



Women's **WORTH**

VALUING OUR OWN WORTH — REALIZING OUR OWN VALUE



An Archival Scan of the Study
Guide from 1982

**A RESOURCE MANUAL FOR THE AWARD WINNING FILM — THE WILLMAR 8
PLUS A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FOR CHURCH USE**



Women's **WORTH**

Women's Worth is the third in a continuing series of projects by California Newsreel exploring innovative and effective approaches to film use, an area of pedagogy which has been sorely neglected. **Women's Worth** was designed specifically to aid teachers and facilitators develop programs to accompany screenings of the award winning film on working women, **The Willmar 8**. The various activities suggested in this manual have been derived from non-formal adult teaching techniques. They are intended to create a context for **The Willmar 8** in order to transform the film screening into an occasion to involve viewers more fully in challenging on-the-job sex discrimination and in shaping a more equitable workplace.

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Dear Abby:

I found this in the "AORN Journal"—a publication put out by the Association of Operating Nurses:

"The Chickenization of Women"

"Women are frequently referred to as poultry. We cluck at hen parties. When we aren't hen-pecking men, we are egging them on. In youth we are chicks. Mothers watch over their broods. Later we are old biddies with an empty-nest syndrome. Is it just a coincidence that so many women's wages are chicken feed?"

Ann D'Arcy,
Oklahoma Nurse

Dear Ann:

No. And ain't it fowl?

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Women's **WORTH**

*W*omen continue to enter the workforce in ever-greater numbers. Already, 42% of all workers are women. Like men, they work out of financial necessity and they work for self-respect. Yet upon entering the workforce, women run head-on into many of the age-old discriminatory patterns which have always denied women equal pay, promotional opportunity and dignity.

The influx of women into the workforce places a new burden on educators who must be ready to prepare women for the discrimination they are likely to encounter and to suggest strategies that will enable women to overcome these obstacles and achieve equal rights at work.

This experiential teaching manual, *Women's Worth*, helps teachers, non-formal educators, and organizers involve students and women in investigative, educational,

and organizing activities which challenge on-the-job sex discrimination at their own workplaces and in their own communities. *Women's Worth* was specifically designed to maximize the effectiveness of screenings of the prize-winning film on working women, *The Willmar 8*. But we think the approaches outlined can be applied wherever women gather to consider responses to on-the-job sex discrimination.

By using the discussion questions, audits, surveys, support materials and activity suggestions of *Women's Worth*, screenings of *The Willmar 8* can be transformed into occasions which translate the empathy, indignation, and insights provided by the film into acts of individual and organizational commitment to challenge discriminatory personnel practices and to promote equity for women at work.

THE WILLMAR 8 AND THE CHALLENGE FOR WORKING WOMEN

The Willmar 8 tells the story of eight unassuming tellers and bookkeepers in a small bank in Willmar, Minnesota. Like so many women, they had been kept at low-paying entry-level positions while men passed them by and advanced up the career ladder. The unequal pay, denial of promotional opportunity, and lack of respect fueled a powder keg of discontent. The explosion came when the women were required to train a man for a higher-paying job for which they themselves were not allowed to apply. They formed a union and walked out on strike, the first bank strike in Minnesota history.

Like most working women, the Eight were not radical, not feminists, and not members of a trade union. The eight women described themselves as church goers. They were both young and middle aged. Some were single, others were wives and mothers. But for all, work was a financial necessity. Politics and feminism were foreign to their world. "I thought politics was for boys," said one of the strikers in the film. "I had to look up the meaning of feminism in the dictionary," said another. As one viewer, a clerical worker in a large industrial company put it, "The women in the film are just like ordinary people—like me."

These eight women—so similar to the other 20 million women who staff America's offices—were driven to challenge the very values with which they were raised. They risked friends, families and jobs, proving that women have come to view recognition of their work as critical, not only to make ends meet but also to give themselves the dignity and self-esteem that comes from knowing that they're making a valued contribution to a productive enterprise. As one of the strikers said in the film, "When management denied us the chance to compete for promotions, to grow with the job, they were taking away what working was all about."

