



UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520-7250

*Natl women's
agenda*

May 1

TL -

Bella called. Said each country
was responsible for putting together national
action agenda - N60 strategy - lots of
work done. But nothing released to
date -

what should we have done?

are there 2 reports?

are they ready to be issued?

when will they be issued?

Let me know

Prue

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Ms. Foundation for Women

THE
NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
FUND

free Ms Foundation

December 19, 1996

Dear Fellow Delegate to Beijing:

Happy holidays! I hope this year has been successful for you. It has been an extremely successful and productive year for the Ms. Foundation for Women. We spent the better part of the year speaking to women across the country about the Fourth World Conference on Women and how the outcomes will affect change throughout this country. The Ms. Foundation used the Fourth World Conference as a way to learn and network with women all across the world who are working in the same areas we are. Since Beijing, we have put into practice programs and projects that were mere thoughts when we were in China.

I was very honored to be able to participate in the President's Interagency Council on Women this past September 28th. Hearing from women all across the country about their accomplishments and interest in the Conference was extraordinary.

I have enclosed a summary of our activities that are connected with the Beijing conference for your information. I hope you will see the wonderful effect this conference has had on the women the Ms. Foundation works with. We look forward to more exciting outcomes in the near future.

Thank you all for your support. I look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

Marie

Marie C. Wilson
President

December 1996

To: Ms. Foundation Beijing Delegates

From: Marie Wilson, President

As we move into the New Year, we are thankful for the work we have been able to accomplish with many of you, and we look forward to more interaction with those of you that we have not crossed paths with since Beijing. We know how much our own work was influenced by the time we spent with you and so many other incredible women leaders.

One of the more memorable aspects of the Beijing conference for the Ms. Foundation was seeing the great distance that women have moved many issues in the last decade. We honor the accomplishment of women's organizations to move the international human rights community to recognize women's human right to be free from violence. You have helped make what was "private" and unspeakable, public and unacceptable.

Another major marker of Beijing was the international uproar by women over the ways that free market global capital undermines community life and self determination, and has particularly deleterious effects on women. Because two of the Ms. Foundation's major program areas have been economic justice and economic development, this was an important analysis for us to learn from and share with other women. It has pushed us, in fact, to reorganize internally and further integrate our economic justice and economic development programs to address together some of the systemic barriers to women in our economy.

Many of you heard, in your travels with us to Beijing, that we were exploring ways to integrate and network the diverse issue work of the women's movements in this country. Many of you expressed the need for convening time, analysis, proactive strategies, and more economic education. To further explore how we might support these things, we brought together in May a dozen leaders of organizations that have worked in cross issue coalitions on economic issues. We asked them to share how they were working on the issues raised in those surveys. Attached you will find the report from that meeting.

What are we doing now? We held our annual Institute on Women and Economic Development in September where 250 women gained skills and strategies for working on welfare reform in their states. We are acting as a convenor for the major reproductive rights organizations and funders through the ProChoice Public Education Project. We have issued Requests for Proposals for our Democracy Funding Circle, and our Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women has just received letters of intent from nearly 550 organizations across the country. We continue to provide vital resources to statewide reproductive rights coalitions, and have started a new Women and AIDS fund. And we have begun the process of raising new money to fund women's organizing and convenings around economic justice issues.

Also, we are a re-organized institution and feel excited about new possibilities. We have combined all the program aspects of the foundation into a new cluster, headed up by a Vice President for Program, Sara Gould (formerly director of the Economic Development Program). All of our issue areas—economic security (Senior Program Officer Anna Wadia); girls, young women and leadership (Senior Program Officer Brigitte Rouson), and health and safety (Senior Program Officer Margaret Eaton)—are working together in an integrated and coordinated way. With Program Associate Judy Schoenberg, Program Associate/Development Sharon Rowell, and Program Assistant Dana Veerasammy rounding out our program staff, we see much potential to forward cross-issue work.

Several long-time staff have moved to other opportunities this year:

Idelisse Malavé is now the Executive Director of the Tides Foundation in San Francisco, and Kalima Rose has joined her there as Senior Program Officer. We look forward to working with them, and hope that the strong gender analysis in both our institutions can help forward and support all of your work.

Tani Takagi, Grants Director, began a coveted Revson Fellowship at Columbia University in September. She also serves as a consultant to the Foundation on the Democracy Funding Circle.

Jill Savitt, our Communications Director, has left to become a consultant and playwright. She too is working with us as a consultant and recently went to Turkey to conduct media trainings as a result of the contacts she made in Beijing.

Within the Foundation, Gail Maynor, who managed Take Our Daughters to Work Day for the last two years, is now the Foundation's Marketing Director. Melissa Silverstein is working in my office as Special Projects Manager and Lauren Wechsler is National Media Manager, charged with all media related to Take Our Daughters to Work Day.

In this package I am enclosing a description of grants made by the Ms. Foundation for Women following up on the Beijing Conference and a copy of the report on our Beyond Beijing Networking Meeting held in California in May.

Please keep in touch, and let us know what you're up to! As we busily organize philanthropists and activists together, we reflect with deep appreciation on the time we spent last year in your company. We wish you a healthy and peaceful New Year.

Post Beijing Grants

Many organizations came back inspired from our journey to Beijing, and we were pleased to be able to support the work they developed from the conference:

9to5, National Association of Working Women (Milwaukee, WI)

9to5 works to improve the lives and economic status of the nation's 20 million non-management women office workers. With 25 chapters nationwide and activists in more than 200 cities, 9to5 combines public education, research, training, advocacy and activism to promote quality working conditions, an end to discrimination, and access to training for low-wage working women. 9to5 was funded as an important lead organization in the networking and coalition-building efforts in the field of women's economic justice.

