



LOCAL WOMEN PARTICIPATE...

The personal survey for this report was born out of the desire of local women to be a part of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women and the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum '85. The survey was a way these women could participate in these world conferences in Nairobi, Kenya without leaving home.

The survey was used in programmes in the early months of 1985. Over 1000 responses were received from:

Kenya
Zimbabwe
Spain
Belgium

Guatemala
India
United States
Japan

Zambia
Canada
Egypt
Austria

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PURPOSE OF SURVEY PROJECT

A network of women affiliated with The Institute of Cultural Affairs decided to create an opportunity for local women to share their experiences of the decade and to link these experiences with women around the world. This network was responsible for the creation and execution of the project. The entire project is related to the third phase of The International Exposition of Rural Development (IERD), which highlights the importance of women's involvement in all aspects of development.

In each country that participated, the women gathered in dialogue groups of 10 to 30. During the first part of the dialogue, women discussed what had happened to them personally during the decade. Next, they filled in the survey. Lastly, the group discussed their answers to

questions in the survey. The settings for the dialogue groups were varied. Discussions were held around office desks and tea tables, in village and urban homes.

A cross-section of women filled out the surveys. They came from all socio-economic levels. They included entrepreneurs, homemakers, physicians, students, attorneys, community workers, architects, religious workers and educators.

The surveys were gathered and sent to an international group of women who met at The Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, USA. It was the purpose of this group to discuss and communicate the common experiences and perceptions of respondents to the survey as they were revealed in the gathered data. The report that follows presents the findings of the survey.

A summary statement with strategic recommendations for the future is found at the end of this report.



IT IS OUR BELIEF...

- That the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, reflect the hopes and aspirations of women throughout the globe.
- That the survey provided an unique way for women to listen and talk together about our global neighbourhoods and make our voices heard in Nairobi.
- That while a number of achievements have been made in the past decade there are still glaring issues concerning women that need to be addressed.
- That there are common threads of concern and understanding which all women share.
- That these threads provide the foundation for women to create a powerful worldwide support system that will enable full partnership in the global community.
- That in this shifting world, women have the capacity to create new forms and expressions of humanity that will take us into the 21st Century.

This report is a compilation of the experiences and values of women in every walk of life, women who are not normally heard or quoted in print.



Being the best me I can be...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are deeply grateful to the women who completed the survey, participated in the dialogues and interchange that made this report possible. We also thank the organizations, companies and families who made it possible for the 22 women to attend the Wingspread Conference.

We acknowledge the gracious hospitality of the Dominican Sisters at Siena Center in Racine, Wisconsin, USA, where we stayed.

We are especially indebted to The Johnson Foundation of Racine, Wisconsin, USA for making the Wingspread Conference possible.

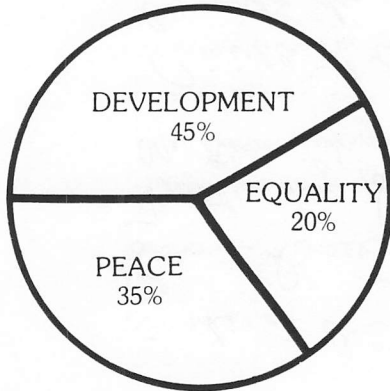
Barbara A. Scott
Lorna Belle Ferguson
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THE WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

HOW WOMEN PERCEIVE THE MAJOR GLOBAL ISSUES

What is one global issue you would like to see the women of the world work on together?



...women around the world share a common bond of care and determination...

The responses to the question were grouped by the decade goals: Equality, Development and Peace. The results are shown in the circle diagram. The accompanying bar chart illustrates the components in each category.

