

March 1974

Proposal for funding submitted to Ernie Hall,
Provincial Secretary by the Kootenay Women's
Collective

Kootenay Women's Project
% Women's Centre
490 Baker Street
Nelson, B.C.
352-9355 6006

KOOTENAY WOMEN'S PROJECT

Projected start: September 1974

Duration: six months

Total number of workers: 8

Project will deal with three aspects:

1. Health
2. Non-sexist childrearing
3. Women and Literature

Proposal for Women's Health Education:

Purpose: Present public and professional health care facilities in the West Kootenays have neither the funding nor personnel for women's health education programmes and counselling on a one-to-one basis. By initiating a six month pilot project we hope not only to begin to bridge the gap between professionals and patients, but to focus public attention to this lack in public health services and to implement such programmes on a permanent basis, within existing services. Our staff will be a combination of volunteer professionals; doctors, nurses, and mental health workers, plus five paramedics.

Areas of focus

1. Pre-natal care classes in childbirth and mothercraft conducted by two paramedical staff members, plus professional consultants.

The classes will teach the psychoprophylactic method of labour and birth using relaxation exercises and breathing techniques. They will teach a woman how to take care of her body during pregnancy (diet, how to prevent stretch marks, week by week information on the stages of growth of the foetus, what to expect during labour.) Fathers would be encouraged to participate in these classes. The workers will also travel to rural areas to set up sessions for women unable to come into town.

There seems to be a growing trend of home deliveries . We believe this is because of the dissatisfaction of the hospital experience. Hospitals are for sick people, and this orientation does not meet the need of the healthy woman giving birth. Although we do not necessarily believe that home births are the answer we do believe that a better environment should be established to meet the needs of women giving birth. The workers would act as a liaison between the patient and hospital staff.

We see a great need for midwives who could also alleviate some of these problems . The two workers would investigate places where midwifery is taught, and will combine training ,if possible, with working. Detailed records and data will be kept with the idea of developing the concept of a Birth Centre should this prove to be desired by the community.

2. Post-natal care This will involve individual home counselling for the new mother by another mother who has been trained in this capacity. Instead of learning that the constancy of a mother-child relationship has aggravations as well as rewards we are conditioned into believing that the first years of motherhood are entirely joyous. When it falls short we are "bad mothers". Consequently, guilts pile up, usually resulting in a very anxious mother and a very frustrated child. If these reactions are dealt with properly in the first few months of motherhood they can be channelled positively. Most first mothers need reassurance and understanding during this common post-partum depression, and many do not have the emotional support so vital at this time. Many do not

advertised in schools, through guidance counsellors, local physicians, public health unit, girl guides, church groups. By October, classes would be scheduled weekly for five weeks with participants of close age groupings. Discussion topics would focus on menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth with the aid of medical models. The pelvic examination with the aid of models and doctor present would be explained. Minor gynaecological problems such as yeast infections, questions on venereal diseases, birth control, abortion, would be explored as participants desired. Instruction in breast self-examination, and exchanges about feelings concerning their changing bodies would be aided with supplementary literature and filmstrips. Personal counselling for individuals will be offered as well.

For the more mature women, class sessions would focus on the gynaecological record sheet, each woman to know and record her gynaecological herstory and then to conduct self-examination sessions in the presence of nursing volunteers. Explanations of smears, cultures, vaginal suppositories, instruction in breast self-examination, how to insert a diaphragm, proper use of contraceptive creams, jellies (this knowledge would hopefully cut down on the need for abortion) will be included in class sessions. These classes will be arranged during both the daytime and evening in order to suit schedules of both working women and housewives. In depth exploration of modern available birth control methods, sterilization, hysterectomy, abortion, pregnancy, menopause, male-female sexuality will be dealt with in order to answer all those mysteries concerning our health care and to dispel those myths which are harmful to a woman's psychological and mental well-being. In this area we will rely heavily on the professional knowledge of doctors, nurses, and extensive self-education on the latest medical research findings.