9to5 has been a leader first in getting the Family and Medical Leave Act passed, in monitoring and assessing its effectiveness, and now in working to expand the Act to cover more workers and to be affordable to low income workers. Ellen Bravo's book, The Job/Family Challenge: A 9to5 Guide (Not For Women Only), was released this spring (it's great!)

Their Poverty Network Initiative and Leadership Conference met several times over the last year with Vice President Al Gore, Ida Castro (new director of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor), Mary Jo Bane (former Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services) and Henry Cisneros (then Secretary of Housing and Urban Development) to share concerns about welfare proposals.

And their post-Beijing inspiration? Talk with Ellen about their "Dignity Dollars: We're Worth It" campaign.

Asian Pacific American Leadership Forum (Los Angeles, CA)

The Asian and Pacific Islander American women who traveled together to the Beijing Conference described their experience as a catalyst to bring together this new forum, which held its first national convening in Los Angeles this past September.

The Forum addresses a critical need for Asian and Pacific Islander American women to define their own agenda and make linkages between their changing communities locally and internationally. The Ms. Foundation supported the founding gathering. Some of the priority issues identified for the founding gathering are linked to the Beijing Conference's Platform for Action: Human Rights of Women, Health Care/Reproductive Rights, Immigrant Rights, Economic Justice and Civil Rights.

Asian Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health (Oakland, CA)

APIRH is the nation's first grassroots, community-based nonprofit organization to address the reproductive health and rights of Asian Pacific Islander Americans. Founded in 1989 in response to the US Supreme Court's *Webster* decision, APIRH set out to include Asians in the broader reproductive rights movement to ensure that reproductive health issues that were of particular concern to Asians would become part of the overall agenda. Additionally, APIRH's long term goal is to improve the community's overall health and well-being through empowerment of young women for peer education, community outreach, and organizing. APIRH received a Ms. Foundation grant for general support.

The Center for Anti-Violence Education (Brooklyn, NY)

The Center for Anti-Violence Education, Grassroots International and MADRE sponsored a project, the Women's Observer Mission to the Elections in Nicaragua (W.O.M.E.N.), which sent an international delegation of women to be official observers of the elections in Nicaragua in October 1996. Members of the delegation also participated in a symposium, "Women and the New Millennium - Toward Democracy in the State and at Home," with 250 women from Nicaragua on women's social and political empowerment that built on the international dialogue carried out at the Beijing Conference.

The immediate goal of the project was to monitor the electoral process in Nicaragua to observe whether a democratic process, in the narrow definition of free and fair elections, took place. The long-term goal is to strengthen the role of women in civil society not only in Nicaragua but internationally through the bringing together of women leaders and activists from around the world. W.O.M.E.N. received a grant from the Ms. Foundation to further US participation by sponsoring a member of the delegation from the Haitian-American Women's Advocacy Network, a domestic violence organization in New York.

Center for Third World Organizing (Oakland, CA)

The Center for Third World Organizing is one of the nation's preeminent centers for training organizers, developing grassroots organizations, strengthening and uniting communities of color, and building multiracial initiatives. Influenced by women she met from other parts of the world in Beijing, co-director Rinku Sen returned to CTWO to help develop their newest campaign: "Winning Action for Gender Equity" (WAGE). In an effort to engage mixed-gender community organizations of color in the fight for gender equity, the WAGE campaign will expand the organizations' capacity to conduct gender analyses, political education, and anti-sexist campaigns.

With Ms. Foundation support for the WAGE campaign, CTWO is conducting a race and gender analysis of the California state budget, developing education materials on their findings,

and beginning to educate communities across the state about who is losing in current trends to cut government, and who is winning in current expenditures. Their five year goal is to organize across the state to pass an alternative budget that reflects economic justice for women and communities of color.

Center for Women's Global Leadership (New Brunswick, NJ)

The CWGL, after its hugely successful "Women's Rights as Human Rights" campaign in Beijing, continues to connect local and community based organizers to national and international analysis, campaigns, and policy change. The Center's post-Beijing work includes translating the portions of the Platform for Action that deal with violence and human rights protections into organizing documents written in accessible language.

The Ms. Foundation gave the Center a grant to fund its United States program which will help women and their organizations establish better linkages within the US and with the international women's movement, and further build on human rights protections for women facing violence.

Illinois Caucus on Adolescent Health (Chicago, IL)

The Caucus received a grant from the MacArthur Foundation to hire a staff person to coordinate post-Beijing activity in the Chicago area. They received a grant from the Ms. Foundation to participate in the US/Canadian Women's Health Conference.

Just Economics: A Center for Economic Education (Berkeley, CA)

Just Economics is a collective of women trainers from social justice and community development organizations across the US. Requests from women's projects for JE's trainings and organizational campaign support have tripled since US women were exposed to international women's economic analyses and strategies in Beijing. In fact, post-Beijing surveys from the Ms. delegation indicated that economic education, analysis and strategies represented the most shared conviction for new work.. Delegates see this kind of community education and shared analysis as essential to the women's movement's ability to articulate values and economic priorities and form a collective agenda.

The Ms. Foundation is providing general support to Just Economics for its work in helping women-serving organizations develop long term strategies, leadership, education and training materials for economic justice campaigns.