The *Willmar 8* provides rare insight into how fairly typical, inactive people broke free from the constraints of their traditional social roles and came to terms with activism, and in turn, how that activism transformed them. The story of these eight women demonstrates that one can take a hand in changing the conditions of one's life, and that one can do this even if one has previously learned to think of oneself as unimportant and unexceptional.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Among the most significant changes in the fabric of American working life has been the unparalleled influx of women into the labor force over the past two decades. Today 42% of the entire workforce is female. Half of all mothers work. This rapid entrance of women into the workforce is due to a variety of factors:

- An increase in the jobs available in traditionally female areas of the economy, e.g. office work.
- Inflation and the inability of families to maintain their standard of living on one income.
- Dissatisfaction with the exclusive roles of housewife and mother.
- A rise in the number of single, separated, or divorced women who must support themselves.

But women entering the workforce have predominantly been tracked into sex-segregated occupations, "women's work." 80% of all clerical workers are women (99.3%

of secretaries), 72% of retail sales clerks, 95% of sewers and stitchers. This occupational tracking has led to a wage gap which, contrary to popular belief, is not shrinking but widening. Women now average 59 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The result is an evolving "feminization of poverty" as more and more women find themselves working for wages unable to support them and their families above the poverty line. 1 out of every 3 female-headed households is poor compared to 1 out of 18 for men.

Things are even worse for black and other minority women who earn only 51 cents for every dollar earned by white men. Young, white women are private secretaries, but minorities are usually found in the key punch room, the typing pool, and the data processing center, in the lowest paid jobs. Minorities are 5% of all secretaries, but 15% of all office machine operators.

Concurrently, however, the influx of women into the work force has almost inevitably led to a growing movement for equality. One of the most exciting and original developments in workplace organizing since the industrial union drives of the 1930's, this movement of working women offers great promise for creating appropriate and effective strategies for not only winning equal rights and respect for women, but also for bringing millions of women into the fight for economic justice. Because it brings the concerns of the women's movement into the labor movement, it also carries with it the potential for bridging the traditional gap between work and the rest of life. Women are demanding dignity, opportunity, and recognition of the value of their work—not only to make ends meet, but as a means to self-fulfillment. From the *Wall Street Journal* to N.O.W., a consensus is emerging that the concerns of equal pay for comparable work, equal employment opportunity, career training, sexual harassment, maternity benefits, childcare, and dignity will become explosive issues in the 1980's.

THE CHALLENGE FOR WORKING WOMEN

Working women often identify strongly with the *Willmar Eight*. 35% of all American

working women are "pink collar" workers, that is, clerical workers. These 17 million women far outnumber all the steelworkers, autoworkers, and electrical workers combined. And like the Willmar Eight, their earnings—an average of \$8,000 per year—are at the bottom of the country's pay scale. Women in the banking industry earn even less; some even qualify for food stamps.

This clerical sector is growing astronomically as our society is changing from manufacturing to service and financial industries. Some of the fastest growing sectors of the economy are banking, insurance, brokerage, accounting, real estate, and government industries in which clericals make up the bulk of employees. According to the Department of Labor's **Monthly Labor Review**, clericals made up only 3% of the workforce as recently as 1960. By 1985 they will be 20%.

Like the Willmar Eight, women throughout the work force are learning that by banding together it is possible to fight injustice and build a more equitable workplace. The challenge of **Women's Worth** is to assist this movement. It is designed to:

1. Alert people to the consequences and prevalence of sex discrimination.

2. Help women identify and understand how commonly practiced personnel policies at their own places of employment actually contribute to sex discrimination and serve as obstacles to job satisfaction.
3. Help identify and understand those traditional sex roles which have prevented women from effectively challenging sex discrimination.
4. Indicate practical steps that can be taken to win greater equity at the workplace.
5. Assist women to take those steps.

It is this affirming vision of people struggling to take control of their own lives that the authors of **Women's Worth** would like to see paralleled by the viewing audience. We do not wish **The Willmar 8** to be merely a film people can watch and weep over and then turn away, willing to be voyeurs of history rather than doers. **Women's Worth** aims not only to heighten the viewing group's awareness and understanding of sex discrimination, but most importantly, to realize its own potential for involvement in ending it.

HOW TO USE WOMEN'S WORTH: ACTIVE VIEWING

In 1896 a motion picture played before an audience for the first time, Lumiere's **Train Entering Station**. The people of Paris were stunned and captivated by this new, strange and mesmerizing media. The explosive growth of the motion picture industry had begun. Today motion pictures are a billion dollar industry and a staple of modern life. Viewing a film is as commonplace and as central to contemporary life as was traveling on trains during the time of Lumiere.

