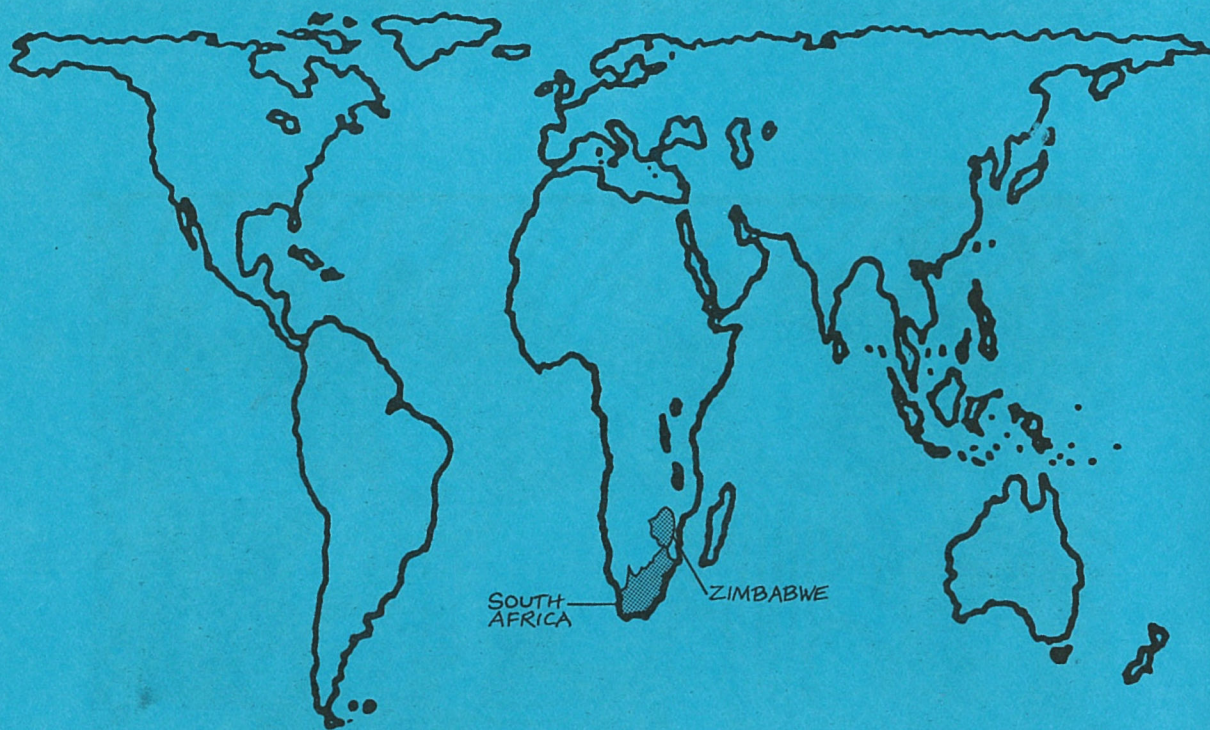




Childcare



This booklet is one in a series of eight. Together they make up a women's kit. Each booklet is made up of material about women's lives from the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and England. The themes of the booklets are:

Women's Days	Finding Paid Work
Childcare	Working Conditions
Health	Violence in the Home
Housework	Women Working Together

The kit is intended for use by women in English as a Second Language classes, literacy groups and other women's groups. We hope the kit will help women to get together to think and talk about their lives.

The following women put together the kit: Gwen Davies, Amy Gottlieb, Jenny Horsman, Linzi Manicom. With help from: Rachel Epstein, Maureen Simpkins and Lynda Yanz.

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Cover graphic from: SPEAK, South Africa

Women who go out to work often have to arrange childcare themselves.

This book shows what some women from Zimbabwe and South Africa think about childcare.

Making sure children are looked after all day long can be a problem for women.

One way to think about a problem is to act it out. From Zimbabwe, here is a story for a group to act out. Women in Zimbabwe use the questions to help them think about solutions to the problem.

You can act the story out or just read it. Perhaps you could think about how the questions apply to your lives.

From: Women's Problems, Zimbabwe Publishing House



Story to Act

Mai Moyo is very active in the village women's group. One day she visits her friend Mai Mubaiwa. She asks Mai Mubaiwa why she is often absent from women's meetings.

Mai Mubaiwa replies that she likes going to meetings but she doesn't know what to do with Chisi. If she takes Chisi with her, Chisi cries and disturbs the meeting. As a mother of a young child she finds it hard to go out, because she is always busy looking after Chisi.

In this story, the "Mai" means mother which is a polite way of talking to a woman.
Chisi is Mai Mubaiwa's baby.

Discuss Together

1. (a) What did you notice in this play?
(b) Why does Mai Mubaiwa find it hard to go out?
 2. Do mothers of young children in your area have a similar problem?
 3. How does a mother feel if she is always busy looking after young children?
 4. What can we do together to improve childcare in our area?
-

Good care for children can be hard to arrange and hard to find.

