

# Women's Kit Introduction



Speak

## About this kit...

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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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### About this Kit...

The Women's Kit is a series of eight booklets. Each booklet is made up of excerpts from material about women's lives from Latin America, Africa and England.

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.



Speak

### The Themes...

The themes of the booklets are:

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

Women's Days:

Women work long hours, whether they grow food for the family, are homemakers or do paid work. Women who do paid work and housework do a "double day".

Childcare:

Women usually have sole responsibility for care of children or have to arrange for someone else to provide care. It is hard for women who work outside the home to find good childcare.

Health:

Good food, good water, and good housing are all important for good health. But other aspects of life are also essential to a broad definition of health.

Housework:

Housework takes a long time every day and women usually have to do it all, but this work is often not valued. Women look at who benefits from this work.

Finding Paid Work:

It is not easy for women to get paid work so they often have to take jobs with low wages and poor conditions. Sometimes they can not get work at all. This is discrimination against women.

Working Conditions:

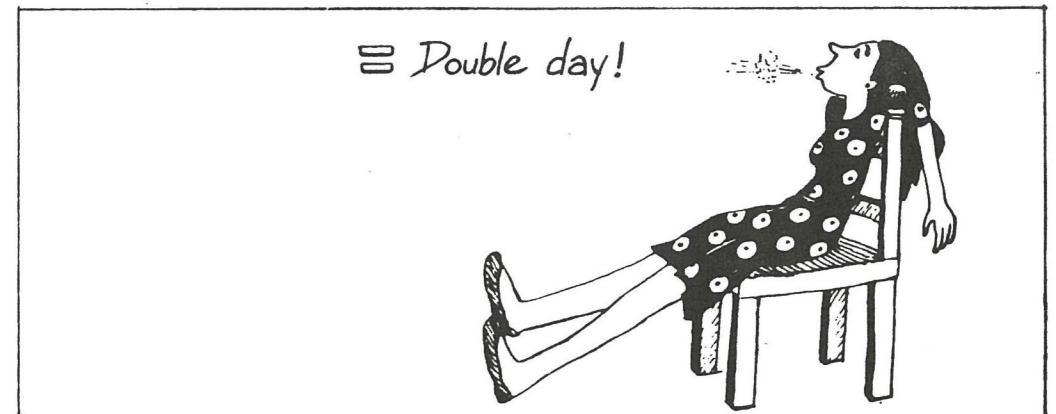
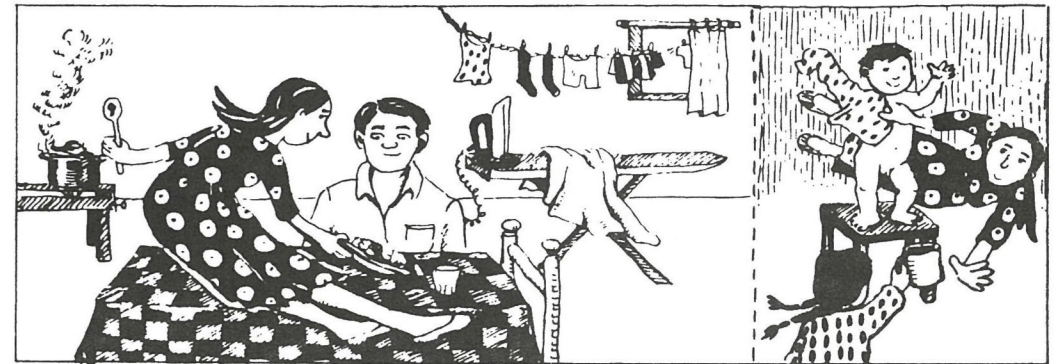
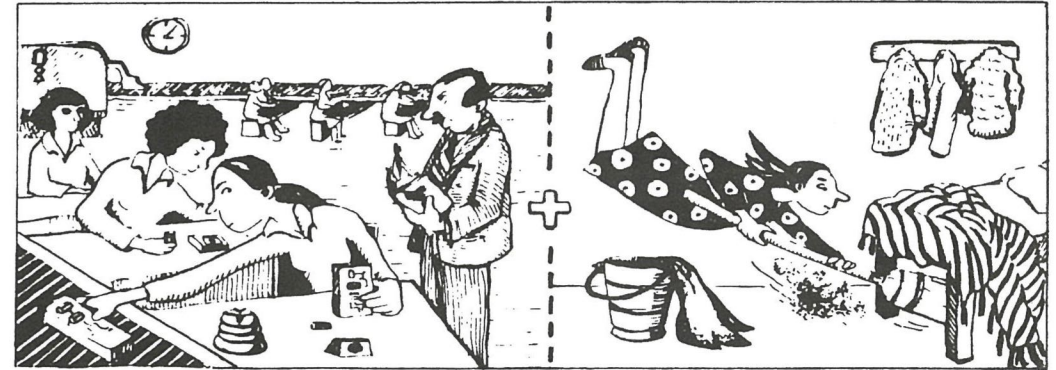
Many women work as domestic workers and in factories where their working conditions are often poor. Women suffer sexual harassment in the workplace.