4. Woman's home health visitor She will be one of our paramedical staff who would make home visits not only to pre-natal class clients, but to other women who are unable to attend regular sessions in Nelson due to transportation difficulties, lack of daycare etc. The visitor would supply specific information pertaining to pre- and post-natal diets,
- how to keep up adequate protein, calcium and iron on a limited meat or vegetarian diet.
 - the use and abuse of dietary supplements, vitamins, etc.
 - what to eat when nothing stays down
 - dietary needs of newborns, breast-feeding, formulas, milk, and the when/how/what of solid foods.

Since the worker would visit many homes she would have at her disposal ideas of simple home planning pertaining to the eating, sleeping, and recreational needs of the infant. She would demonstrate functional ideas for cradles (hanging, rocking, portable) changing tables, bathing facilities, toys (ideas for mobiles, soft toys, noisy toys). The home visitor would have information on non-nutritative ingestion of tobacco, alcohol, drugs (medical and non-medical use of), hallucinogens as pertains to the pregnant or nursing mother.

The visit could also supplement pre-natal exercise classes, a personal exercise session, or in the case of the non-exercising women, alternate means to meet the body's needs for physical activity could be suggested. The visitor would also know of the optional methods for the actual birth, whether in the hospital, at home, or in the hospital with immediate discharge, and she would have a listing of co-operative doctors midwives, and paramedics. She will also be a support and companion for the single woman who will be facing labour and childbirth alone. She will be a resource person for birth control information, family planning plus childcare information, such as where to go for inoculations, daycare etc. And of course, the visitor will also be a resource person for women's literature courses, non-sexist childrearing, needs of single parent families.

health information dispersal, sharing experiences as women, as doctors are too busy to deal adequately with common problems of women. Also, often the doctor-patient relationship is too impersonal for a woman to discuss her problem in depth. Our health programme, we see as a six month pilot project in order to assess the community health needs of women and to seek ways of fulfilling these needs. In order to qualify ourselves as paramedics, we would undergo short on-the-spot training sessions at the Vancouver Women's Self-Help Clinic with whom we have already established rapport. After six months of operation we would be able to judge as to the need for a Women's Self-Help Clinic, Birth Centre Family Planning Clinic, none of which exists in Nelson at present. If we find that these services are indeed essential to our community, we will work towards setting these up on a permanent basis and seek financial support from the community and government.

Background of paramedic/health workers:

Kathy McElroy - Age 27

Two years university education studying sociology and science at the University of Washington, University of Hawaii, and N.D.U. Nelson. One year VISTA community action worker, Houston Texas. (initiated tutorial programmes and did home counselling to welfare recipients). Two years teaching assistant in Nelson Elementary schools. One year chairperson of Co-operative Pre-School, U.B.C. Part-time bookkeeper for Kitsilano Food cooperative and for Job Development- Outreach, Vancouver. One year Nelson Family Day Care worker as Home Visitor and counsellor. Mother of two children- ages five and two.

Jan Bryan - Age 25

Pregnancy at young age of fifteen. Seven years ago underwent drug addiction withdrawal. Experienced natural birth with first child and underwent a caesarian with second birth. Has worked in Daycare and with juvenile delinquents. At present is on welfare and is a mother of one child aged two.

Sheila Draginda - Age 26

Has taken courses in psychology and the arts at U.B.C., Vancouver. Recent experiences have been centred around motherhood, childrearing especially post-partum depression. At present works part-time at the Nelson Daily News. Mother of one child age one and a half.

Carole Popkey - Age 25

B.A. in Psychology from the University of Windsor, Ontario 1968. One year child care worker at Browndale Residential Schools, LaSalle, Ontario 1969-70. One year with Toronto Free Youth Clinic 1970-71. Six months research assistant to Dr. Saul Levine, Department of Psychiatry, Sick Childrens Hospital, Toronto Ontario 1971. Three months Director of the Department of Health Innovative Grant concerning study for alternate clinic in Toronto Ontario 1972. Presently employed as cook for the Nelson Family Daycare Centre 1973-4. Nine months pregnancy resulting in the natural childbirth of daughter.