Latina Roundtable on Health and Reproductive Rights (New York, NY)

Formed by an independent group of Latina women in 1989, the Latina Roundtable on Health and Reproductive Rights received funds to implement a multi-phase program to enable Latinas to influence public policy on critical reproductive rights issues impacting Latinas in New York City. The Latina Roundtable has integrated policy development, community organizing, and grassroots media strategies into one program. To develop model policies, they are conducting four community leadership forums, outlining a policy agenda, and providing hours of in-depth training to women (identified through the community forums) in the areas of reproductive health issues and media skills.

Southerners for Economic Justice (Durham, NC)

Southerners for Economic Justice received a Ms. Foundation grant for a networking and economic literacy training event held in the spring of 1996. The meeting brought together the primary groups they have been organizing for the last two years: youth between the ages of 11-18; residents of four low-income community groups; women organized through their contingent workers' project; and a state university housekeepers' organization. All groups are primarily African-American women.

This training event was designed to help participants understand the connection between the various issues they face in their respective communities/workplaces (e.g. low wages, high crime, poor housing, underfunded schools and poor education) while helping them understand the need to collaborate with their counterparts within and outside the city to challenge the systemic roots of these problems.

Women of Color Resource Center (Oakland, CA)

The Women of Color Resource Center (WCRC), which also led a delegation of 100 women to Beijing, continues to play a significant leadership role in Beyond Beijing activities. They received Ms. Foundation support as a member of the Beijing and Beyond Advisory Committee, and director Linda Burnham participated in the Women's Organizers' Networking Meeting.

The Women of Color Resource Center, a clearinghouse for research and information on women of color, received funding for "Bringing Beijing Home: A High School Curriculum" which aims to make the Platform for Action accessible to high school students, especially high school girls. Through school-based activities, the curriculum will: 1) sustain the focus on young women and girls generated by the Fourth World Conference on Women; 2) broaden the lessons of Beijing beyond the very few US young women (and men) who were at the Conference; 3) increase the dialogue about the status of women globally, and familiarize students with women's organizing strategies; and 4) encourage social action among young women and men.

Women's Self Employment Project (Chicago, IL)

WSEP was awarded a three-year grant from the Ms. Foundation's Collaborative Fund on Women and Economic Development in June, 1996. The grant will support WSEP's development of "clusters" of firms, as a method to expand the capacity of microenterprises. The clusters will include businesses owned by WSEP's low-income clients, as well as other businesses in the community. WSEP will explore creating a government and major corporation-subsidized incentive package to encourage more established businesses to join cluster groups with low-income business owners.

WSEP will also use the grant to support the convening of an advisory council of government, community, and business leaders to provide strategy and support in addressing the barriers that exist for job creation by and for welfare recipients and other low-income women.

Other recognition for Beijing delegates

The Entrepreneurial Development Institute (Washington DC) Melissa Bradley, TEDI's executive director, received the Do Something BRICK Award (co-sponsored by Mademoiselle and MTV). Do Something is an organization that supports young people's community-building efforts. The ten who received the award, who ranged from 18-30, "prove that change can happen brick by brick, tree by tree, person by person."

The Hetrick-Martin Institute (New York, NY) Frances Kunreuther received a Ms. Foundation Gloria Steinem Woman of Vision Award for her visionary ability to bring support to lesbian and gay youth.

Asian Women's Shelter (San Francisco, CA) Beckie Masaki also received a Women of Vision Award for her ability to help the most vulnerable women transform their lives from being defined by violence to being defined by communities of safety and support.

Ms. Foundation for Women's

**Beyond Beijing
Networking
Meeting Report**

Introduction

This is a summary of the networking meeting that the Ms. Foundation for Women convened in May 1996 as a follow up to issues raised by our delegation in Beijing. After returning from the World Conference on Women, we conducted a written survey of our 35 grantees. Four major topics emerged from the survey as central to future work in the women's movement. They included: Base Building and Coalition Work; Political (and Economic) Education; Healing and Transformation; and Proactive Strategies. We invited women who indicated an interest in being part of a strategy and analysis meeting, and were parts of larger networks themselves to a meeting to talk out these issues and make recommendations to the Ms. Foundation about the kind of support and next steps we could lend. Meeting participants included:

Rinku Sen, Center for Third World Orgnaizing, Oaklannd, CA
Ellen Bravo, 9to5, Milwaukee, WI
Cynthia Brown, Southerners for Economic Justice, Durham, NC
Leah Wise Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network, Durham, NC
Maria Elena Del Valle, The Family Learning Circle, Bronx, NY
Peggy Saika, Asian Pacific Enviromental Network, Oakland, CA
Harilyn Rolusso, Disabilities Unlimited, NY, NY
Kelly Rosenleaf, WEDGo. Billings, MT
Beckie Masaki, Asian Women's Shelter, San Francisco, CA
Jen Ray, Idaho Women's Network, Boise, ID
Maria Elena Durazo, Local 11, Los Angeles, CA
Linda Burnham, Women of Color Resource Center, Berkeley, CA
Idelisse Malavé, Tides Foundation, San Francisco, CA
Kalima Rose, Ms. Foundation for Women, Berkeley, CA
Tani Takagi, Ms. Foundation for Women, New York, NY

We gratefully extend our thanks to Soyinka Rahim of Our Thing Productions for opening and closing our meeting with dance, altar building, blessings, and guidance for our future work.

This report was prepared by Kalima Rose, formerly a program officer with the Ms. Foundation for Women. Kalima also organized the meeting on which this document reports.