Children who do not have good care may be in danger.

Often women have to solve the problem of childcare alone.

In Canada women are often responsible for finding childcare. Although the number of daycare centres has increased, in some places it is still hard to find good childcare. When women do find daycare it often costs more than they can afford.

From: **SPEAK, South Africa**

PROPER CARE FOR OUR CHILDREN!

I leave home at 5 a.m. to catch the train to work. I get home at 6 p.m. In between these hours I worry all the time about my children. I worry about them on the roads, I worry about them when they're sick. I work because I want to give my children the best, also because my husband does not earn enough. I earn R50.00* a week.

*R50.00 means 50 rand. This is about \$32 in Canadian money.



WHOSE PROBLEM IS THIS?

Why should it be the problem of every mother alone?

Should a mother get cut on the machine at work because her mind was far away at home with her children?

The problem of childcare is the problem of both parents — of mother and father. It is the problem of all the workers in a factory, and in a community. It is a problem that all workers should stand together to act on.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

One woman will tell you “I worry about my children all day. I know the aunty* I leave them with doesn’t give them the food I leave for them.”



Another woman will say “I worry because I don’t know what goes on at the aunty’s house. My child is too young to talk so she can’t tell me. But she doesn’t look happy.”

And another will say “I leave my children alone locked in the house. I worry sick about them but what else can I do? I need to work to feed them.”

Some can leave their children in crèches*. Others must leave them in the care of older children. Then the older ones miss their schooling.

*Aunty — a women doing childcare.

*crèches — daycare centres



WHO SHOULD PAY FOR CHILDCARE?

The employers and the government benefit from the work of all workers. They make profits and run the country on the sweat of workers. Workers are paid just enough to keep alive and to continue working. We should all demand the employers and the government do something about the care of children of working parents.

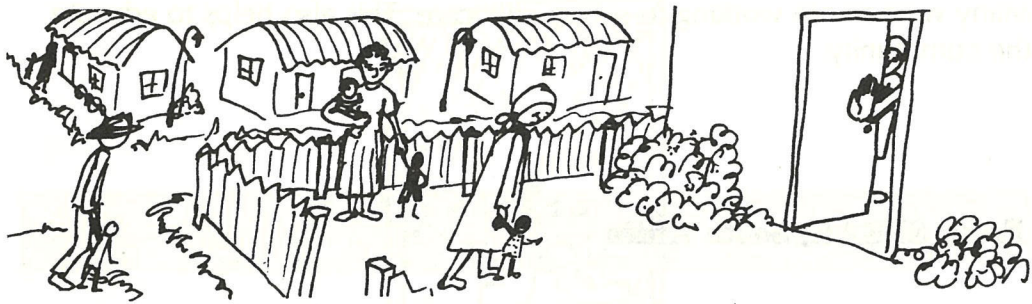
Many women are working to set up childcare. This also helps to educate the community.

From: SPEAK, South Africa

WOMEN ORGANIZING CHILD CARE

Here is some idea of what women are doing about childcare and also some idea of the problems they face.





CRÈCHES*

Emmy Mbambo, 69 years old, from Kwa Mashu* talked about how she started a crèche in Kwa Mashu in 1960. "There were children dying every day. The mothers stayed home. When I asked why, they said because they have children. There was no food, but there was nowhere to leave the children. I went from house to house visiting parents. I told them that I wanted to offer a place for children so that mothers could work. I asked the Durban Corporation for a hall and they let me use one that used to house cattle. The welfare gave us some food for the children.


*Crèche — daycare

*Kwa Mashu is a township for black people close to Durban in South Africa.

I was earning very little and so was my husband. I didn't care how much I earned. All I cared about was the children. I used to come home very tired. Sometimes parents would leave their children until 7 pm. and sometimes those who worked night-shift never came at all — I would bring those children home with me.

After some time more and more parents got to know about the crèche. They wanted to send their children. The Durban Corporation then built two creche buildings. Later more creches were built in different sections of Kwa Mashu."





**WE DEMAND
FREE CHILD-CARE!**



**AND UNTIL WE HAVE THAT
LET US ORGANISE OUR OWN!**



THANK YOU

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ABOUT US

The Participatory Research Group (PRG) is a collective of activists, educators and researchers working for social change. Since 1976 we have produced a range of materials, including booklets, bibliographies and slide shows. We also produce a bi-annual newsletter, organize workshops and conferences and have a resource centre for public use. We work with literacy, women's and community groups, labour and native people.

The International Council for Adult Education, Women's Program is presently coordinated from the office of the Participatory Research Group, in consultation with representatives from various regions.

The Women's Program works with individuals and groups in different regions of the world who are exploring and developing popular forms of education which reflect and address women's issues. Our aim is to contribute to the development of a feminist popular education that makes connections between broad social struggles, and the personal issues and oppression women face daily.

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