Violence in the Home:

Women's lack of power makes them victims of violence. But when women start to talk to each other they can begin to support each other. There are many ways to work together to stop this violence.

Women Working Together:

Women work together to solve the problems in their lives. Often women's concerns are not heard when they are in a group with men. When women learn to work together they can bring about changes in their lives.



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### The purpose of the booklets...

The Participatory Research Group (PRG) is committed to making links between women in North America and Third World countries so that we can learn from each other's experience and build international solidarity. We are committed to education for social change and we produce educational materials which encourage people to look critically at their own reality.

As coordinators of the Women's Program of the International Council for Adult Education, PRG has contact with Third World women's groups and access to some of the educational materials that are being produced by and for women in different regions of the world. The original idea for these booklets came from PRG's wish to make this material more widely available to women in Canada.

People learn best when their own needs and experience are at the centre of the learning situation, and when they are free to direct the learning. When women are learners in English as a Second Language and literacy classes their lives outside the classroom must be acknowledged. The material in this kit describes many everyday issues in women's lives and provides relevant and stimulating material so that women can improve their English skills while considering real problems.

The kit is intended to be the basis for discussion about women's experiences — as homemakers, paid workers, and mothers. Our aim is to encourage women to engage in discussion and critical thinking about their own lives.

In doing so they may see the similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of women living in Third World countries. We hope that instructors and group leaders using these materials will encourage women to think about the views expressed in the excerpts and discuss their opinions to see where they agree or disagree with the materials.