Base Building & Coalition Work

In the post-Beijing surveys and interviews, many respondents raised the need to increase base-building and coalition activities. Service organizations such as violence shelters raised the need to be doing more base building work with clients of their services, and felt the need to be working in coalitions with more direct action organizations to both politically mobilize those being affected by the problems, and to have the needs they serve be part of the solution that direct actors are agitating for. Direct actors want to raise issues of building new coalitions with longer term vision that can forge more powerful movement of proactive interests. All want to think about how to bring more women in--and particularly, how to support women's involvement and leadership in mixed gender organizations and coalitions. Many raise questions of youth involvement, and many have begun initiatives specifically aimed at girls and young women. Some are utilizing this year's elections to begin longer process of base building.

The working session on base building and coalition work was led by Peggy Saika, Harilyn Rousso, and Cynthia Brown. They began with asking people to write down why they think base building is important, and then compiled this portrait through a round robin:

Why base build?

- To create new possibilities, a new set of forces that have not been present before
- To build a community among people who would otherwise not be a community
- To revitalize democracy—connect people who are outside the democratic process
- To get workers for the movement
- To connect with the solutions from people who are living the problem
- To involve the people most affected because they have the greatest stake in the outcome (The people who are affected won't compromise)
- to build power and strength to make changes and put solutions into place
- to contradict the forces that marginalize people, and to create other forces that bring people from margin to center.

Peggy Saika—Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)

APEN defines the environment as where people live, work, and play. APEN works by the philosophy “we speak for ourselves”: this is a deeply challenging principle because Asian-Pacific Islanders (API) speak 40 languages. APEN does mapping and data collection work; building a socio-economic profile of all communities in CA, onto which they overlay superfund sites as a way to locate the places of work. APEN builds relationships with indigenous networks, farmworkers’ networks, other communities of color. “We consciously and intentionally are building a decentralized movement,” Peggy says, “in which every network is a ground up movement. And APEN is growing within this milieu.”

One of APEN's projects targets the Laotian community of 3000-6000 people in north Richmond, an oil refinery town, and an historically African American community where immigrants are now settling in the most toxic neighborhoods. The Bay Area has the highest incidence of breast cancer in the nation. Sixty percent of Laotian immigrants are on welfare, unemployed, living in dilapidated housing, and attending horrible schools.

To reach people, APEN is teaching classes at the ESL center; and gathering girls through the junior high. With the girls, APEN is focusing on reproductive health as a way to prevent problems for girls, and as a way to have information reach their mothers. APEN is using Just Economics to do economic literacy work with the girls to build a social justice analysis as a part of their leadership development. (Peggy is experimenting with having this economic education as part of everything they do.)

A key part of APEN's development of girls is dependent on being able to connect them with a larger movement, with role models and places to plug in. Out of the Asian American women's delegation to Beijing, women have been working to form a National Asian Pacific Women's Forum (the name isn't determined yet). It will meet in LA one year after Beijing, and diverse women from around the country are helping to formalize it.

Cynthia Brown—Southerners for Economic Justice

SEJ attempted to get legislation to try to begin regulating contingent work, but didn't have a strong enough base to move anything or to see it get enforced.

SEJ, with "mother wit" formed a core group of contingent workers to do participatory research, trained them to do interviews. Cynthia says it has taken a long time to get interviewers to know where they are going; SEJ's project drew from the questionnaire being used by 9to5 to survey the conditions women face in contingent work. Surveyors find these workers at the food stamp office, at grocery stores, etc. The four women who are conducting the survey have gone through their own development and consciousness raising around the issue. Cynthia says the biggest leap in their understanding of where these interviews could lead and how they fit into organizing came when they went to the multi-state regional network meeting and met other women like themselves doing similar work—then it took on whole new significance and meaning for them.

SEJ is bringing together all of the constituents it has been trying to do organizing work with as another stage in the development of this campaign. The women who have been interviewed on contingent work issues will be in the same general meeting/celebration with all the youth and the domestic workers that SEJ has been mobilizing.

Jen Ray—Idaho Women's Network

The mission of the right has been carried out by the Idaho Citizen's Alliance, a far right coalition, whose strategy has been to divide resources of women's network by multiple attacks. This year, ICA laid out their extremist agenda through 4 statewide ballot initiatives that use the late term abortion ban to help pass other conservative proposals

designed to eliminate unions, provide private school vouchers and deny civil rights to gays and lesbians. IWN is using this as an opportunity to organize people and expose this agenda. IWN is working electorally to do base building across the state by identifying supporters of gay and lesbian civil rights and reproductive rights in the last election and educating them on this year's initiatives. IWN is merging this identified list with lists of organizational members as a way to identify other potential supporters, to then go out and register and educate those who are not registered and/or voting.

The coalition members also are pooling all their member organization lists, and comparing them against voter file list of registered female voters. The rationale: that supporters of one member groups will be more likely to be supporters of all of the issues. They will then make contact and register unregistered members, and educate all members on all four issues. IWN cites an important strategy of sharing all the membership organizations' lists between them so that all the organizations can build their own membership.

The short term advantages are that it is a time limited campaign and people see the difference their work will make. The longer term goal for IWN is to use this work in localities to form empowered groups of women citizens that can begin working on affirmative proposals.

The discussion

What does base building have to do with power? Base building enables people to do things that need to be done.

How do we measure the leadership of a group? By whether it draw folks together, can influence folks and be influenced by them.

We have to continuously recruit new leaders: We've stopped being effective when we think we have enough leaders. Its that process of bringing in new leaders that gives us the new ideas and solutions to solve the problems creatively.

