



Enclosed is a report of the WOMEN OF CHICAGO Conference. The conference was held on March 15-16, 1985 at The Conference Center of The Institute of Cultural Affairs, 4750 North Sheridan Road, Chicago. The report that follows is derived from the returned evaluation forms that each participant was asked to complete. Eighty-four people responded....about 50% of paid registrations.

The report shows both figures and in some cases additional comments. These comments, which may or may not be helpful interpretation, are strictly my own.

The purpose of the WOMEN OF CHICAGO Conference was to provide a forum of interchange between existing networks of women in the Chicago area. Too often we pursue work and interests only in our own field of endeavor. Our intent was to give women the opportunity to step outside the usual frame of reference to share approaches that work and begin to see how we can use our various networks to solve many of the problems that our groups and organizations encounter.

Since the United Nations Decade For Women closes in July of this year, it was our hope that this occasion could provide a dimension of celebration for the many accomplishments of all women and could be used to 'bring the globe' into our midst to serve as a reminder of our global interdependence.

It was never our intention to begin another women's group. As we stated from the first, our interest would be in assisting existing groups and organizations to be more effective in their programs and delivery of services. Perhaps the idea of 'Creating Future Partnerships' will be pursued; we certainly do hope so. Without the creation of these partnerships, it is possible that many existing groups will not be able to survive. The competition for funds and volunteer hours of members beyond paid staff are but two major areas of concern for the future of any service organization. Further, there is a need to create partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors. Finally, the partnerships that are created between groups and specific neighborhood needs will be crucial to the future.

Thank you for your participation in WOMEN OF CHICAGO. We hope you enjoyed the conference as much as we did. We also look forward to working with you in the future and to provide again a forum for interchange. Please keep in touch with your ideas.

Mary Warren Moffett
For the Steering Committee
And The Institute of Cultural Affairs

* How important was each of the following in your decision to attend WOMEN OF CHICAGO?

| | Deciding Factor | Somewhat Important | Unimportant |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| An opportunity to meet others with interests both similar and different from my own | 59 | 21 | 1 |
| An opportunity to learn more about subjects of interest to me | 48 | 29 | 2 |
| To be a part of celebrating the UN Decade for Women | 30 | 30 | 15 |
| An opportunity to reaffirm the potential of the women of Chicago | 34 | 37 | 8 |
| Other reason(s) (following were mentioned) | 10 | | |
| To let others know what I'm doing | | | |
| Came for Resource Fair | | | |
| Specifically invited | | | |
| A convenor | | | |
| Learn more about ICA | | | |
| Develop skills | | | |
| Share evolution of consciousness | | | |

*REMINDER: Please keep in mind as you read the charts through the next few pages that they are based on the 84 returned evaluation forms....representing approximately 50% of paid registrations to the conference.

I found out about Women of Chicago (check all that apply)

| | Number | % |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----|
| Received Brochure | 35 | 42 |
| through mail | 19 | 23 |
| at a meeting | 16 | 19 |
| From a friend | 34 | 40 |
| Newspaper/radio/TV | 2 | .02 |
| Today's Chicago Woman Calendar | | |
| Chicago Information Service | | |
| Word of mouth | 13 | 15 |
| Other sources | | |
| Convenors/organizers | 9 | 11 |

Comments on Attendance

1. A large percentage (55%) of people who came to the conference heard about it from a friend or by word of mouth.
2. The brochure accounted for 42% of attendance
3. Announcements at meetings, with brochures, was helpful in getting responses.
4. Leaving brochures at organizational offices for random pick up by individuals was not fruitful, though we had targeted up to 1,000 brochures to be used that way.
5. The low cost of the conference did not seem to be a factor in attendance; only one person commented about the low cost being a factor in her attendance.
6. Availability of scholarships did not get attendees. Visits with community organization leaders did not yield participants; several came and paid their own way. More effort could be made through personal contacts in the neighborhoods in the future. Programs probably need to be offered in those neighborhoods before those women would attend a citywide conference.
7. The location (far North Side) did not seem to be a block to participation. Free parking was one factor in keeping the cost low, and people appreciated that. Several telephone inquiries about the ICA indicated interest in the organizing sponsor, but many people came without knowing anything about the ICA. The low profile of the ICA in Chicago may have been a factor for some people not attending.

