

GENERAL CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

In discussing general campus activities, it was strongly felt that there was a need for a well-structured programme. Continuity is very important, as is planning according to each particular campus.

We agreed that a high profile, broad popular approach was important. This could be launched during Orientation Week, when issues that first years can directly relate to will be raised. This would include anorexia, rape, menstruation and other sexually-linked topics. However, it is important to introduce a more political aspect into this early programme in order to prepare the women for the more overtly political issues discussed later in the year.

By high profile was meant much publicity by means of media, T-shirts, stickers etc. T-shirts will be nationally circulated as well as introductory booklets.

It was thought that a debate or preferably a talk on feminism during the week would serve to educate or to make aware many new people. Rather than attack Rag, drummies and royalty, we felt it more tactically sound to educate and raise the issues in such a way that people do not feel personally attacked. It is important that the rejection of overtly sexist practices, e.g. those in Rag, should come from the people involved or potentially involved rather than coming from us - from above.

To avoid alienation during this week, we felt it would be best to attempt to integrate people socially or through teas after movies or talks and perhaps jaws at people's homes. Also we could use more personal issues as our initial platform so as not to scare new members off by jumping into the deep end. We did find last year that people tended to come to the personal seminars rather than those that were more overtly political, so we felt we should gradually, subtly introduce the political perspective.

Rap groups within a certain amount of theoretical input - are good means both to get people to feel integrated and to introduce new issues on a less formal basis.

Reading groups, too, can get people to do more theoretical research and to widen their understanding of issues. The problem of more theoretically advanced members feeling bored could be potentially solved in this way.

There is a need to have different levels of education - introductory education as well as more advanced education for those who are clearer on issues.

Besides our public role of generally attempting to include campus in our high profile activities - debates, talks, movies, there is also a need for a vigorous seminar system to facilitate interior education.

The residences will be a primary area of focus next year. They are often neglected and their potential is rarely exploited. There are many issues which affect them on campus around which we can mobilise. Perhaps more practical help and introductory education would be best here. But the strategy adopted will depend on the specific conditions of each campus.

For reasons of strategy and concern for women we agreed that student services offered by the Women's Movement would be invaluable. These would include a variety of courses - public speaking, rape crisis, self-defence, motor mechanics as well as making available such things as spray guns. The introductory booklet will contain useful practical advice - suggestions have been legal rights in cases of abortion, rape, detention. Also where pregnancy tests, contraceptive advice is available.

Ongoing skills workshops to encourage people to participate more actively and

to train them in essential skills will be held, too. The skills will probably be more media-oriented - silkscreening, layout, typesetting, camera work etc.

More uses should be made of media both to advertise WM and to bring our projects to campus. This will be further discussed under media.

WEEKEND SEMINARS

Weekend seminars were felt to be very productive. In the first term women's movements should have these with new recruits from their own campuses, to discuss basic issues, to help consolidate their ideas about feminism, sexism and the role of the women's movement. These are also very important in that people get to know each other on a personal level.

REGIONAL SEMINARS

Regional seminars like those that were held this year should definitely be held again, the most appropriate time being in the third term.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The idea of a National Conference on women in July was discussed and strongly supported. WMs on the different campuses were mandated to discuss exactly what form this should take and to start thinking of possible speakers. They would then report back through the local co-ordinators to discuss ideas with the national co-ordinator. More concrete plans would then be taken back to the WMs for approval and further ideas. It was suggested that the conference take place for about 5 days, after the July NUSAS conference. More concrete plans and venue would have to be decided on once the NUSAS gathering had been planned but preliminary work should proceed until then.

STRUCTURE, ORGANISATION & FUNCTIONS

It was generally felt that the most effective way to organise women's movements on each campus was to establish a core group of people committed to the successful running of the organisation. The size would obviously depend on the number of people available and would differ from campus to campus, probably 5 - 10 people. This group would take initiative and responsibility, plan the WM programme and ensure its implementation.

It is important to stress that a concerted effort should be made throughout the year to draw new people into this working group, working towards a situation where all people involved in WM activities participate in planning and decision-making. The nature of WM support unfortunately at this stage doesn't really allow for this to happen. Support is often passive rather than active. Many people merely attend WM programmes without wishing to or being able to devote their time to its running. Recognising this, it is important to stress that it is the responsibility of those committed to the aims of the WM and/or those who have chosen the WM as their particular area of involvement within the student movement to actively work within its structures and participate in decision-making. Within the working group itself different areas of responsibility could be allocated - other general WM members could be drawn into specific projects and areas of interest on an ad hoc basis. This would ensure more active participation by those wishing to become involved but reluctant to commit themselves on a long term basis. Through this initial involvement, e.g., one person could take responsibility for producing regular publications, drawing in non working group people to participate in working on the whole process. Other areas of responsibility could be for example, organised reading groups, contact with residences, organised self-defence classes, a car mechanics course, skills training programmes, producing a slide-tape show, organised film showings, co-ordinated project research, working out WM finances etc.