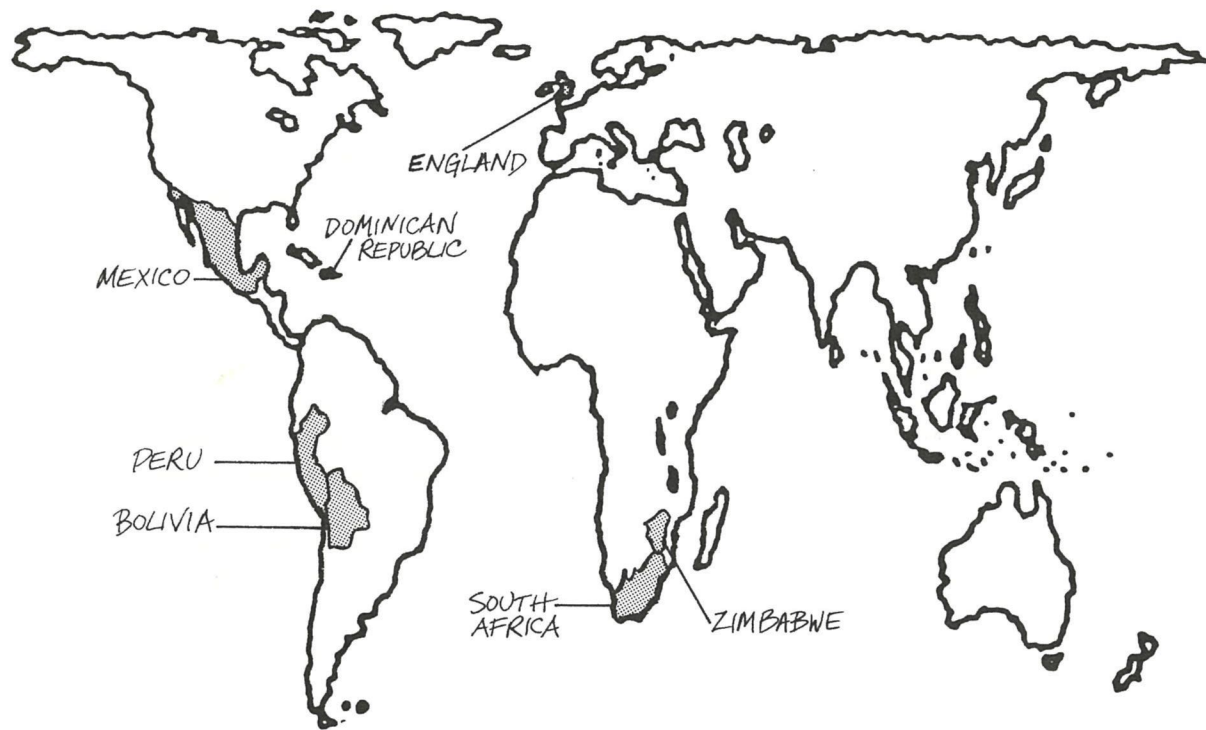
We hope the material will prompt women to move from their individual situations to identifying common experiences within their group and in comparison with other women.

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After working with a particular theme from the kit a group might want to carry out their own research. For example after reading the Women's Days booklet each woman might describe her day, hour by hour, and discuss the differences in the class. They might go on to compare the routine of their days in Canada and in their countries of origin. This could be compared with the day-to-day routines of their mothers or grandmothers, women from other social and economic classes, or women from other countries. The similarities and differences would provide the basis for discussion and analysis and for written work. Similarly, each booklet could be the basis for further research and discussion.

Women might want to find out more about a particular country featured in the kit or about women's lives in one country. Resources for this research are available in local libraries or through the sources mentioned in the resource section at the end of this booklet. Local women from different countries may also be good resource people.





### The groups....

In the kit we have included material from groups in Africa — South Africa and Zimbabwe; Latin America — Bolivia, Mexico, Peru and the Dominican Republic; and England. The excerpts in the kit are from a selection of materials we were able to collect. They are not representative geographically, and they do not represent the full range of groups who are producing such learning materials for women in different parts of the world.

The section that follows provides some information on the groups that wrote the materials in the kit. This section is presented in plain English so that it will be clear for learners to read for themselves:

### SPEAK

SPEAK is the name of a group in Durban, South Africa. Black people in South Africa speak the language of their tribe as well as English or Afrikaans.

In South Africa there is a system called apartheid. Apartheid means the separation of racial groups. The whites lead very comfortable lives in the cities and on big farms. The apartheid government forces black, mixed race and Indian people to live outside the cities where they work. These areas are called townships. Other black people must live in poor rural areas called bantustans. Many women live in the bantustans while their husbands are forced to migrate to work in the mines or the factories. There is little land in the bantustans and women struggle to grow enough food for their families.

In 1982 some women who were members of a women's group started a magazine which they called SPEAK. It is about the problems in women's lives.

The women work as a collective. They make decisions, write articles and put out the magazine together. Sometimes other women help with the magazine as well.

We have used many pieces from SPEAK magazine in this kit.