8. Attendance was about 50% higher on Friday than on Saturday. However, the people who attended on Saturday, for the most part indicated they could not come on Friday because of their work. The day and a half seemed, therefore to split the difference. More women than not can get the day from work to attend on Friday.
9. Childcare was available both days at a low cost. Only 2 people used the service. We felt that in today's world, women need to have childcare provided, but it did not seem to affect attendance one way or other.
10. About two-thirds of the convenors attended more of the conference than their session. We felt this was an important factor concerning future support of women by those who are in leadership positions.
11. About 50% of the registrations came in the last two weeks; reservations were made by telephone in the last week.
12. There is no way to know whether or not a fuller explanation in the brochure of the conference, its sessions and their leadership would have yielded a high percentage of additional participation. Our feeling is that in the future every effort should be made to do that, even though names might have to be starred as unconfirmed. Certainly, the Jane Addams Conference and the Women in Charge Conference had brochures much superior to ours, and they indicate that the brochure was the key to participation.

AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS RESPONDING

| Age | Number Attending |
|---------|------------------|
| 15-20 | 2 |
| 21-29 | 10 |
| 30-39 | 16 |
| 40-49 | 23 |
| 50-59 | 20 |
| 60-69 | 9 |
| over 69 | 4 |

THE WORKSHOP/ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Which workshops/roundtables did you attend and what did you think of them??

| | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
|--|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| <u>Friday Morning-Sessions</u> | | | | | |
| A. The U.N. Decade For Women | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | |
| B. Chicago's Link With The World's Women | 5 | 2 | | | 1 |
| C. What Makes Networks Work? | 6 | 3 | | | |
| D. Women As Entrepreneurs | 4 | 3 | | | |
| E. Facing The Community's Hard Problems | 3 | 4 | | | |
| Unlettered | 1 | 2 | | | |

Friday Afternoon Sessions

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| F. Women And World Peace | 2 | 5 | 1 | | |
| G. Wellness And Today's Woman | 5 | 2 | | | |
| H. Growing Old In America | 2 | 4 | | | 1 |
| I. Women And Spirituality | 2 | 6 | 2 | | 1 |
| J. The Status Of Women: Political And Economic Justice | 3 | 5 | 1 | | 1 |
| Unlettered | 3 | 2 | | | 1 |

Saturday Morning Sessions

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| K. The U.N. Decade For Women | 4 | | | | |
| L. What Do We Teach The Children? | 3 | 5 | 2 | | 3 |
| M. What Makes Networks Work? | 2 | 3 | | | |
| N. Chicago's Link With The World's Women | 2 | 3 | | | |
| O. Tools For Leadership | 5 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Unlettered | 5 | 5 | | | |

THE RESOURCE FAIR

The variety of exhibitors in the Resource Fair was a very positive demonstration of the many kinds of activities that involve women across the Chicago area. There were over 40 exhibitors (see attached sheet). The responders graded the Fair: Excellent: 21, Very Good: 30, Good: 20, Fair: 3. We felt it was an important part of the conference and would encourage others planning conferences to include this dimension in future gatherings. We set up the Resource Fair the day before the conference opened (on March 14) and would recommend always doing that; it allowed the day of the conference to start without the bustling around that set up would involve. Many exhibitors came without signs; they had not realized how long it would take them to set up. Also, if people are coming with audio-visual equipment, it is well to know ahead of time so that they can be placed near outlets, etc. Some people arrived the day of the conference with materials that were placed on tables; some of their names may be ommitted from the list.

THE FACILITY

The conference facility received very high marks. We received no complaints during the conference about the services provided. Most comments were quite favorable about the style and simplicity of the conference surroundings. In grading the facility, 36 respondents said it was Excellent, 34 said Very Good, 11 said Good, and 2 said it was Fair. The low cost of doing the conference at the ICA was the most positive factor in our decision to do it there. We could not have provided the services and ambiance in a more public location for twice the cost.

