

global women's forum

ICA THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Global Women's Forum is a one day forum directed toward woman's historic role in today's changing world. The consult engages women at the point of their own integrity and by discerning their practical vision of the future, focuses on woman's significant participation in the fashioning of tomorrow's society.

GLOBAL WOMEN'S FORUM
a one day consult for women

SITUATION

Women of every nation and circumstance are today part of what has been called the Female Revolution. Self-consciousness about this revolution varies widely; but generally it can be said that there is a gulf between the emergence of a new sense of selfhood resulting from this revolution and authentic modes of engagement in society. Roles also vary greatly within any given society, such as between educated and uneducated or urban and rural women. There are external structural impediments to full social engagement, such as legal restrictions on jobs, property-holding and education. Likewise, there are objective blocks of tradition which associate women solely with home tasks, burden bearing, nursing, subsistence farming or other designated roles. In addition, there are the more internal hindrances perpetuated by women's own image of self-depreciation or by their unwillingness to risk taking responsibility for shaping either society or new patterns of womanhood. Obviously, there is pain and pathos for and among women themselves today, as they are denied participation in the total society, either because of structural injustice or their own decision. But perhaps the more profound tragedy lies in society's cry for leadership to deal with the complex social issues while at the same time being denied the unique human creativity of much of the female population of the globe.

INTENT

Global Women's Forum is a one day program designed to maximize women's participation in the 20th Century world. It acknowledges and affirms the burst of consciousness and creativity present among women everywhere today. Whatever their age or role, pictures of new possibility are offered. This forum is designed to enable women across the world to choose priorities for their lives within the context of our total society's needs. It also provides a collegial bond among women of diverse backgrounds and nationalities as they encounter the pressing issues in their own communities and society as a whole. Part of women's current self-consciousness is related to the creation of stories about womanhood that go beyond outmoded images of their role. The experience of the forum allows each woman to create that new story and begin to think through positive new directions for her life.

DESIGN

Global Women's Forum does not presuppose the issues or the answers that will be generated during the day. Its methods combine the concerns of the individual with the wisdom of the group. In the morning session, the opening talk provides a framework for each woman to look at her own life with its unique relationships and responsibilities. In the dialogue that follows, major blocks to women's authentic participation in society are identified. The morning workshop discerns arenas of needed social change before small units meet to talk through the direction of present trends. At lunch the conversation centers on the qualities of women from the past who have had an influence on the individual participants. Then the afternoon begins with a contextual talk focusing on 20th century social challenges and responses. The workshop following examines possibilities for employing women's creativity and care. During the plenary session, the group suggests specific and practical steps toward engagement. The forum closes with group reflection on the day.

PHASES

Global Women's Forum is a four-phase model which was initiated in 1967. Phase I, basically ten years of research, included pilot testing of forums during the past year in Asia, the Pacific Islands, Europe and North America with over 700 women participating. Phase II, a nine-month demonstration period, is presently underway with ongoing research, program revision, materials creation, and marketing. However, the emphasis of this phase is the training of national women to establish the global faculty network. Phase III, a second nine-month time of acceleration will include final revision of the construct, materials preparation, scheduling and marketing. Phase IV, lasting until 1985, will make the forum available globally on a regular program basis. The forums are presently scheduled for Spring, 1977, in eleven nations including twenty-six major urban centers and four isolated villages. A full evaluation will be made during July, 1977, when Phase III will be planned in detail by a group of representative women from across the globe.



THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS is an intra-global research, training and demonstration group concerned with the human factor in world development. The ICA, a not-for-profit organization, serves twenty-three nations. Among the programs offered around the world are one day community forums called Town Meeting, community reformulation in twenty-four locations entitled Human Development Projects, and specialized consultations and seminars. These programs are funded through government agencies, foundations, corporations, and concerned individuals.



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