The magazine comes out monthly. In it, South African women write about their lives. They talk about the work they are doing to improve their lives.

SPEAK Collective  
P.O. Box 19375  
Domerton  
4015  
Durban  
South Africa



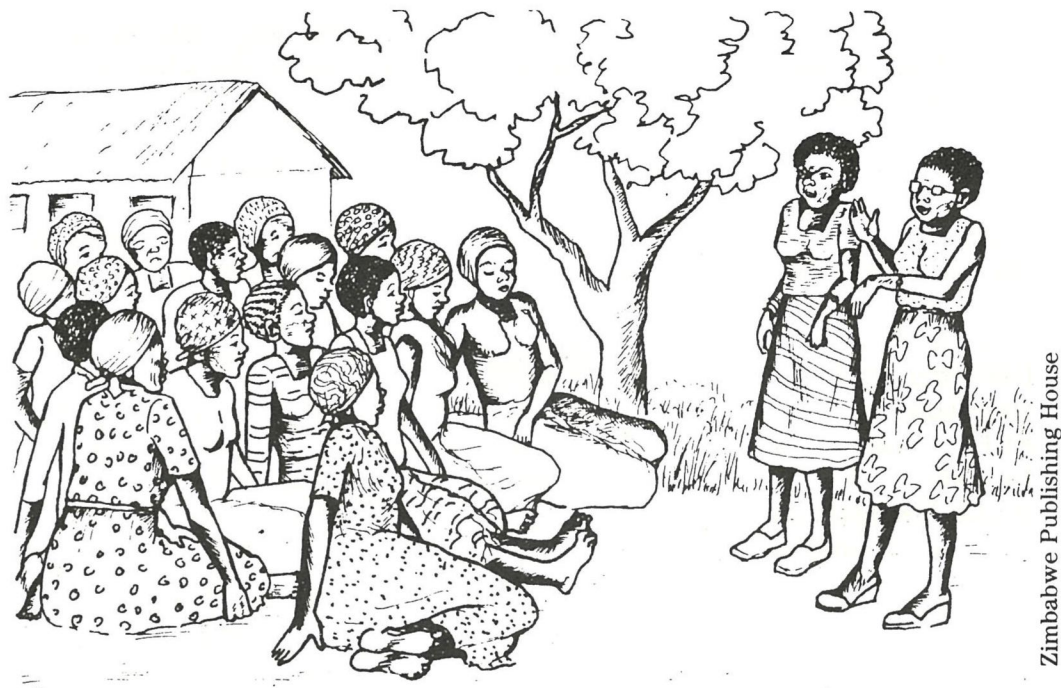
## The Zimbabwe Publishing House

The Zimbabwe Publishing House (ZPH) is in Zimbabwe, Southern Africa. People in Zimbabwe learn to speak the language of their tribe and many also learn English.

Zimbabwe was like South Africa. It had racist laws. Black people fought to change the society. In 1970 Zimbabwe won its independence. Now the people are working to build a society where there is no racial oppression.

ZPH started in 1981. It publishes books to encourage people to talk about their own lives and to solve community problems.

The Women of Africa series of books was written especially for women. The series was started when the members of some women's groups got together to take a course in leadership. They could not find good books to study, so they wrote their own. These books help to bring new ideas to women's groups.



Zimbabwe Publishing House

Many of the booklets in this kit have stories from one book in the series: Women's Problems.

Women's Problems was written by Kathy Bond-Stewart with women who were learning together in a group. The book uses plays and pictures to look at women's problems in Zimbabwe. Women using the book can act out the plays and discuss the issues and then look for ways to change things.

Zimbabwe Publishing House (PVT) Ltd  
P.O. Box BW-350  
Harare  
Zimbabwe

## CIPAF

CIPAF (Centro de Investigacion para la Accion Feminina), is a women's research centre in The Dominican Republic, in the Caribbean. In the Dominican Republic people speak Spanish.