Vita Storey - Age 26

B.A. in Psychology from York University Toronto, Ontario 1969. One year professional teacher training at Notre Dame University, Nelson. Three months with Nelson Kootenay Learning Project organizing women's studies and Women's Centre 1972. One year co-ordinator of the Nelson Women's Centre (worked as health researcher and counsellor) 1973-4. Vice-chairperson for the Nelson Family Daycare Society. Mother of one child aged five.

Part I - Kootenay women's Project

Resource Program, Library, Existing Services

Objectives:

To continue to function as a drop-in and referral center, in connection with other objectives.

To build up a library/reading room in the Center.

To hold informal discussions or series of discussions on women's literature and women's political writings. These will be advertised for the public.

To bring in films by women, show them and hold similar discussions for the public.

To compile a directory of services, information and recommended reading material from our existing records, as well as from new contacts.

To have a staff with time to take on certain cases which come up, to facilitate action for the individual involved and in a broader sense, on the issue. For example, difficult divorces, cases of discrimination in employment, etc.

To be available as speakers to groups, particularly schools, which would call on us. We would give a program with the aid of a kit available from OISE in Toronto, and also possibly with a local kit designed by us. We were called upon to do this in the past.

Background of Workers in Resource Program

Katherine Govier

25, M.A. in English from York University. Taught for a total of two years in Toronto, in adult education programs through YMCA, to new Canadians, and at Ryerson Polytech. Worked as public relations writer. Journalist and published writer.

Dianne Luthmers

30, three years at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, has worked in a political group in Detroit, has worked as a daycare mother for Nelson Family Daycare in 1972. Mother of two children. Has been active in the Women's movement for several years, both in Detroit and in Canada.

Eally Wozny

26, tree-planter, has been active in the women's movement for several years.

Non-Sexist Childrearing

Purpose: To produce a booklet which helps parents and other adults become aware of sex-role stereotyping, how it occurs, which influences bear the greatest weight, and how such influences can be modified or avoided. We hope to present some techniques for raising young children with relatively few role associations as well as techniques for enlarging our own perspectives on traditional sex roles and those of already socialized older children.

To produce teacher retraining courses and community workshops in non-sexist childrearing.

Justification:

Children, it has been shown from studies, form many of their attitudes and patterns of thought by the time they reach first grade. Therefore, any attempt to de-emphasize traditional sex roles and unlock choices should begin with the very young child. Parents are just not aware of how they came to view themselves within the context of male or female, and how subtly sexual stereotyping can be transferred to their children. One need only investigate the young children's section of any library to note the absence of role variations for both the adult and the child created as characters in easy readers. Women are almost always housewives or maybe nurses; they are rarely shown participating in family outings other than to the grocery store, doctor's office or playground. It is difficult to find a male character caring for an infant or sharing the chores of housekeeping. Working mothers are ignored; so are men with artistic vocations. Likewise, girls are excluded from roughhousing, from adventures and are shown in passive games, while the boys are excluded from those passive pursuits. This type of mass-molding can be found elsewhere. In a brief presented to the current CRTC's hearings on the renewal of CBC's licence, a brief concerning the role of females both on the air and behind the scenes of the CBC's TV network, it was charged that the pre-school children's program, "Sesame Street" has more than four times as many male characters as female and that many of the stories read by "The Friendly Giant" are sexist in that girls are passive and boys active. This type of propaganda is not fair to either sex, and pressures the child to conform and develop socially acceptable manners regardless of the individual. Conformity by sex is also blatant in clothing and toy stores: it is much more difficult to determine when the parent is dealing with his or her own attitudes or that of a relative neighbour or teacher. As children grow older, it becomes even more obvious as they are asked to share in the responsibilities around the home and at school. Traditionally more active jobs requiring even the smallest amount of strength or endurance are delegated to the boys, while the activities that pertain to housekeeping or child care are given to the girls.

