Subscribers to the Crow Collection Network receive Ecoso Exchange Newsletter which provides information on seminars, conferences, research activities, community action and on how the Collection is being used.

It costs \$10 to subscribe to the Ecoso Exchange Newsletter. Subscriptions should be sent to Sheila Byard, Urban Studies Unit, Victoria University of Technology (Footscray) PO Box 14428, MMC, Melbourne 3000. Please make cheques payable to the Crow Collection Association. Donations are very welcome indeed !

A Gender Agenda
New Directions for Planning Theory

Leonie Sandercock and Ann Forsyth have collaborated in writing an article which is published in the Journal of American Planning Association (Vol 58, No 1, Winter 1992) which uses the above title. They explain that "the objective of this paper is not to present a singular feminist theory of planning practice. Rather it examines those aspects of feminist theory that seem to have the most to offer planning theory." (emphasis added)

Here are some other extracts :-

From the Introductory Paragraphs

"Gender issues emerge in each of the three approaches (planning practice, political economy, theory) and take the form of such themes as economic status of women, the location and movement of women through the built environment, the connection between capitalist production and patriarchal relationships and between public and domestic life, how women know about the world and about what is good, and the forms, of communication with which women are most comfortable or by which they are most threatened. An awareness of these issues is lacking in planning theory.

From the section on Spatial, Economic and Social Relationships

"Planning theory must treat this diversity (categories of women) seriously. Theorists must be able to determine when it is appropriate to distinguish between specific categories and when the experiences among women of different classes, races and other backgrounds are actually congruent (Collins 1990, 217 - 9).

"Theorizing within this multiplicity of voices is a complex task, but not doing so can make "women" as oppressive a category as "man" (Harding 1986). As yet planning theory literature deals hardly at all with multiple oppression by race, sexual preference, culture, and gender. Leavitt and Saegert's (1989) work on gender, race, and age among poor people is a notable exception."

From the section Language and Communication

"A feminist planner, experienced in neighbourhood consultation and participatory planning, described her difficulties in encouraging people at public meetings to contribute equally, particularly when many women are socialised to believe they have nothing valuable, to say. She responded to this problem by asking people to sit in small groups and tell a story or anecdote about their lives and community....the storytelling format gave a variety of people the courage to be more involved.

From the section on Methodology and Epistemology

"A distinctly feminist epistemology would be controversial. Feminists insights, however, would expand the planner's perspective beyond scientific and technical knowledge to other ways of knowing..... knowledge is gained through talking.... 'gossip, like poetry and fiction, penetrate to the truth of things,' says Belenky et al..... knowledge is gained through listening.... knowledge is also tacit or intuitive..... creating symbolic forms through painting, music, or poetry is a more important way of knowing and communicating than planners have yet been prepared to contemplate.....acting and reflecting on the meaning of action yields information about the world that is unavailable in technical books and reports."

A Gender Agenda contd.

From the on Section Ethics in Planning

The new communitarian theorists offer sophisticated critiques of liberalism and offer alternatives with obvious links with feminists theories of care. They tend, however, to be complacent about traditional structures, such as family or nation which are hierarchically organised and oppressive to women.

From the section on the Public Domain

"The involvement of planners in current moves to privatise public services also has a direct though complex effect on women. Women are more likely than men to receive public assistance, as single parents, as the dominant elderly population group, as residents in public housing or as the majority of public transport users. This assistance has given women more choices, relieving them of some of the responsibilities formerly considered private or domestic, such as caring for children or older relatives, and giving them enough material resources to achieve some measure of independence.

From the section on Gender Research Agenda

This section has five sub-sections the titles of which whet the appetite ... Studies of Planning Practice, ... Practical and Strategic Gender Interests,... Gender and the Culture of Planners....Reform of Planning Education.... Balancing the Differences.

The last couple of paragraphs are on the On-going Debate

The final paragraph states :-

In mainstream planning theory women have scarcely ever been seen as subjects of theory. The problem, however, is far more subtle and complex than a simple tradition of exclusion. The paradigms on which planning and theorizing about it have been based are informed by characteristics traditionally associated with the masculine in our society. There is a need to rethink the foundations of the discipline, its epistemology, and its various methodologies. The feminist critiques and feminist literature need to be incorporated into the debates within planning theory.

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Leonie Sandercock is visiting professor and lecturer in the urban planning program at the University of California, Los Angeles. She was professor and chair of the graduate studies program at Macquarie University in Sydney from 1981 to 1986. In the 1970s she was a lecturer in Urban Studies at the Footscray Institute of Technology (Now the VUT, Footscray Campus).