Directive Co-ordination

The list could be endless but structured in this way responsibility and initiative could be spread through the movement to a greater extent, and in a more efficient way rather than some people discussing and working on everything. In order to co-ordinate these different activities, report backs to the working group or to the whole WM should be held.

From this structure, it is clear that the local co-ordinator of the Directive should preferably be on the working group as well, thereby being in a position to gain information and materials about the different projects and areas of responsibility and to relay this information to other campuses through the national co-ordinator. The local co-ordinator would then also be in an ideal position to relay information and material received from the national co-ordinator to the working group and the WM on that campus.

The role of the Directive, broadly speaking, would be to co-ordinate the activities of the WMs on the different campuses, to ensure the circulation to all the WMs of resources and information about these activities, to point out ways in which success has been achieved or can be achieved, to point out where mistakes have been made and how to avoid these. It would also review activities pointing out where weaknesses exist and how these could be overcome.

The Directive should also ensure a more efficient distribution and maximum utilisation by all WMs of those resources which exist, e.g. a film/video could be hired from overseas or bought and costs shared by the different WMs and then circulated to all the campuses. In other words, a pooling of resources would enable the WMs to have access to more and better resources than would a single WM.

It was felt that the Directive should also have activities which have some

autonomy from those of the WMs. These would be national projects co-ordinated by the Directive and could draw in people not necessarily involved in the WM working groups. This would ensure to some extent that projects continued on a national level and were not totally dependent on the success of individual WMs. Ideas for national projects should be discussed by the different WMs and consensus reached through the local co-ordinators.

Obviously none of these functions can be fulfilled without the co-operation of the WMs and especially the local co-ordinators. The success of the Directive depends on the co-operation of the WMs and commitment of the local co-ordinators and national co-ordinator. The function of the local co-ordinators should be to keep in contact with the national co-ordinator, providing project ideas, reports of WM activities, gathering information about resources available, discussing ideas for national projects with the WMs, and taking the responsibility to ensure that they are worked on. The local co-ordinator should receive information from the national co-ordinator and ensure that this is relayed to the WM or working group.

The national co-ordinator (1) should ensure that information from all the centres is received and compiled in the form of a monthly newsletter to be sent to each campus WM.

(2) should also compile a resource list of speakers, films, slide tape shows, books, articles etc, which could be of use to WMs. This should be sent to WMs and updated throughout the year.

(3) should also take responsibility for national projects eg the July Conference.

(4) gather information about e.g. WM-produced T-shirts, stickers, posters, publications etc, find out if WMs would be interested in receiving these, find out numbers required and organise distribution.

(5) circulation of seminar papers, articles, national and international news, concerning women etc. It is essential that the co-ordinators maintain contact with each other. Meetings should be held at all NUSAS national gatherings where ideas and progress and further plans can be discussed.

MEDIA

A general weakness of most of the WMs in 1981 has been a lack of publications, UCT being the only WM who actually produced publications. All forms of media, publications, posters, pamphlets, banners, displays, films, videos etc are an essential part of our activity on campus. This is essential not only in getting our ideas across to people on campus but also an effective way of incorporating people into actively working on projects, thereby playing an important recruiting role. Incorporation of people into working on media is also essential in terms of skills training and learning to work in groups with other people. Media skills can be acquired by people working on projects e.g. in producing a publication, new people should be included in planning the publication, doing the research, writing the articles, finding pictures, doing the layout and organising the printing, collation and distribution of the publication. The same holds for other media. This process also contributes towards getting away from the idea that people with no skills or knowledge cannot participate actively in producing media or in other activities and therefore fulfils one of the essential roles of the WM - internal education and training.