CALIBER OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CONFERENCE

| | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Luncheon Event | 26 | 23 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| Conference Materials | 33 | 23 | 15 | 1 | |
| Workshop Convenors | 44 | 25 | 9 | 2 | |
| Overall Conference | 43 | 26 | 5 | 4 | |

WOMEN OF CHICAGO CONFERENCE
March 15-16, 1985
THE RESOURCE FAIR
(a representative list)

National Forum for Women
National Council of Jewish Women
Ecumenical Women's Center
Urban Academy Women's Committee
Woodstock Conference Center
The Junior League of Chicago, Inc.
Panel of American Women
Women's Health Resources
Women for Peace
Inward Bound Ventures, Inc.
Hull House Association
Women and Children First Bookstore
LENS, International, Inc.
International Visitor's Center
Women's Committee of the World's Fair
Training, Inc.
9th Congressional District Freeze Voters
ACCEPT Program, Cuneo Hospital
World's Fair Authority
Oasis
UNICEF
Osteopathic Center for Children
Discovery Toys
OJAI Foundation
LaLeche League
Institute of Cultural Affairs
Illinois Nuclear Freeze Campaign
Film Project for Women's History and Future
Access Unlimited
Women's Caucus for Art
The Latin School Adult Education Program
Horizons Unlimited
Women Employed
Women United for a Better Chicago
Family Focus
11th Congressional District Freeze Voters
June Brindel, Author
Women in Charge
YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago
Sister Cities International-Sister Cities of Des Plaines
Catholic Women for Reproductive Rights
Older Women's League

With which networks do you most often identify with in your work or volunteer activity?

| | Number | % |
|---------------|--------|----|
| Community | 39 | 46 |
| Business | 22 | 26 |
| International | 25 | 30 |
| Peace | 21 | 25 |
| Education | 35 | 42 |
| Health | 10 | 12 |
| Justice/Law | 7 | 8 |
| Religious | 35 | 42 |
| Arts/Culture | 21 | 25 |
| Government | 9 | 11 |

Would you be interested in attending another event like this conference?
If yes, how often?

| | Number | % | Once a year | Every other year | *Other |
|-----|--------|----|-------------|------------------|--------|
| Yes | 83 | 99 | 60 | 7 | 16 |
| No | 1 | | | | |

*Other included;

- Twice a year
- Once in a while
- After Nairobi
- Like to meet to decide

What aspect of this conference would you like to pursue further?

Many responses to this question indicated a wish to have more occasions like this conference to continue making contacts and networking.

There were responses suggesting future sessions on each of the topics covered in the conference....taking them a step further.

It was suggested by several that there be a way to 'follow-up' the conferences in Nairobi to find out about them and see how the plans made there fit with things planned here in Chicago.

Very specifically, it was suggested that we work toward having an international women's conference in Chicago as a part of the 1992 World's Fair.

It was suggested that we repeat the series of small group dialogues that preceded this conference...for reflection and future planning.

In pointing to the difference they found in the WOMEN OF CHICAGO conference and other conferences they have attended, several themes emerged in the responses.

- a. high participation made possible by workable, smaller groups
- b. more opportunities for interaction, more opportunity to meet and network at lunch, at the Resource Fair.
- c. the diversity of women and their interests, including the international focus, which was mentioned as a positive addition.

Comments:

1. These responses are gratifying in that they show the goals of the conference were met.
2. However, it should be possible to have the same caliber of participation and large attendance. (Maybe it isn't) Hopefully, when future conferences in Chicago are planned, the organizers can succeed in doing both.
3. The convenors were all enthusiastic about assuring high participation in their groups and built that feature in to their planning. The responses to the sessions and the 'excellent' rating throughout the forms for the convenors indicate a good balance of convenor expertise and participant interaction.
4. Other aspects of difference mentioned in the responses included the organization and attention to detail. 'I felt cared for'....'thank you for having things so organized' were typical comments.

QUOTES FROM PERSONAL COMMENTS ON THE CONFERENCE

- 'successful and stimulating'
- 'a very good example of a planned conference'
- 'celebration! thank you for doing it!'
- 'excellently planned and executed'
- 'exemplified feminine qualities'
- 'truly, a new learning experience'
- 'well organized and very informative'
- 'I prefer results to exchange'
- 'loved the Resource Fair'
- 'glad to meet professional women concerned about the world'
- 'I hope to integrate all this good stuff'
- 'glad I participated'
- 'wish I had told more people to come; they missed something'
- 'I would like more'
- 'It was a great event'
- 'Worthwhile....needs more support by women'
- 'Very glad I came'
- 'Didn't focus enough on Chicago issues'
- 'We need a method for creating partnerships'
- 'Impressed by convenors and participant response to workshops'
- 'It was a great event and more fun than I had expected'