Yet the very way in which we have been conditioned to experience film tends to preclude its effectiveness as an educational and organizational tool. Be it in theatres, on television, or even in the classroom, film is usually encountered as entertainment or diversion.

Audiences have been conditioned to assume a passive attitude towards the material on the screen and be absorbed by the film. Nothing is expected of the viewer. Films are skillfully designed to take full advantage of the powers of empathy and "sweep the viewer away" from their own world into the world of the film. The emotional drama of **The Willmar 8**, for example, focuses the audience's attention upon the problems of those eight women in Willmar, not on sex discrimination as the audience confronts it in their own daily lives.

It is up to educators and facilitators to help viewers make the jump from the world of the screen back to an examination of their own world. **Women's Worth** aims to integrate

the film screening into a larger, well-defined context of critical inquiry through a process we call "active viewing."

Using surveys, questionnaires, audits, discussion questions and other activities, **Women's Worth** is an attempt to transform the customary passive and privatized nature of movie viewing into a more self-consciously active and social experience. **Women's Worth** does not so much aim to convey a body of knowledge about a predetermined subject, but rather aims to foster an examination of the student's own potential to participate more fully in shaping an equitable workplace. Each of the four sections of the manual—"Defining the Problem," "The Film Screening," "Reflections," and "From Insight to Action"—are designed to facilitate an evolving four-fold process of self-discovery. First, audiences are encouraged to focus their attention on sex discrimination as they have encountered it in their own lives, how they have responded to it, and how it exists in society as a whole. Second, as a result of this focusing, viewers will have a well-defined framework for viewing **The Willmar 8**. Third, audiences are helped to focus their attention away from the story of the Willmar Eight back to the world around them, through investigation of sex discrimination at their own workplace and their own sex role conditioning. Finally, concrete on-the-job and community activities are suggested which can translate the insights and anger generated by the film into a positive program for giving visibility and legitimacy to the problem of sex bias, both in the viewer's own workplace and in the wider community.

SELECTING APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

The activities in the manual can be used separately or in combination with others depending upon your goals and your time. We suggest you read them all carefully and select those most appropriate for your organization. We have found that the film screening plus one activity from each of the three learning sections—"Defining the Problem," "Reflections," and "From Insight to Action"—will fill up a two-hour program.

The first section of **Women's Worth**, "Preparatory Activities: Defining the Problem," will help the group define its goals in watching **The Willmar 8**. This section contains three different modules. "The Many Faces of Sex Discrimination" will help students articulate their own preconceived notions about the nature and seriousness of sex discrimination and introduce them to the many ways it can limit their work opportunities. "Job Satisfaction and the Meaning of Work," will help students articulate their usually vague and fuzzy expectations and wishes. The module "The Socialization Process" shows how traditional sex roles restrict and limit occupational mobility, rewards, and fulfillment.

"Reflections: Women's Worth" is a two module section which follows the film screening. It will enable students to extract from **The Willmar 8** insights into the nature and impact of their own socially determined attitudes as well as their own conditions of employment. The first module, "Women's Worth: Taking Charge of Our Own Worklife," leads to an identification of the deeply entrenched and socially conditioned sex role behavior traits that the student must overcome within herself if she is to successfully challenge oppressive conditions at her workplace. "Separate But Not Equal: Occupational Segregation and Inequity," advances the theme of "women's work" introduced in **The Willmar 8** and reveals how sex segregation acts to lower wages and limit employment opportunities.

The last section, "From Insight to Action: Four Paths Towards Equity," provides a menu of suggested empowerment activities in each of four general areas: employer personnel practices, union organizing, comparable worth, and community action. Each module provides suggestions for follow-up activities which will bring pressure upon employers and promote wider involvement in the fight for equity.

While **Women's Worth** draws together a number of suggestions which will help you develop a program to achieve sex equity, naturally not every activity is appropriate or useful. The modules which you choose from

each section will be dependent upon the nature and purpose of your group. For example, if your group is comprised of young women about to enter the workforce who are considering their career possibilities, the preparatory activity, "Job Satisfaction and the Meaning of Work," will help the students define their own previously unarticulated career hopes and expectations. It will provide a useful introductory context for explicitly viewing **The Willmar 8** for evidence of what sex-related obstacles to these hopes they are likely to encounter. A group of established women workers, on the other hand, might be aware of sex discrimination and how it affects them, but find themselves inhibited from taking action because of the fear generated when they consider stepping outside the traditional passive female role. In such a case, you might want to develop a program from these modules which examine sex-role behavior, including "The Socialization Process" from the preparatory activities section, and "Women as Advocates for Equal Rights on the Job" from the "Reflections" section. A group comprised of members from one organization or class that meets regularly will be capable of carrying out an extended project, while a group comprised of

organizationally unrelated individuals meeting on a one-time only basis would necessarily find that problematic. Some groups can initiate an action at their workplaces while others are better suited to support an existing effort to gain equity in the community at large.