DEVELOPMENT

human rights
environment
family
world awareness
human relations
family planning
hunger & poverty

PEACE

peace & hunger
cooperation & negotiation
arms control
world peace

EQUALITY

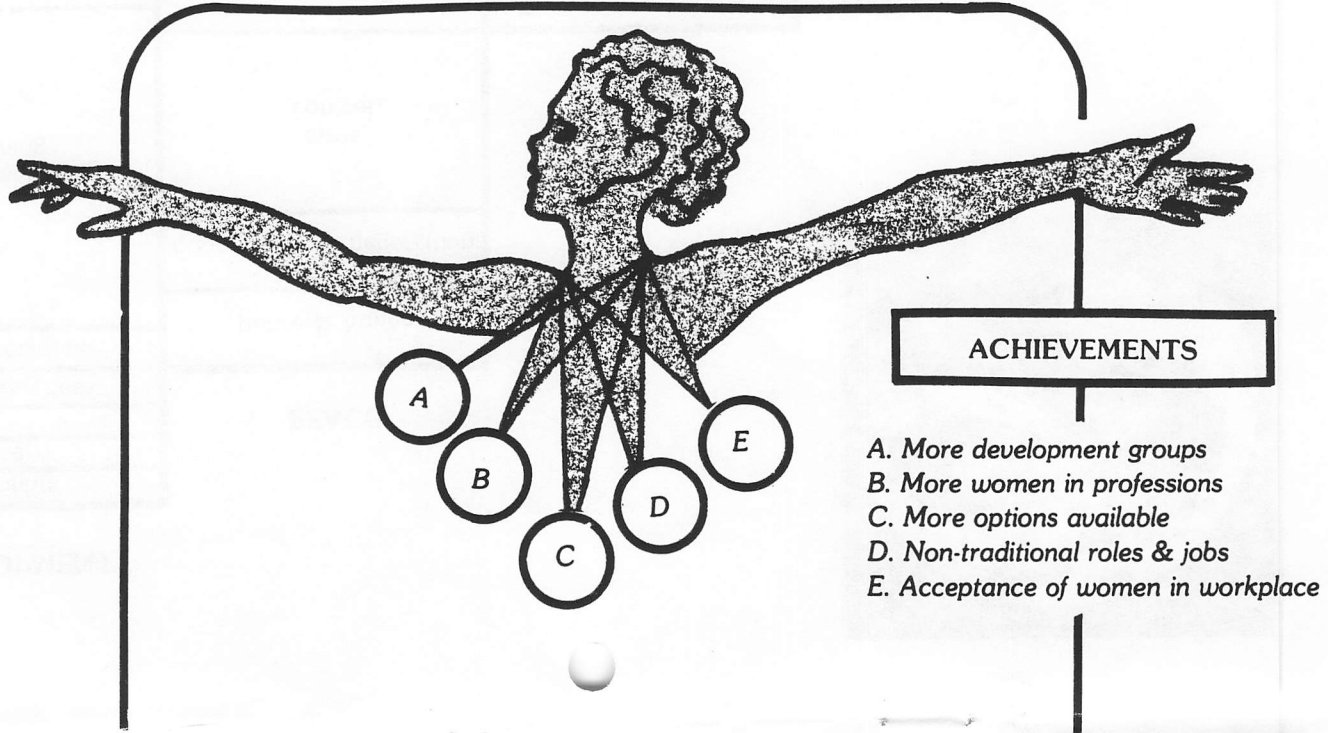
male/female relations
women working together
responsible participation
equality of rights