Media and specifically publications, should be co-ordinated and planned in conjunction with WM activities on campus. In planning publications a clear idea must be gained of exactly what issues need to be covered and what audience or sector of the student body the publication is directed at. Here is a need on the one hand for publications which appeal to the broad campus base, including popular issues which people can relate to, and on the other hand, those which take a more in-depth look at feminist issues, theoretical issues, and more overtly political issues relating to the position of women in S.A. Publications could

obviously also include a mixture of articles meeting these needs. This must be decided in terms of the priorities which exist on each campus. It was felt that a definite priority on all campuses was an introductory booklet for orientation week. This would be a nationally co-ordinated Directive project. Other publications could come out of national research projects. Other more exciting forms of media should also be explored, e.g. where facilities, videos could be made, displays, banners, like the ones made by UCT, as well as silkscreen posters produced by a number of people at a workshop with simple striking designs are also very effective. Pamphlets should also be used, as these can both advertise events and educate. Use should be made of existing campus newspapers by including articles on feminism, sexism and other issues relating to women. Preferably these would be done by the newspapers themselves though. More attention must be paid to media production next year and media skills training is essential as this will ensure improved media production next year and in the future.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Campus Groups

SRC and other organisations within the student movement. Focuses and publications on campus should where possible include a focus on women, e.g. a focus on Namibia should also look at women in Namibia. Here it should not be the responsibility of the WM to provide this coverage although information and resources could be obtained from the WM.

It would be a good idea to establish a women's portfolio on each SRC to deal with practical campus issues affecting women, e.g. academic rape, discrimination against women on campus, rape, health, contraception, creches etc. So far only UCT and Durban have such portfolios.

Gay Groups and Men's Groups. These have recently been established on some campuses. There are many areas of overlap between these groups and the women's movements, e.g. sexism, socialisation etc. It was however felt that the women's movements should not only concentrate on sexism but should attempt to analyse the position of women in society and specifically in SAfrican society, as well as looking at more theoretical feminist issues. In addition, women's movements were important in breaking down the stereotyped passivity and non-assertiveness of women, building up confidence and ensuring acquisition of public speaking and other skills.

Men's groups and gay groups on the other hand mobilised around different issues. It was therefore felt that rather than form a broad non-sexist group it was necessary to maintain separate structures co-operating on various issues and provision of resources.

Black Women on Campus. Generally speaking, black women have not been involved in the women's movements. The growth of the non-racial student movement is however changing this situation and a fair amount of informal contact already exists. It must be recognised that although many areas of common interest exist, the position of black women is very different to that of other women on campus. It is important to establish closer links between groups by sharing resources and skills and mobilising around common issues such as rape, contraceptives etc.

Residences. These are important areas that have often been neglected in the past. Practical advice and basic education could be offered by providing media, speakers and seminars at the residences rather than relying on students to attend campus meetings. Where possible these should be organised through the Residence House Committees.

Medical Schools and other physically separated faculties. These are also generally neglected areas. It is the responsibility of central campus to make closer contacts and to encourage the growth of decentralised groups. Groups may be initially mobilised around health issues and could provide vital input to the WM on them. Due to the shortage of enlightened speakers on medical subjects, eg., gynaecology, it is essential that the WM disseminates issues in order to exploit the potential of medical students.

Academics. Attendance of sympathetic academics at campus WM meetings should be encouraged. Closer links could lead to the introduction of feminist issues into courses. Academics could play a vital role in providing theoretical input for the WM. Generally academics tend to be removed from student groups and attempts should be made to work in closer co-operation.

Off-Campus Groups. It is essential that campus WMs maintain contact with groups such as Rape Crisis and ARAG, covering specific areas with in-depth research. WMs can gain and give a lot of support through links with such groups.

In various centres grass roots women's organisations have been established which mobilise around political issues and the need for women to participate in struggles. Links have been made between the WMs and these organisations in various centres. Generally speaking though the women's movements still need to establish themselves as progressive bodies.

Where these broad women's organisations do not exist, links could be established with smaller women's community organisations, possibly playing a support and resource role.

Schools. The schools were felt to be a very important area where WMs could get involved and which had been neglected in the past. The limitations of this had to be realised however as many school authorities were very suspicious of campus groups. It was therefore necessary to work through supportive school students and teachers. Women's movements could give talks on issues such as anorexia, and rape, and try to get WM publications into school libraries. It was also suggested that a publication be produced specifically for distribution in the schools.

Other universities. Small women's groups exist at other universities, battling to get off the ground. Support and resources from our women's movement and contact on an informal level would be very valuable to them. The National Women's Conference which is planned for July could also improve contact between progressive women's organisations.

CONCLUSION

Clearly the WMs and the Directive have the potential for achieving more success and making significant gains in 1982. This will not happen automatically though and will be dependent on the hard work and commitment to the WM and the Directive of those involved particularly the local co-ordinators and National Co-ordinator. Provisional local co-ordinators have been chosen as most women's movements would like to take the decision back to their full women's movements.

THE COMMITTEE: the following be appointed by Congress:

Local co-ordinators: Cape Town: Bridgit McKay, Andy Thesen
Wits: Terry Shakinovski
Durban: Alison Wilkes
Rhodes: Mandy Wood

National Co-ordinator: Ingrid Obery