The group started in 1980. It carries out research on the life and working conditions of women. They have studied women agricultural workers and workers in the free trade zones. They have also studied women's health issues and sexual violence. They produce simple materials on women's health and workplace issues.

They also carry out workshops with women to share the information they have learnt.

In this kit we have used a book called: No to Sexual Violence.

No to Sexual Violence (No! A la Violencia Contra La Mujer) is about violence against women. It looks at why it happens and the things we can do to try to stop it happening.

Centro de Investigacion para la Accion Feminina (CIPAF)  
Apartado Postal 1744  
Santo Domingo  
Republica Dominicana



Centro de Investigacion para la Accion Feminina

### Gregoria Apaza Women's Centre/CIDEM

The Gregoria Apaza Women's Centre (Centro de la promocion de la mujer "Gregoria Apaza") and CIDEM (Centro de Informacion y Desarrollo de la Mujer) are both in Bolivia, in Latin America. In Bolivia people speak Spanish.

The Gregoria Apaza Centre is named after a woman who united the two native peoples of Bolivia. She led them in a fight against Spanish oppression in 1871.

The women of this centre give workshops and study the roles of women in Bolivia. They gather resources and give support to women who are working to make all people in Bolivia equal.

CIDEM supports women's groups in poor countries. They train women leaders and help with the organization of groups. They also provide legal aid and health care for domestics.

In this kit we have used one book from the Gregoria Apaza Centre: Women have a way, and two produced jointly by both centres. They are part of a series on the law: Our Laws: ...could it be that the more he beats me the more I like it? and Our Laws: ...and when we return who will care for us? The Ministry of Planning also helped with this series.

Women have a way ( Las Mujeres Tenemos un Camino?) is about women's lives and women's liberation.

Our Laws: ...could it be that the more he beats me the more I like it? (Nuestras Leyes: ...Y Cuando Vuelvas Nadie Te Va A Querer) is about violence against women. It looks at why it happens and what to do about it.

Our Laws: ...and when you return no one will care for you (Nuestras Leyes "Acaso Mientras Mas Me Pega Mas La Quiero?") is about women working as domestic servants. It looks at the bad conditions of work and the laws about this work.

Centro de Promocion de la Mujer  
Gregoria Apaza  
Casilla 21170  
La Paz  
Bolivia

Centro de Informacion  
y Desarrollo de la Mujer  
Casilla 3961  
La Paz  
Bolivia



Gregoria Apaza Women's Centre

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## “Women and the Border Program” SEDEPAC

The “Women and the Border Program” of SEDEPAC (Programa “Frontera y Mujeres” de SEDEPAC — Servicia, Desarrollo y Paz) is in Mexico, in Central America. In Mexico people speak Spanish.

SEDEPAC works with poor people in the towns and in the countryside of Mexico. It helps people to improve the way they live.

SEDEPAC’s “Women and the Border” program works with women working in the electronics industry in the Free Trade Zone. It is concerned with health education.

The Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City worked with SEDEPAC to find out about the working conditions of the women in the electronics industry. The information was written in booklets in simple language. These booklets were shown to the workers. They made suggestions about the language and the pictures. Then a set of booklets were printed and distributed amongst the workers.

In the kit we used one booklet from this set: Women, Work and Health in the Micro-electronics Industry.

Women, Work and Health in the Micro-electronics Industry (Mujer, Trabajo y Salud en las Maquiladoras Electrico-electronicas) is the first book in the set. It looks at the advantages and disadvantages of working for women. The book describes the tasks and the materials that are used in micro-electronics and the illnesses they can cause.

Programa “Frontera y Mujeres” de SEDEPAC  
Apdo Postal No. 61-024  
06600 Mexico City  
Mexico D.F.

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## Popular Education with Women

Popular Education with Women (Educacion Popular con Mujeres) was a project carried out in Mexico.

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It was an educational project with women living in towns. The project looked at women’s health. A group of women met and discussed their problems and this information was used to produce a booklet.