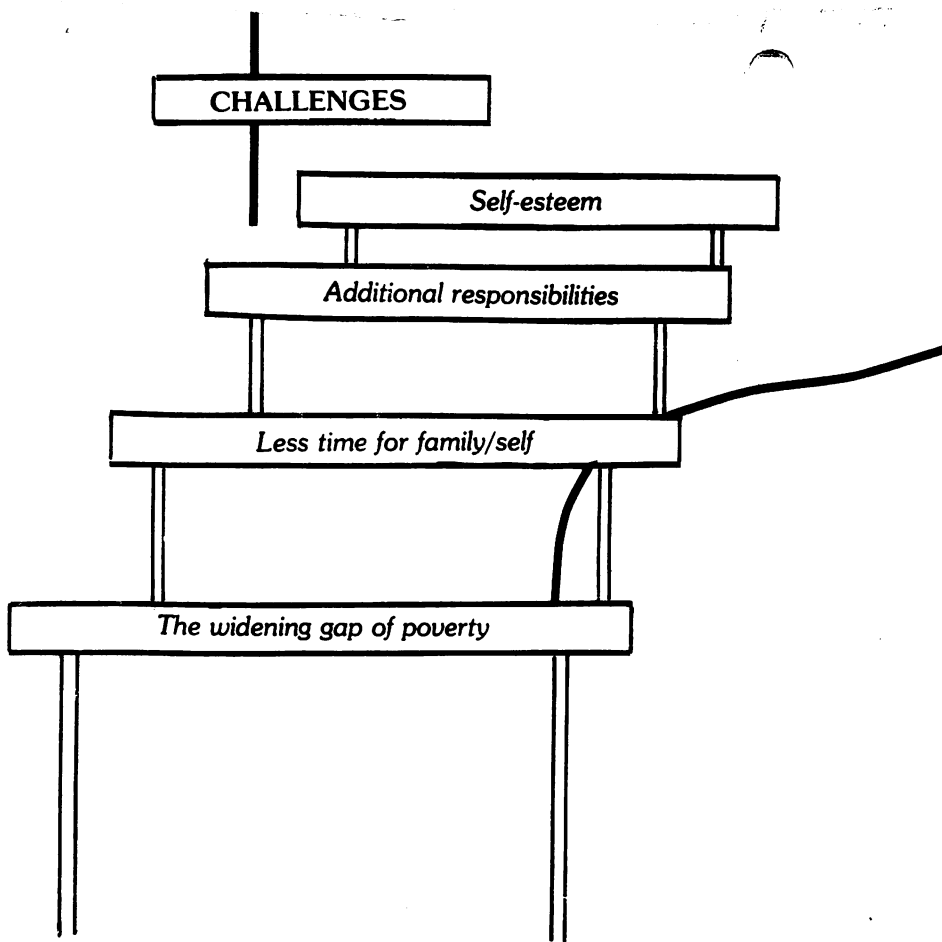


Many women saw a strong connection between development and peace. Although equality was an important global issue, development and peace took priority in the data.

CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DECADE

What has been the most important change in women's work in the last ten years?





During the decade we have seen a blurring of the lines between “men’s work” and “women’s work”. These are positive achievements to report. Women are creating practical networks to meet development needs. Women have entered professional and technical fields. More women are active in political and leadership positions. Accomplishments in the workplace are more recognized.

At the same time there are many challenges to be met. The situation of rural women remains relatively unchanged. Women’s concerns and participation remain marginal. The widening gap of poverty affects women everywhere. The issue of equal pay for equal work remains unresolved in most nations.

Increased work opportunities mean that a woman has additional responsibilities with no corresponding decrease in household and family responsibilities. Most respondents mentioned the absence of time for themselves.

BLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

What blocks women from doing what they see is needed for themselves or for the community?

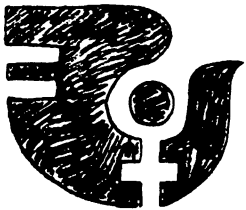
The following are direct quotes from the surveys:

The pressures of daily existence and the many demands on my time restrict me..I have little energy or resources left after working and caring for my family..I hesitate to try to alter my routine or change the system..the pressures of customs and traditions prevent me from seeing beyond my "old" ways of doing things..too many old forms and new rules perpetuate male dominance..I really am too often afraid of responsibility and the pressures against change..my courage fails and I don't know what to do or how to do it..

I find it very difficult to let go of the security and approval of my family and society..there are few images of women that appeal to me..I have not seriously attempted to redefine the vision of a new role for women..I see no way to make a difference in my community..I feel no immediate need to focus the direction of my life..I have not prioritized the options available to me..