She has recently published "Property, Politics and Urban Planing : A History of Australian City Planning 1890 to 1990."

Some of her other publications, for example "Cities for Sale", and "The Rent Racket", are in the Crow Collection. Prof Sandercock is a subscriber to Ecoso Exchange Newsletter and sent a message of congratulations to the seminar and celebration which launched the Crow Collection in 1990.

A copy of "A Gender Agenda" is available for references in the Crow Collection Room. Photostat copies can be obtained for \$1.50 (includes postage). The article has a very comprehensive list of references.

The People's Committee for Melbourne

The People's Committee for Melbourne was formed on 26th November 1991, to challenge urban planning geared to priorities of powerful vested interests. The People's Committee aims to identify and speak for the real needs of the community, demanding democratic decision making and social justice in planning.

The PC for M considers that decisions about the Melbourne metropolitan area are being dominated by self appointed committees and business groups, like the corporate Committee for Melbourne, (see information below) the Tasman Institute and the Institute of Public Affairs. This has diverted attention of government decision makers from people's needs.

The People's Committee has prepared a draft charter stating its general principles on :-

- the importance of Aboriginal culture and sovereignty, and rejecting Australia's colonial past and present.
- the need for equality in the access and distribution of all resources for all groups and individuals, regardless of wealth, race, gender and nationality.
- the importance of participatory democracy at all levels of decision making.
- how the changes in the nature of consumption and work must be fair, socially useful and environmentally sustainable.

Then follows a list of principles about particular issues such as the economy, employment, urban planning, housing, health, transport, education and the environment.

Low-Down on the Corporate Committee for Melbourne

In November 1991 the following information was published "Community Planning", the newsletter of the Justice in the City Group which was a forerunner to the People's Committee for Melbourne. The material is the result of research by Julie Lawson a post-graduate planning student.

The Corporate Committee for Melbourne started in 1985 and claims to have a membership of "leaders" in fields of academia, technology, medical research industrial relations and politicians from both political parties. Total membership is about 150 with each member paying \$2000 to \$5000 for membership. There were only three women members in 1991. Members of the Board include :-

Chair - John Elliott (International Brewing Holdings), Deputy chair - Nobby Clark (Foster Elders IX1); Ivan Deveson - ex Nissan, Lindsay Fox (Linfox), John Gough (Pacific Dunlop) Gil Hoskins (National Mutual), Bill Keilty (ACTU), Prof. Mal Logan (Monash uni.), Prof. Pennington (Melb Uni), Richard Pratt (Pratt group of industries) Elizabeth Proust (Melb City Council), Fergus Ryan (Arthur Anderson) Peter Wilkinson (Myers Stores), Ron Walker (Hudson Conway), Roy Woodhouse (Baillieu Knight Frank).

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More information on the PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE for MELBOURNE, write to Joan Doyle, 2 Elm Street, North Melb.3051 or phone Julie Lawson 658. 9976.

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Housing and Elderly People
Federal Government's Midterm Review of Aged Care Strategy

In March, during Elderly Citizen's Week two seminars on housing were held in Melbourne both of which were part of the Midterm Review of the Advisory Committee to the Federal Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services. Both seminars were organised by the Victorian Consumer Forum for the Aged.

One seminar was attended by about 40 "consumers" a large proportion of whom seemed to be in the University of the Third Age ((U3A) or the Older Persons' Network. The other was attended by about 40 "providers" (Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Central Mission, Abbeyfield, Salvation Army, several municipal councils and representatives of State and Federal departments and some planners).

General Remarks

1. The range of ideas at both seminars dovetailed fairly well.
2. A large proportion of time was devoted to economic issues.
3. There was fairly full discussion on Federal and State Govt. roles but very little about the role of municipal councils.
4. No discussion at all on issues relating to ethnic elderly.
5. Very little discussion on location of housing to give accessibility to community facilities
6. Very little discussion on design of housing other than how to meet planning regulations so that plans could be passed.
7. Strong agreement about the need for more information and the proposal to establish neighbourhood resource centres.

Buzz Words

1. Asset rich, income poor.
2. Jumping across boundaries (i.e. relating supplying support services).
3. Flexible arrangements.
4. Assessment tools barriers.
5. Joint venture programs (dealing with multiplicity of legislation)
6. Fear of devalued equity.

More Information

The Aged Services Review Team is located in the Office for Aged, GPO Box 9848, Canberra 2601. Dr Anna Howe is the Principal Policy Advisor and Prof. Bob Gregory (Economics ANU) is the Principal Consultant.

The Crow Collection has some documents on services for elderly people and on residential accommodation for elderly people.