We have used this booklet in the kit, it is called Popular Recipes.

Popular Recipes (Recetario Popular) is a book of traditional recipes and information on health. It also talks about women’s role in the home and in society.

The book is distributed by:  
Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana-Zochimilco  
Calz. del Hueso No. 1100  
Col. Villa Quietud  
Delegacion Coyoacan 04960  
Mexico D.F.





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## Flora Tristan Women's Centre

Flora Tristan Women's Centre (Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan) is in Peru, in South America. In Peru people speak Spanish.

In Peru many women work with their families on farms. They grow food for themselves and to sell at the market.

Women started the centre in 1979. They called it Flora Tristan after a woman from Peru who lived in the 1800s. She helped working class women make their lives better.

Women in the group study the history of women, and women in industry. They help women with legal aid. They work with other groups to help them to understand problems and find solutions. They give workshops and help to educate young women.

The women work as a cooperative. This means they share the work and make decisions together.

We included parts of two books in this kit: All Women Work and Sexual Harassment at Work.

All Women Work (Todas Las Mujeres Trabajamos) is about women's paid work and women's work at home.

Sexual Harassment at Work (Hablando de Delitos: El Asedio Sexual en el Trabajo) talks about sexual violence.

Centro de la Mujer Peruna Flora Tristan  
Parque Hernan Velarde 42  
Lima 1  
Peru

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## Peru Women's Association

The Peru Women's Association (Asociacion Peru Mujer) is in Lima, Peru.

The group works for social change by strengthening women's organiza-



Flora Tristan

tions and training women leaders. They also run a mother and child health service and family planning service. They offer legal aid to poor women.

They encourage research about women's lives and create booklets with this information.

In the kit we have used one booklet: What is Health?

What is Health? (Que es la Salud? Organizacion y Salud) is about all the things people need to be healthy.

Asociacion Peru Mujer  
Apartada 949  
Lima 100  
Peru

Being healthy is being able to develop one's potential



Peru Women's Association

## The Peckham Publishing Project

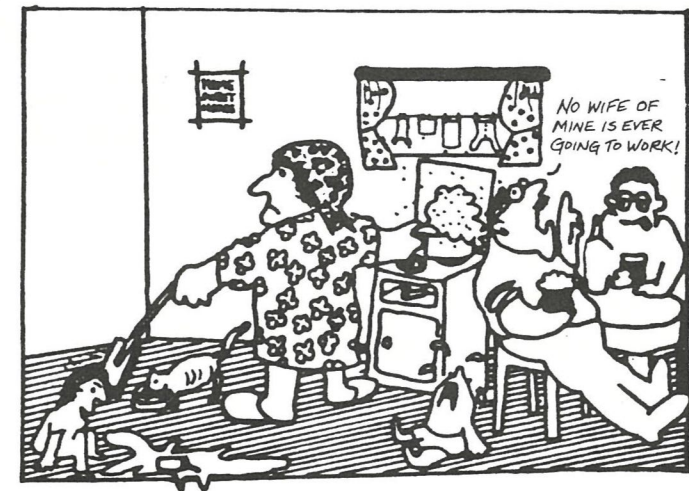
The Peckham Publishing Project, is in Peckham. Peckham is an area of poverty and high unemployment in London, England. In England people speak English.

The Peckham Publishing Project is part of the Bookplace, a community bookshop. People from the Bookplace also run literacy classes for adults. The publishing project publishes books by and for people in the community. A group of local people decide what to publish, and get their books ready for printing. Most of the books are about local people's real experiences. Some of the books are by adult literacy students at the Bookplace.

In this kit we have used parts of one book: I Want to Write it Down, written by women in an adult literacy class.

In the book they talk about their lives as women. A lot of the book is about the kind of work women have to do because they do not have training or because they have children to look after. It is also about the new jobs that women are doing that used to be seen as jobs for "men only".