Opportunities for education and employment are not available to me..The absence of personal and group interaction prevent me from self development..

2000



The issues of self-esteem and self-confidence were the most often mentioned blocks in the surveys, worldwide. Second to these issues is the lack of opportunities for economic independence that women experience.

WHAT WOMEN ARE TEACHING THE NEW GENERATION

What is the most important thing for mothers to teach their daughters? Their sons?

As women, we continue to play a major role in setting values for the next generation. Responses to the question were grouped by similar intent and listed in order of frequency. Nearly half of us would teach daughters and sons the same things. The answers, however, reveal different priorities for what we would teach daughters and sons.



Some common themes emerged:

- Loving yourself and loving others
- Equality of women
- Developing individual potential
- Instilling personal values
- Preserving family relationships
- Serving the community and world
- Encouraging spiritual values

CONFIDENCE

DAUGHTERS

- Develop positive self-image
- Love and care for others
- Prepare yourself for limitless opportunities
- Be independent; you are equal to all
- Acquire education and skills toward career
- Be honest, responsible, patient polite, strong, respectful
- Care for the world and national development
- Develop religious faith
- Learn sex education and develop moral values
- Develop life skills of homemaking and organization
- Preserve the family
- Care for community and school

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW GENERATION



SONS

- Accept yourself and love others
- Treat women as equals
- Take charge of your life; decide what is best for you
- Be gentle and sensitive
- Be the best you can be at what you do
- Work as partner in family in everyday life
- Pursue constructive career
- Practice honesty and tolerance toward all people
- Care for the world and national development
- Respect everyone regardless of who they are
- Develop religious belief
- Be morally responsible

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP

What is an attribute that today's woman needs to move into leadership roles?

ATTRIBUTES

COMPETENCE

CONCERN

COURAGE

CONFIDENCE

The majority of surveys indicated that confidence and courage were the main qualities that women prize in their role guides. Self-reliance, assurance and boldness marked the leaders. This confidence, along with the spirit to face difficulty with firmness and bravery was the attribute most named.

Over and over responses pointed to the ability which allows a woman to act in accordance with her beliefs in spite of criticism. Concern for the globe, its communities and all its people was the third most named quality. Lastly the respondents recognized the importance of trained, competent leadership.



PERSONAL ROLE MODELS

mother 37%
friends & colleagues 34%
local leaders 22%
family (other) 7%

PUBLIC ROLE GUIDES

Twenty-one percent of the data consisted of women named only once suggesting the emergence of many and varied role models. Each dot on the chart represents 1%. There were not enough women named in the finance, business and labour categories to reflect even 1% of the answers.

CULTURAL				POLITICAL				ECONOMIC		
•••••	•	•••••	•	•••••	•••	•••••	•			
arts	media	religion	education	political	activist	women's advocacy	environ- ment	financial	business industry	labour

NAMING THE LIVING HEROINES

Who are 2-3 women living today that you admire?

Approximately 30% of all answers named the same four women: Mother, Mother Teresa, Margaret Thatcher and Geraldine Ferraro. The last three names appeared across the data of every nation. This was puzzling to the team until we realized that these women share a spotlight in the international media. There were, however, other women who showed up several times in a nation's data, revealing many outstanding women whose accomplishments are not known beyond their own sphere of influence. The women of Kenya most frequently mentioned Jane Kiano who chairs the largest rural women's group. Mama Ngina Kenyatta and Dr. Wnagari Mathai of the Greenbelt Movement were next. Mrs. Sarojam Varadeppan, the president of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), headed the list in India.

*People poised on tiptoe...
leaning toward the prize of
equality, development and
peace.*



*Reach out...claim the wind
for your own.*

THE WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE

Method of analysis

*Dream daring dreams and
have the courage to pursue
them*



Twenty-two women from eight nations gathered at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, USA to create this report. We worked for five days tabulating the data, designing the format and writing the contents of this report. The group's task was the challenge of visualizing and crystallizing ideas while honouring the data of every survey.