Base building is effective when the base has a developed level of analysis of what is at stake; if members of that base feel connected to each other; if they share resources in the group. Its in how people think of the we; if there's a willingness to confront power structures and "our own mess".

Base building can be done through using cultural events and telling history; bringing together different sectors and critical groups, for example, taxpayers associations could be good allies in corporations not paying enough.

Non union workers sharing life of the union, giving union workers a stake in organizing non union, a stake in keeping quality of jobs that we'll lose if we don't build a broader stronger union movement.

Healing and Transformation Working Session

Transformation-healing is a broad category that involves both values and techniques for creating interconnections so that people can work together. It is about having spirit and culture central. It's about creating a "high ground" for women to work from. It's about creating a process for tired, overworked, underpaid women to be able to take on the work of social change and have it be renewing and healing rather than a greater burden. It's about creating unusual space for us to understand how to do that. It's about healing racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, and the oppression of disabilities within the context of work together. And it's about being able to create the space for critique and analysis that women can understand what rights they have/want/can struggle for and a vision to create the process to get there from here.

Beckie Masaki, Asian Women's Shelter

Asians always seen as foreigners, our cultural values are always seen as part of our home countries. What that means is a lot of times culture is a dynamic thing and always changing. But we've gotten into a cultural freeze. People's values about women characterized as betraying your culture. We have a responsibility for contributing to changing values. We see this played out in every immigrant group coming through. After Chinese man let off for beating his wife to death with a hammer, we came forward into study group to say violence is not a culturally acceptable value. The small ways are the ways that it happens big. Build healing into everyday life, serving a meal is important part of creating safe place, healing, social change for long haul.

Maria Elena DelValle, Family Learning Circle

"My concern is for the deterioration of human spirit. I see this with women I work with who come to our center. So I work with what will bring transformation to their lives. Transformation happens when an idea hits the mind and moves to the heart..... We need courage to enter people's daily living; We need to examine what we value in our work with people. We need to make a commitment to self-nurturance. And examine, from our own cultures, how we handle decision making."

Maria Elena described experiments she has been engaged in to find out how to get women who don't show up to come. She has been collecting transformational moments in film, to show women to let them witness that process in others. She poses the question to women, what will allow us to have such moments of transformation?

Leah Wise, Regional Economic Justice

In process of coming together to do something collective, we didn't even know what would need healing or need to be transformed to accomplish it. Trying to do something that we knew we couldn't do by ourselves, and couldn't do it without creating something new. Knew we would have to look at obstacles: coming to the table, what have our different experiences done to us. Tried to own that problems exist and will continue to exist, so let's keep dealing with them.

People have to get together in safe space to arrive at discernment. We have a space for relationship building. We did not form network with idea that we would not pass resolutions for action because then there would be turf to fight over. As a technique for getting people to do their best: share your mother's wisdom to have cultural appreciation, hear same thing said many ways. Set women on the high ground because had their mothers in the room.

We focused last gathering on gender relationships. Constituencies are mainly women, but we had never specifically honored them. We wanted to uplift legacy of women in the South and celebrate it. But in Mississippi, men would not let women travel outside of their towns. This put gender issues right on the table. Fishbowl where we let women speak about their conditions at work, home, as organizers. Process structured for men to repeat the same thing. Turned into "get out the garbage session". Facilitator very skilled at keeping the women in that place. Discernment very important, can't assume information same in room. Getting more elemental, not more sophisticated. Men said it was first time they had ever talked to each other, men opened up and valued it so much. Healing physical, intellectual, mental. Had massage person available. Creation of safe space: color, music, poetry--cannot do safe space sharing in a large group--must be small group.

Political Education Working Session

Political education: Almost every Beijing survey respondent said that she felt there needed to be more economic analysis and more political education happening within her organization, and within the context of how they would analyze and identify their strategic directions. Groups want to have a full discussion of the strategies of political education that organizations are using, or that they see a need for new models for--from leadership, to staff, to constituents, to members, to coalition-building. People felt like it was important to be more informed about the international context of issues, and to have more exchanges internationally as well, as a huge shift in strategy and perspective came up for folks by being in Beijing.

This session facilitated by Ellen Bravo, Harilyn Rousso, and Linda Burnham

How do we get political education higher on the agenda?

What is it you want political education to do?

What do you mean by it?

- it's a process of having a group of people reflect together on the systems that have been put in place, to do analysis about those systems--what are they based on? do we like the values they reflect? do they build the kind of society we want?
- I want it to be a process to sharpen people's thinking, gives them language to talk about those ideas with others, I want it to build their leadership, I want it to lead to action to change the systems that do not reflect their values or world view;
- For my organization, I want it to be a process for distilling and unifying our ideas for action, a fun and interesting process that will engage more people.
- it's a tool for political revolution; for shared analysis of power; economic literacy is basic to organizations' strategy; it's politicizing and consciousness raising on race, class, gender; it brings a better understanding of environment & context; more active role in self determination; analysis of systemic forces; for people knowing history of social changes so know capacity for change;
- It helps us aim at right targets & know who our allies are; as a tool to imagine new society/economy; if political education is done right, people see themselves as political actors; more consistent and systematic way to deal with leadership development; to show people the need to act, how to act, and why to act; consciousness around marginalized groups; build a pool of candidates and officials that better reflect the communities; understand the formal mechanisms by which power is exercised; what we need to do to build democracy; sustain critical thinking; process of engagement; access across marginalized groups; help us keep perspective about where we are in our

struggle, and help keep us motivated; connections among forms of oppression; fewer surprises; reactive to proactive; articulate our own values; increase voter turnout

Ellen Bravo, 9to5: 9to5 organizes for affordable leave. We found many women who had been hurt by no-leave policy. We wanted our campaign led by women who would be effected. One of the tools we used was tree of life—it develops how you came to have a sense of justice. The roots of the tree are where you got your sense of values. First did this in small group, then had someone from group introduce each woman to larger group, describing her leadership qualities. This gave full group sense of leadership abilities to take on the problem.