Peckham Publishing Project  
The Bookplace  
13 Peckham High Street  
London SE15  
England



Speak

## Resources...

There are many resources which can be used to help women think more deeply about their own experiences.

Addresses for all the groups mentioned here are listed at the end of the booklet.

In most areas there are local women's organizations. Many of these produce resource material on women's issues. Some of these groups work and produce materials on a particular issue. Ask around in your area to find out what groups exist. In some areas there are local lists of women's groups and services. In some cities there is a listing in the Yellow Pages called "Women's Organizations and Services" which can be a starting point for contacting women's groups.

If you can't locate groups locally there are several national lists of women's groups:



Listing of Women's Groups 1984, Canada, Secretary of State, Women's Program

Connexions Directory of Canadian Organizations for Social Justice, 1987 — Gender Equality section

Everywoman's Almanac, The Women's Press — Women's Centres and Resource Groups

Audio-visuals are useful supplementary materials. A catalogue of women's audio-visual resources from many parts of the world is available from:

ISIS

Catalogues are also available from several Canadian distribution centres:

Beyond The Image, National Film Board of Canada

Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre

DEC Films

International Development Education Resource

Association (IDERA)

YWCA Audio-Visual Materials

Many of these audio-visual resources can also be borrowed at no cost from local public libraries or university libraries.

If there are no local women's groups in your area and you can't find any locally-produced materials, contact the national women's organizations as they also produce some materials:

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

National Action Committee on the Status of Women

YWCA

Women's Bureaus of many of the Federal and Provincial Ministries also produce materials. One listing of print and visual materials is:

The Women's Resource Catalogue, produced by The Secretary of State, Women's Program.

Some of the booklets may raise questions about what services are available for women in your area. For instance, do women know how to contact their local shelter or safe house? Do they know how to find out what childcare is available locally? Directories of women's groups and services provide much of this information. Crisis services are also listed at the front of the telephone book.



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#### Addresses

Beyond The Image,  
National Film Board of Canada  
P.O. Box 6100  
Montreal,  
Quebec H3C 3H5

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
Box 1541  
Station B  
Ottawa  
Ontario K1P 5R5

Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre  
67A Portland Street  
Toronto  
Ontario M5V 2M9

Connexions Directory of Canadian Organizations for Social Justice  
Special issue of the Connexions Digest of Resources and Groups  
for Social Change  
Winter 1987 Vol. 10 No. 2-3  
427 Bloor Street West  
Toronto  
Ontario M5S 1X7

DEC Films  
229 College Street  
Toronto  
Ontario M5T 1R4

International Development Education Resource Association (IDERA)  
IDERA Films  
2524 Cypress Street  
Vancouver  
British Columbia V6J 3N2

ISIS  
Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30  
00186 Rome  
Italy

National Action Committee on the Status of Women  
344 Bloor Street  
#505  
Toronto  
Ontario M5S 1W9

The Secretary of State  
Women's Program  
Ottawa  
Ontario K1A 0M5

The Women's Press  
Everywoman's Almanac,  
229 College Street  
#204  
Toronto  
Ontario M5T 1R4

YWCA Audio-Visual Materials  
Resource Centre  
YWCA of Canada  
80 Gerrard Street  
Toronto  
Ontario M5B 1G6



1997  
 The Social Work and Health  
 Care Act  
 1997



I, THE SISTER, AM  
 A NURSE, AND I  
 FEEL MY HUSBAND  
 MET I BEGAN TO SEE  
 MANY WAYS THAT  
 PEOPLE ARE NOT

Everyman's Health  
 123 College Street  
 1997

SO I TALKED TO MY FRIENDS AND  
 TOLD THEM WHAT WAS GOING ON. THEY  
 TOLD ME THEIR HUSBANDS BEAT THEM  
 TOO. I THOUGHT IT OVER AND  
 THERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO  
 WE GET A GROUP TO HELP



CHILDREN'S GROUPS AND SUPPORT SERVICES



Speak