The first task then, is to define your group and your goals carefully. Then read the rest of the manual carefully so that you can choose the most appropriate modules from among its three sections. Our goal is to make available individual projects and learning activities which you can combine in a form suitable for your unique and individual program.

The activities often make use of questionnaires, surveys, and other hand-outs. We encourage you to make the necessary number of copies directly from the originals here in **Women's Worth** or design your own. Feel free to make any changes that will increase their utility and better fit your special needs. Each module contains an introductory essay to help orient the group. You can either make copies and pass them out or simply use them as a reference in preparing your own remarks.

Preparatory Activities:

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The context in which a film is shown is the single most important factor for determining how effective it will prove as an educational and organizing tool. The preparatory activities in this section, "Defining the Problem," are explicitly designed to help groups re-examine their own experiences and articulate underlying—and often unspoken—attitudes and preconceptions about the nature and extent of sex discrimination and its effect upon their lives. As the group struggles to a common understanding of the situations faced by its own members—identifying their sex-related employment problems and obstacles to obtaining equity—they build a framework which will enable students to watch **The Willmar 8** explicitly searching for insights into their own employment problems.

The first module, "Women and the Workplace," is particularly well suited as an introductory exercise for groups just becoming aware of the problems of sex bias. An "Everything You Didn't Know About Sex Discrimination Quiz" will alert participants to the surprising pervasiveness and seriousness of sex discrimination.

The next unit, "Job Satisfaction and the Meaning of Work," explores the meaning and role of work in one's life. The accompanying "Job-Satisfaction Self-Audit and In-

dex" will promote articulation of one's own career hopes and expectations and help each individual evaluate one's existing or potential job. Programs and classes with a career education orientation will be most interested in this section, but any group considering working life and the nature of work will find it useful.

Lastly, "The Socialization Process: A Woman's Lot," examines the many personal and social constraints women must overcome if they are to successfully challenge oppressive behavior and social structures. The activity "Reactions to Discrimination: Sharing Work Memories" is designed to foster a re-examination of participant's reactions to incidents of sex discrimination they have encountered or witnessed.

These three sections provide a comprehensive introduction to the major themes of **The Willmar 8**. Working through the activities before the screening will imbue the film with new personal meaning. In this way the film screening will become an occasion for a group to define itself, to analyze its common situation, and to begin planning for the future. Depending upon your time and purpose, choose the module or modules most appropriate for your group. If time is a problem, consider assigning the activities as "homework" the session previous to the film screening.

THE MANY FACES OF SEX DISCRIMINATION

Women and the Workforce

The story of the Willmar Eight illustrates both how much and how little progress working women have made. The long and determined fight that these "ordinary" people waged certainly indicates that women are no longer willing to accept the roles that

have traditionally been assigned to them. Yet the very fact that they were forced to wage—and lose—their fight indicates just how prevalent and deeply rooted sex discrimination remains in our society. It is much wider, in fact, than most of us realize.

The first female factory workers were employed in the New England textile mills in the early 1800's. They worked 72 hours each week for less than \$2 and lived in factory-owned boarding houses under constant supervision and harsh rules.

Since then we have seen women win the right to vote, the rise of labor unions, and the women's movement of the 1960's and 70's. Despite it all, the wages of women as compared to men are less today than they were 30 years ago. In 1954, the average woman earned 64 cents for every dollar a man earned; today a woman averages only 59 cents to a man's dollar. College-educated women earn less on the average than male high school graduates. Throughout history, women have been viewed by all men—employers, male workers, and trade unionists alike—as temporary workers working for “pin money.” They have been segregated into low-paying jobs, denied opportunities for advancement, and denied career training. Their particular needs as women, such as maternity leave and child care, have been almost completely ignored.

In addition, working women are isolated both from each other and from means of redress such as unions. The result is that women are still struggling to make a living and build careers in a world dominated by traditional attitudes toward women and work.