Aims of project:

It is our first aim to present varied ways children are patterned according to their sex in the hopes that parents will be able to recognize and change the negative images presented to their children according to their own beliefs, or at least to counteract them when needed. Secondly, we will include techniques, some gleaned from our research and others developed locally, for dealing with children in a relatively role-free manner, and also for counteracting the socialization process. Toward this end we will be researching the existing studies on sex-role stereotyping, locating articles, books and published results of such experiments that deal with this subject. From this material we will put together the booklet and a bibliography for those who wish further study.

Women's Literature Studies

Objectives: To bring to the community an awareness of the women who have contributed to the world of literature, historically and currently and who have been ignored or neglected in our male-dominated society. To increase awareness through the means of women writing about women, of women's special roles, values and perspectives.

Activities to be undertaken:

Preparation of classes- one an overview class on women writers in English language literature concentrating on representative women in each period from Elizabethan times to the present with emphasis on modern Canadian and American writers. Other, more specialized classes might include Women and Poetry, Modern Feminist Writing, Women Novelsist, Canadian Women Writers, or groups of women such as Bronte sisters, Emily Dickens on, Virginia Wolf, Willa Cather, Margaret Atwood etc.

The organization and co-ordination of these courses to be available to the largest possible number of people, working in cooperation with local libraries, adult recreation facilities, Nelson Women's Centre, and possibly local high schools and colleges. The main attempt would be to include and reach women who might not otherwise be aware of the growing availability and importance of women's literature (i.e. women not currently involved in the academic world.)

With one full-time salary, I will offer a minimum of two courses lasting three months, in at least three locations, a total of four courses for the six month period. The classes will be offered once a week for two hours, making a total of six classes (12 hours) per week to be prepared and delivered. The classes will be structured along seminar lines rather than straight lecture in order to encourage independent study and foster a sense of cooperation and community within the group. Classes would have a maximum enrollment of twenty, so conceivably, a total of 240 people could participate.

It has been the experience of other women involved in programmes similar to this one, that such classes provide a rewarding and enriching experience. Aside from the obvious benefit of beginning to correct an unjust view of the world of letters as a male domain, (and the implication thereof that women are less creative or less intelligent) the class will offer women an opportunity to come together and discover the universal qualities of experiences they previously might have considered unique, and allow women of different ages and educational and economic

backgrounds to find the common ground they share with the writers, as women.

They will be encouraged to relate the experiences they are reading about to their own lives and to be aware of the different approaches made by the authors to cope with the stress of trying to succeed as women in a man's world. Women interested in writing themselves will be encouraged to do so and to share their work with others in the class. Any men taking the course would surely gain an increased awareness of the social problems faced by women, as well as the pleasure of being exposed to some fine literature. One would hope that the impact of the classes would extend beyond the people enrolled, to their friends and families, and therefore contribute in its own way to the creation of a non-sexist society in Canada.

Monthly progress reports will include accounts of the number of people who use our services and the outcome of their experiences and all

Six Month Budget
Kectency Union's Project

Salaries

Eight full-time workers @ \$150/week	\$31,200.00
One part-time secretary/bookkeeper @ \$75/week	1,950.00

Travel

1200 miles @ 15¢/mile	1,800.00
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Office

Rent @ \$150/month	900.00
Two telephones @ \$50/month/phone	600.00
Utilities @ \$6.00/month	36.00
Two typewriters @ \$20/month/typewriter	240.00
Postage @ \$10/month	60.00
Materials and supplies	700.00

Medical Supplies

Medical models	Donated by pharmaceutical companies	
Speculums (disposable plastic) 5 gross @ 50¢ each		310.00
Gloves (disposable plastic) one gross @ \$2.00/dozen		24.00
Examining lamp - one		30.00
Two flashlights plus batteries		6.00
Mirrors - one large and two hand		30.00
Stethoscope - two demonstration models		40.00

Non-sexist Child Rearing Booklet

Typing costs	100.00
Printing costs	450.00

Total expenses for six months	\$38,476.00
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