We tabulated five sections of the survey: "My World", "My Work", "My Community", "My Family", "Her Story". The database was composed of over 1000 answers to each question in these sections.

Before beginning the task of analysis, the group spent time looking at completed surveys from every nation. Then, the group was divided into five teams, one for each section. The method of analysis was in several steps. First, each team took data for their section and transferred it to individual cards. The asterisked questions of each section were the focus. Next, data from individual nations was grouped. An equal sampling from each nation was used to offset discrepancies in the total number of responses from any one nation.

We utilized group methods and a consensus building process, working in teams and reporting frequently to the whole group. This helped synthesize the data and make conclusions about the presentation. Our techniques allowed for a free flow of ideas uniting our intellectual and intuitive thoughts.

SUMMARY AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking toward the year 2000



This survey project has been a glimpse at what local women think and feel about their lives. Although we still lament the fact that women are not co-partners with full opportunity in every sphere of life or every nation, there have been important and far-reaching changes in the past decade which must be acknowledged. The surveys we have seen point to a hopefulness in the midst of difficulties and to a readiness to participate even further. No woman feels defeated or hopeless.

This project was not intended to be a scientific analysis. It was, from the beginning, seen as an invitation to local women to participate in their own reflection and assessment of this decade. We did not discuss whether or not we agreed or disagreed with the data. A conscious effort was made to let the data emerge..just as it appeared in the tabulation. Nor has it been our purpose to analyze the data by particular location (country of origin, rural or urban), age or economic status. Though that data might provide beginnings for other interpretations, our interest was in looking across the information for common ideas and thoughts and experiences. At the same time, we would not assume to make a case for "women are all alike". Indeed, there is individual and cultural uniqueness that could be explored in every category. However, the points of commonality give clues about women in development programmes and projects in the future.

The issue of self-esteem and self-confidence was the single, most often mentioned constraint women experienced, regardless of age or nation. Much of the work done throughout the decade in research, practice and policy related to women in development, was designed from the observer perspective. This work is invaluable in delineating the arenas of constraints and presenting data in empirical gender statistics: Now the same attention needs to be focussed on issues from the perspective of the women who experience them in their daily lives.

Programmes that deal specifically with the constraint of self-esteem are required on a massive scale. Many women are voicing a cry for the courage and self-confidence to break through their fears of change and new responsibilities. We experience being blocked by factors from within and outside ourselves as results of centuries of being

“second” to men. This is counter-balanced by our desire to nourish self-esteem, strengthen confidence and face new challenges in caring for the well-being of our families, our communities and the world.

Women see clearly the widening gap of poverty, sometimes called the ‘feminization of poverty’ and see that this gap affects them and their children first and with the most devastating effects. Perhaps more than any one thing, being involved in income-generating work gives women a sense of esteem. **Resources must be made available to women for the launching of projects that give them the opportunity to feel their own worth as well as provide a livelihood.**



In talking about achievements in the workplace, there was a clear recognition of some breakthroughs

for women in the decade. The challenges, however, seem to loom even larger. **The need for practical skills training, starting with basic literacy should not be a right any woman has to earn. Until she has the capacity to read and write, she is kept powerless to move into full participation.**

A question does arise as role models are examined. Tabulation revealed no examples of heroines or role models from the economic sphere at the national or global levels. What does this mean? Does this point to the distance that still remains for us to go in the world of work? Or is it possible that women's recent gains in the economic sector are for the most part local rather than national or global?

In order to accomplish the aims of all the organizations and programmes involved in development, women must be full participants in planning and execution. Women are still seen as marginal to the development process. This seems incredible after all the facts have been stated. However, the involvement of women remains something separate from the planning and funding of much of the international development community. Women have, and still do play key roles in the lives of their communities and families. Their experience and knowledge, when included in the planning process, has proven to be beneficial to the entire community.