Today, as in the past, most women enter the work force for the same basic reason men do: they need the money. Almost 45% of all women workers in 1979 were single heads of households. Another 30% of working women were married to men who earned less than \$15,000 per year.

While the reasons that men and women work may be very similar, the work itself is very different. The lowest paying occupations are dominated by women. Less than 7.5% of all women earn more than \$15,000 compared to 40% of men. A woman is two-and-a-half times more likely than a man to be poverty stricken, a trend that is coming to be known as the “feminization of poverty.”

Banking, the industry employing the Willmar Eight, exemplifies these trends. In the past decade the proportion of female tellers increased from 73.6% to 92.9%. Their low wages reflect this overly female concentration. Pay for bank tellers and clerks are among the lowest in the country. According to the Wall Street Journal, in 1980 in New York City—the home of the Country's highest paying banks—tellers averaged \$4.43/hour and file clerks \$3.84. In most other cities wages are lower; some tellers are even eligible for food stamps on their starting salaries. To make matters worse, it is a dead-end job. Once a teller, always a teller (unless one quits); the position of teller is rarely attached to a career ladder. It is a dead-end job.

Today 52% of all women work. The Wall Street Journal expects this figure to increase to 65% in ten years. From 1950 to 1975, 11.5 million married women entered the labor force, and the number of working mothers has increased nine-fold since 1940. Yet the dramatic shift in the role of women in paid work has not been matched by a similar shift in home-based work responsibilities. Women are still expected to have the major, if not the sole, responsibility for home and family. The result is that many women work what has become called a “doubleday.”

An Everything You Didn't Know About Women and Work Quiz

Sex discrimination at work is often considered a relatively minor and unimportant problem, but it is more pervasive and its consequences much more tragic than even the most “enlightened” among us usually realize.

A necessary first step to reducing sex discrimination is to draw attention to just how widespread and debilitating it really is. It is important that individual working women realize that their situation is not unique, that

the sex discrimination they face is the rule rather than the exception.

This "Quiz" is designed to alert participants to their own ignorance of the surprising extent and consequences of sex discrimination in the workplace and the myriad ways it manifests itself. It will demonstrate that unequal pay, occupational segregation, and denial of promotional opportunity is even more widespread than they ever imagined, and that despite recent well-publicized gains

by a small segment of professional women, the situation is not improving.

After the "Quiz" is taken, tabulate all the answers to each question on a blackboard in order to develop a profile of the group's responses. This will also remove the pressure from individuals to provide the "correct" answer. The "Quiz" is not meant to be a test in the traditional sense, but rather more resembles a survey. After each tabulation, give the correct response.

An Everything You Didn't Know About Women and Work Quiz

1. Women earn _____ to every dollar earned by white men.
 59 cents 44 cents
 76 cents 85 cents
2. The earnings gap between men and women _____ during the last 30 years.
 Narrowed by 17 cents
 Increased by 5 cents
 Increased by 15 cents
 Narrowed by 2 cents
3. _____ percent of working women are union members.
 5% 22%
 12% 45%
4. _____ women will work outside the home at some point in their lives.
 2 of 10 7 of 10
 4 of 10 9 of 10
5. The fastest growing sector of women's employment is in _____.
 clerical occupations
 professional occupations
 management services
6. At the turn of the century the overwhelming majority of working women were _____.
 single and self-supporting
 married
 single and living at home
7. In 1870 women made up _____ percent of the nation's secretaries.
 5% 76%
 42% 98%
8. For a woman to earn more than the median income of a man with 8 years of elementary school, she must have _____.
 the same education
 a high school degree
 4 or more years of college
9. Women make up 98% of dental assistants, but make up only _____ percent of practicing dentists.
 2.3% 38%
 4.6% 15%
10. _____ percent of the world's income is earned by women.
 25% 64%
 47% 10%
11. _____ women in the U.S. with children under 13 work outside the home.
 1.5 million
 17 million
 600,000
12. _____ percent of women workers are the sole source of income for their families.
 26% 45%
 9% 70%