We also asked why did we come here today; all said because someone had paid attention and called them 3 or 4 times. In discussing how to address the problem, they also understood that they needed more "we," and became empowered to start organizing more women to help.

9to5 is also doing work on transforming our organization into more multiracial, multicultural, anti-oppression organization. We put together reading packet to raise critical awareness around issues of oppression.

Harilyn Rousso, Disabilities Unlimited: Is our value really inclusion? Cost is a big reason to exclude a lot of people from a lot of things; we especially see this as a reason to exclude women with disabilities. But this is a contribution that they could make—they could help build the avenues for this to happen, rather than create a sense that this is "just one more group to work with."

We think of disability as a biological fact, but it is more of a social and political construct. Definition is that a must be able to *not work*, which would make me not disabled.

Through organizing around anti-discrimination legislation we have found that disabilities do not connect people, but rather the experience of discrimination; the culture that emerges from the experiences of disability--some values connected to experience of oppression, some just needing to have new strategies. On all measures of success, women with disabilities do less well.

When doing workshops, I encounter a lot of fear and discomfort for people to identify with disabilities, but its good to get people reconnected to attitudes of childhood, and where there constructs of disability came from;

(Leah Wise interjected here about her work organizing injured workers, and their inability to keep staff working at level of crises; she asked Harilyn if they might work to categorize concerns, do collective brainstorming about how to overcome them.)

What kind of women's community do we want to create? Corporate studies for accommodations have found many are quite inexpensive.

Group brainstorm on what could be done in own organizations:

- We need to more intentionally identify resource people who can teach our folks how to cope, we're not very skilled at dealing with mental health side; need to fundraise for it;
- Develop activities for keeping issue conscious and present;
- Do coalition building with disability rights groups;
- In profile we publish about problems on the job, include women with disabilities with problems on the job so that they will also call hotline;

Linda Burnham, Women of Color Resource Center

wanted to be more systematic towards girls, so began working with high school teacher in women's studies. Wanted them to think about issues that affect girls in US and translate it into community service learning. Wanted to give them experience in context of an organization to work on change. They got a graduate student from school of education to help develop curriculum that links US with issues of girls worldwide. Because there are few women's studies courses, they are working as well with world history teacher to develop sections for world history, English, social studies. They are also working with agencies doing work in the community with girls. Linda says the best part is working with young women to hear how they shape issues.

Women of Color Resource Center also doing work to develop curriculum on economic literacy and the effects of global economic restructuring on women in the US that community based women's groups can use.

Leah Wise, Regional Economic Justice Network:

Southerners for Economic Justice did economic education on the global economy with Mexican & US women, which allowed folks to organize against NAFTA. It let women argue with economists about people aspects of trade policies. It let women discuss the impact of global economy on our town on television. They developed working class people and SEJ staff to be able to articulate their experience about the economy.

SEJ and REJN thought this education was important because it supports long term change, and development of leaders. It takes time, and the results not always immediately measurable. Groups want to squeeze political education into one section; there is resistance to study--culture mitigates culture of study. Difficulties of really doing economic and political education also has to do with: democratic decision making (who gets to decide what is going to be studied); the unstable nature of low income people's lives. The benefits include: getting those most directly affected involved in developing solutions in a structured way; it develops new leadership; it helps us get at new ways of organizing; it demystifies political involvement; it helps us integrate action and reflection as part of process.

From this a discussion emerged which identified Categories of Challenges in implementing economic education as:

1. External
2. Organizational
3. Constituency-Based

How do we make political education part of everything we do?
Is economic change core to social change that we want?

The facilitators asked: is economic literacy core to political education, and how does that view shape your work?

Yes, because it allows us to get at the lynch pin, deeper issues that connect our work, it gives us a way to shape our values of community, basic needs, etc. into specific mechanisms.

Peggy: Yes, circles back to why do we need political education? Empowerment agenda based on econ & political empowerment. It permeates our analysis and problems, it defines strategies for us, define programs around training and leadership development. Believe it is key to our goal of empowered communities and goals. Working with folks on welfare requires understanding system which defines their place.

Beckie: ending domestic violence linked to economic justice in other countries, yet not core at all in the US; need to shift to address that more strategically; it is part of core of abuse of power

Kelly: consideration is around how you bring it to the table, so it makes sense on how you integrate it in this work.

Jen: it is one of issues in our coalition, but one of many

Cynthia: if a shelter program is doing any kind of education, it needs to be integrated, so becomes part of women's thinking; No reason why battered women shouldn't be part of living wage campaigns.

Leah: It is not an issue, it is core way of understanding how our society is organized--way of understanding, and intentional misinformation about the nature of capitalism—you cannot even question the fundamental organization; to help people unravel it, give basic questions: who benefits? who suffers? who decides? this is a discussion about the issues of democracy: where do we vote on the economy? this is beginning of unraveling system for people. trying to reveal what is intentionally hidden.

