

WOMEN IN TRANSITION PROJECT

January-October, 2000

Goals:

This project will work to alleviate women's poverty by identifying strategies for addressing the key systemic causes. Specifically, this project seeks to address inequities in social policy that affect women's economic well-being.

Objectives: to work with women living in poverty to



- develop a critical feminist analysis of the Nova Scotia Community Services social assistance policy and related programs
- expand women's awareness of feminist analysis and of how policies are developed and how women can come together with other women to have meaningful influence in the policy process
- bring women together at a provincial forum where we will develop specific recommendations for changes in social assistance and related policies that will improve women's economic well-being

Key players around the province:

- **Nova Scotia Women's Centres Connect!** - coordination; research; follow-through with possible further initiatives
- **Antigonish Women's Resource Centre** - workshops with local women to learn about feminist analysis; apply that analysis to social assistance policy; develop a workshop on feminist analysis of social assistance policy and deliver the workshop at the provincial meeting (May, 2000)
- **Women in Transition Project Advisory Committee (Antigonish)** - assist AWRC with implementing and evaluating project
- **Pictou County Women's Centre** - interview women on low incomes to research their needs in gaining economic independence; research opportunities through various government programs for women to achieve economic independence; help women understand how policy works and is influenced and develop a strategy for doing this
- **Every Woman's Centre** - help women living in poverty to understand how policies affect them and encourage their ability to suggest change; document the difficulties faced by women living in poverty and raise awareness and public will for change of policies
- **LEA Place Women's Centre (Sheet Harbour)**, **The Women's Place (Lawrencetown)**, **Second Storey Women's Centre (Bridgewater)** - work with women to understand social policy and have meaningful input into improving it; bring local women to a provincial forum in May 2000
- **Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy** - help coordinate a provincial forum for women involved in this project and share expertise in influencing social policy

Tentative work plan/time line for Antigonish*

February - April

- recruit participants
- research studies and models that assess the long-term effects and expense of proactive support programs for women
- hold 5 workshops for women where they will learn about feminist analysis using their own life experiences and new information provided in the workshops
- organize 6 workshops for women where they will learn about how public policy is developed and reformed and they will apply a feminist analysis to social assistance policy in Nova Scotia
- develop recommendations to government on how to improve social assistance programs for women

May - June

- develop a pamphlet for women showing how they can understand and influence public policy
- develop and deliver a workshop for the women at the provincial forum which will help them understand women's poverty from a feminist viewpoint
- work with Connect! to plan, facilitate, and participate in the provincial forum
- hold 3 workshops for Antigonish area women to debrief from the provincial forum and develop strategies for action and for strengthening the provincial network of women involved in social policy

September - November

- implement strategies for action which were developed in the early summer
- evaluate the project in a half-day meeting involving the advisory committee and the participants

* Please note that this workplan does not include all of the work of the project. It is a sketch of the main activities involving participants and advisory committee members. Background activities such as administrative work to be done by the project coordinator are not included.