There needs to be a full range of activities and programmes at the local level to deal with all the problems that exist there. Single projects, however successful they may be, do not thrive in an atmosphere of isolation. This isolation can be as local as the very community in which a project exists. As one woman has stated, "Even our own community did not see the relationship of our project to the total life of the village until other projects were begun in the community".

Women are bridging the gap from isolation to cooperative action. This cooperative action extends beyond the collegial networks of women to partnerships with men. Networking has become a popular process of the decade. Much needs to be done to strengthen the sharing and cooperation that has begun.

Coalitions between the public, private and voluntary sectors in conjunction with local planning, must be pursued. No one of these groups can be successful on its own, at either the regional, national or international level. Where these coalitions have been built, there is clear evidence that the interaction and cooperation between these groups brings the best results for all.

The people of the developed world need to be educated about international development. Misconceptions and misunderstandings prevail among the very people who genuinely want to be part of the solutions. Relief projects and short-term solutions, while alleviating the immediate pain, do not finally resolve the underlying constraints to development. More and more people need to see that the future requires long-term solutions to the desperate plight of many of the world's people.

There is increasing evidence of the actuality of 'the global village'. In fact, the over-riding global issue in the minds of the women of our survey is peace, or development issues related to a peaceful world. Many of the respondents directly related hunger and poverty to world peace. These women see a direct and practical relationship here, not an abstract ideal of peace on earth.

More attention about peace needs to be focussed on the practical issues of health, food and housing. Most respondents expressed a sense of helplessness about dealing with global peace, indicating a vacuum between international affairs and local self-sustenance.



As a team, we feel it was a privilege and an honour to be part of this unique project. We hope that our work can become a working model for others. This decade is not the end of anything...it is a beginning. Our desire is to generate hope for women everywhere and a renewed commitment to the work of Equality, Development and Peace.





ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was presented in a booklet form with one page for demographic information, including such things as nation, age, occupation and marital status. Respondents were asked to be sure they filled in the questions with asterisks. Many women who filled in the survey have expanded the process by sharing the survey with family, friends and colleagues.

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

MY WORLD

Who is one woman in your country's history that you think other women in the world should know about?

Her name, country and when she lived.

Why is she memorable? What did she do?

If you could visit a group of women in another country, what country would you choose and what would you like to talk about with these women?

What would you want to tell these women about the women of your country?

****What is one global issue that you would like to see the women of the world work on together?**

MY COMMUNITY

What have been some of the contributions of women in your community?

What is your own contribution to the life of your community?

What would improve the quality of life for women in your community?

****What blocks women in your community from doing what they see is needed for themselves or for the community?**

MY WORK

List the kinds of work you have done in your life.

What would you say is your life's most important job?

As you think about the younger women in your country, what kind of training do they need?

****What has been the most important change in women's work in the last ten years?**

MY FAMILY

What is the most important contribution you make to your family?

What gift have you received from your family that you think is important?

****What is the most important thing for mothers to teach their daughters?**

****Their sons?**

HER STORY

****Who are 2-3 women living today that you admire?**

What is something your mother told you that you have never forgotten?

Name something that your father/uncle/brother taught you about men.

****What is an attribute that today's woman needs to move into leadership roles?**



Sharing Approaches That Work has been the theme of a three year, three phase programme titled, the ***International Exposition of Rural Development (IERD)***. The intent of the programme has been to locate and spotlight breakthroughs in all forms of community activity, including the urban. In February 1984, 650 delegates from over 300 projects and 55 nations met in New Delhi to document the factors of success they have experienced. During the third phase of the programme, an effort is being made to further the linkages of people worldwide to provide an environment for further sharing and to encourage local development efforts.



The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) is an international research, training and demonstration organization concerned with the human factor in world development. It has been involved in community development for over 30 years, acting as a catalyst to local participation in self-help projects. It is a private not-for-profit and voluntary organization registered autonomously in each nation where it works. It is currently working with rural and urban communities in 35 nations. Local self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-confidence are the aims of all ICA programmes.



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