Maria Elena: We're doing political education through a *mercado* as a way to give women a sense of self and their role in the exchanges in the economy.

Tani: how do you intervene: do you choose strategies that help women get their due from what the system now offers or do you help women challenge root of how that system is organized?

Cynthia: There is a problem I have to speak about how economic development is held up as solutions to the problems. Accumulating more wealth through economic development won't get it.

Leah: We have to create intentional space for visioning work; getting out of the US-- study tours, at least out of their community; visioning space; folks from different cultures to broaden organizations; study retreats; home exchanges; took 2 years to get folks who were close in reality but not identity--took 2 years for identity to emerge.; folks on welfare clearer in understanding , relationships push through stereotypes. Build on part that works on connection, reciprocity.

How do we make action-reflection-action part of ongoing work?

Integrate an evaluation into everything you do: do the best you can and then we'll evaluate what we learned from it. Networking with women in other industries, hoping a working women's organization will emerge, but takes time.

People coming to you is not going to necessarily move them

Understanding how it works, have so much trouble believing that change is possible means that documenting successes important.

We have to be clear about how these economic relationships affect everything, can't wait for workshops.

Proactive Strategies Working Session

Women's organizations repeatedly stressed their need to learn about the range of concrete strategies groups are using to build proactive movements that begin to bridge diverse interests into core interests. Most of the progressive coalition work we currently see started reactive--to fight some right wing initiative or some program cut. Most survey respondents want to take the time in these convenings to lay out proactive, long term strategies. Some of the participants are active now in such long term work. Others want to move their reactive coalition work into long term proactivism. Folks want to look at the living wage campaigns, budget equity strategies, regional economic networks, voter participation strategies, and the opportunities in the devolution from federal to state, to lay a plan for moving large numbers of organizations in diverse regions into "proactive progressivism."

This session was facilitated by Rinku Sen (Center for Third World Organizing), Maria Elena Durazo (HERE, Local 11), and Leah Wise.

Purpose

1. practice developing proactive visions and plans
2. to take the process apart
3. to share our organizational methods and ideas for strategic processes.

People broke up into small groups and worked on developing a proactive vision. Facilitators worked the groups, helping them move when stuck. When groups reconvened, they visited what had come up in their process.

Process of trying to define long term vision revealed:

- Improving quality of life;
Eliminating exploitation;
Changing power relationships;
Creation of frameworks to exercise/practice collective will--values of mutuality
- to know and affirm what we are doing now is the basis for proactive work
to build a network and alliance nationally and internationally
- easier to come to long term vision if we can first struggle and agree on values
what does that look like, make people free themselves
let us unload our personal history, nourishes human potential
- identifying strategic leverage point and applying resources there; for example,
need to organize unorganized if we're going to do anything about quality/security
of jobs--this means I would dedicate 50% of resources to non-union worker
organizing in 5 yrs, 90% in ten years

- we found ourselves afraid of finding steps in between—if doable, they seem not radical enough, left us jumping in place.
- we need an affirmation at every membership meeting of our vision and commitments; we often don't do this because we are afraid our base won't go there

Name one proactive strategy:

IWN--development of women candidates for office

CTWO--added direct organizing function, then knew we needed proactive strategies, but one staff retreat a year is not enough; now have two, one politics, one operations. We have decided a step in how to act proactively to change a certain set of economic policies--do gender and race analysis of state budget, do popular alternative budget, and for once, avoid pressing ourselves into action

Asian Women's Shelter--formed Philipina advisory committee; launched an oral history project; convened the Philipina women who were living at the shelter at that time w/ Philipina staff and board members; during oral history project, one of members was stabbed by her former batterer. They wrote the story as "The Community Secret," and had it printed in Philipina weekly.

Montana Economic Development Group: leveraged coal tax \$ from state capital pool and turned it to our use.

How Do you know your idea is proactive?

- No money for it
- opposition gets up in arms
- fits within long term view
- it fits with your capacity
- gets reaffirmed by key allies
- systematizes or makes reflection possible on ideas and actions that were previously scattered
- responds to a lack in people's lives
- expected outcome is a gain
- systemic change: addresses back wages and structure of industry: effects decisions, power, policy, organization (how things are done), \$, inspires-ripples, introduces new language

At the end of the session, Rinku remarked on how most organizations in the group knew what to do immediately because of threats or basic services orgs offered; knew long term systemic change they wanted; but many lacked the 3 to 5 year strategic steps to move

toward the longer term. Because of the need to integrate short term with middle and long term, Rinku asked: "Can you link the strategic, the systemic, and the short term into a 3 to 5 year strategy?"

Working Recommendations and Relationships **from Beyond Beijing Networking Meeting, May 12, 1996**

Facilitated by Kelly Rosenleaf and Maria Elena Del Valle

Skills/Resources organizers have to offer to group

Beckie Masaki, Asian Women's Shelter: can bring her organization's background and experience around grappling with issues of power and control and what women need to confront power; also, would like to bring women from her organization to share their experience of organizing against violence; can be resource in how to serve multilingual women.

Jen Ray, Idaho Women's Network: can bring experience on organizing on a grassroots level with legislative and electoral politics and base building; resource for radical right organizing and tactics used in NW

Rinku Sen Center For Third World Organizing: Can offer model from their California state budget, gender and race equity analysis; in October will have 20 new trained organizers of color looking for jobs

Ellen Bravo, 9to5: anti-oppression, and curriculum development for girls on employment; proactive campaigns (jobs with dignity); sharing personnel policies.

Linda Burnham, Women of Color Resource Center: two pieces of curriculum—the impact of economic restructuring on women, and a piece on girls, domestic and international; and ties and contacts with different women of color orgs in different parts of the country

Leah Wise, Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network: suggestions for creating new safe space for communities, building relationship with the institutional church; creating opportunities for women to honor themselves in creating their legacy (We Are the Ones we are Waiting For) is one part of this

Cynthia Brown, Southerners for Economic Justice: can share methodology of doing participatory research (they are doing research on women working in temp agencies and as contingent workers).

Maria Elena DelValle, Family Learning Circle: can share ways to do outreach to those who don't show up; we can work as a pilot site for strategies and campaigns groups want to expand to new locales; can share how organization can do internal transformation around pay scales, job descriptions/nature of work.

Kelly Rosenleaf, Montana Economic Development Group: share insights about being inside public office, what does and doesn't work in trying to engage public officials and why; and board experience on national microenterprise trade association

Maria Elena Durazo, Hotel & Restaurant Employees Union, Local 11: Skills at organizing women in the work place; can share how to do corporate research

Soyinka Rahim, Our Thing Performing Arts Company: group rituals, celebration, multimedia collaborations, icebreakers

Harilyn Rouso, Disabilities Unlimited: help with including disability community, training, technical assistance; work with girls

Kalima Rose, Ms. Foundation: Ability to organize funders around movement-building activities; ability to coordinate some of the groups recommendations; and Just Economics can offer training models, the building of systemic analysis into organizing campaigns, and into leadership development of organizations.

Connections for future work made at this meeting

Leah Wise, Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network

- Want to work to connect folk from disability rights movement w/ injured workers' board members;
- Connect w/ Maria Elena Durazo around supporting union organizing of unorganized workers;
- work with Just Economics to find out about models
- would like to continue the conversation w/ Rinku over budget equity work

Cynthia Brown, Southerners for Economic Justice

- want to work with Maria Elena DelValle on what she's learned about why women don't show up; how to better incorporate them into base work
- learn more from Ellen about anti-oppression work, taking models on tree of life
- want to work w/ Just Economics, get new analysis
- wants to work with Rinku on Gender analysis of City Budget

Rinku Sen, Center for Third World Organizing

- want to have Leah come talk to our org about church relationships question;
- want to go visit Ellen (9to5)& Maria Elena Durazo (local 11);
- want to send staff teams to visit other orgs.;
- want to explore gender equity strategies in orgs of color and mixed gender orgs (wants to talk to Peggy Saika about that)

Beckie Masaki, Asian Women's Shelter

- Want to work w/ Just Economics to link violence against women w/ economic literacy;
- wants to go to north Carolina to visit the Economic Justice projects;
- want to call upon all the Bay Area groups that are here to help us dig deeper into base building question from service orientation
- With Jen Ray (Idaho Women's Network), further explore the role of art in activism

Jen Ray, Idaho Women's Network

- will call on everyone to combat sense of isolation, and to get the bigger picture
- Just Economics to develop political education ideas

Recommendations to the Ms. Foundation

- Bring together poverty initiative workshop which would include organizations working with women on welfare, and welfare rights organizations, including JEDI women, 9to5, Family Learning Circle, etc. Include some members, staff, not just directors (Ellen Bravo)
- Generally, support institutes around strategic thinking, in this kind of setting, to work through analysis, strategy, and actions in an ongoing way (Linda Burnham)

Issues that institutes could explore:

- core nature of economic literacy:
an institute on economic literacy could help to define what we are putting on the agenda; folks could model work they are actually doing, get feedback; go deeper into the questions raised by the group; could better see how popular education around economic issues can influence long term strategic work and organizing ability.
- issues around base building
deeper discussion around *models of organizing*, how self-consciously have we chosen the models we use, and those that we've rejected, why? go from discussion of models to concrete action strategies;

deeper discussion of *base building in context of electoral work*: what are the possibilities and limitations of that kind of work?;

same thing on organizations that provide direct services: *what is relationship between base building and particular services?*, what does that mean about where you can and can not move them?

same thing about *what's possible within the structure of unions?*;

we need to explore *gender issues in relationship to base building*, in both women's orgs and mixed-gender organizations; base building institute

could raise these up and work them through; those of us who work in non profit sector are framed by, and dependent on philanthropy--how that creates possibilities, problems, practicalities

- support specific actions: commit one day to economic literacy, collective experience is catalytic; simultaneous action dates on our calendar, common experience for entry for conversation; the simpler the action the better (Maria Elena DelValle)
- Convene this group again for reflection/cross pollination (Beckie Masaki)
- Reconstitute Equal Means (or some simpler publication/dissemination) as place to summarize information from institutes, where we would reflect on proactive strategies (Ellen Bravo)
- Support visitations to others' organizational sites
- engage a dialog with long term unemployed, and those in marginalized sector of economy--dialog between these two sectors, because it pushes the vision about what is work, critical relationship to visioning (Leah)
- support series of community discussions around the country about what's a family; gets people to talk about good families, gay families, extended families as way to begin putting out family values; (this conversation raised several issues) -- Rinku

Ms. Foundation Strategies (as result of these recommendations)

To raise new collaborative moneys for supporting economic justice work on larger scale, particularly to address economic/family security issues: living wage, regulation of contingent work, pushing child care infrastructure, health access, family leave.

To continue to do convenings across issue areas to do strategic analysis work like this.

To include organizing skills building and economic literacy training in our institutes and convenings.

To bring strategy and ideas to funding world about how to support women's economic organizing.