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Women make **59 cents** to every dollar earned by white men. Less than 7.5% of women earn over \$15,000 per year.
2. The earnings gap between men and women **increased by 5 cents** in the last 30 years. In 1954 women earned 64 cents for every dollar earned by men.
3. **12%** of working women are union members. This compares to 29% of men. In 1900, 5% of all women belonged to unions.
4. **9 out of 10** women will work outside the home at some point in their lives. The average woman will spend 25 years in paid work.
5. The fastest growing sector of women's employment is in **clerical occupations**.
6. At the turn of the century, the overwhelming majority of working women were **single and self-supporting**.
7. In 1870 women made up **42%** of the nation's secretaries. This compares to 99.3% today.
8. For a woman to earn more than the median income of a man with eight years of elementary school, she must have **4 or more years** of college.
9. Women make up **98%** of dental assistants but make up only **4.6%** of practicing dentists.
10. **10%** of the world's income is earned by women.
11. **17 million** women in the U.S. with children under 13 work outside the home.
12. **45%** of women workers are the sole source of income for their families. Another 30% are married to men who earn less than \$15,000 a year.

Questions for Discussion

The Quiz and Discussion Questions below are meant to make participants aware of their own preconceptions about the nature and causes of sex discrimination. Participants should watch the film looking for evidence that either strengthens or challenges these preconceptions.

1. Which of the statements from the quiz is most surprising and/or shocking? Why? Which most challenged your own preconceptions? Where do you think those preconceptions came from?
2. Many reasons have been advanced as to why working women have done so poorly. Discuss the following reasons. To what extent do they appear true and why? Refer to your own situation or to that of others you have known when possible.
 - a. Women work only for "pin money;" work isn't as important to them as it is to the male breadwinner.
 - b. Women are less likely to fight for their rights, for improved wages and working conditions, including joining and becoming active in unions.
 - c. Women are overwhelmingly hired to work in "female ghettos," traditional low-wage, dead-end jobs with no career ladders attached.
 - d. Since women often leave work to have families, they are not worth training and developing.
 - e. Many women lose their jobs, or at least their seniority, when they take time off to have a baby. They must then start all over at the bottom when they return to work.
 - f. Many employers are simply prejudiced against women and would prefer to hire and promote men.
3. Do you feel you know enough to make a reasoned case of your views about equal pay and promotion policies at your workplace, in your community, or in your union? For example, do you know what the Equal Pay Act of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act actually says? Do you know the facts and figures on men's and women's rates of pay in your firm or industry, or on men's and women's promotion and training opportunities? Do you know the methods of job evaluation which can or could be used in rating men's and women's jobs in your firm or industry?

4. How would you explain to a **male** co-worker (or member of your community or union) that it was in his interest to actively campaign for women's rights and strong trade union organization among women?

How would you explain to a **female** co-worker or member of your community that it was in her interest and the interest of all workers to be strongly organized and to fight for their rights?

JOB SATISFACTION AND THE MEANING OF WORK

Reasons for Working

Work is central to our lives. We all know that through our work we are able to purchase the basic goods and services we need to survive. But work is also important in ways other than financial necessity. People define themselves by the work they do. Work shapes our identity and contributes to our self image. It confers social status on us and on our families.

To earn a day's pay for a day's work, no matter how dull the task, has always been our lot. Now, however, a growing number of American workers are questioning the quality of their working lives. They are asking for dignity and purpose, a livelihood as well as a living.

Although pay is still critical, workers are placing greater importance than ever on interesting work and the opportunities for growth on the job. The boring, repetitive, and seemingly meaningless tasks that characterize many jobs offer little challenge or autonomy. Some feel that it isn't the jobs that have changed but the aspirations and expectations of workers themselves. As one woman, an editor, put it in Studs Terkel's

book *Working*, "I think most of us are looking for a calling, not a job. Most of us have jobs that are too small for our spirit. Jobs are not big enough for people."

Many want work to offer creativity, responsibility, peer approval, a sense of usefulness, an opportunity to learn and other benefits less tangible than a pay check. Studies such as those done by Yankelovich, Skelly and White show that our job values are changing, that personal fulfillment and growth are becoming increasingly important to those who labor in America's factories and offices.

Studies have found women to be almost twice as likely as men to express negative attitudes towards their jobs. Women derive the same satisfactions from the intrinsic rewards of work—when such rewards are available to them—as do men. But there is a vast discrepancy between women's high expectations and the low social and economic status actually associated with their work. Like the Willmar Eight, women around the country are becoming increasingly frustrated by jobs precluding them the opportunity to grow and develop.

What Do You Want From Your Job? A Self-Audit

Why do you work? Is it only to make a living? Or are there other reasons as well, reasons that are vital to your self-image and personal fulfillment? What ambitions do you hope to realize from your working life?

This Self-Audit will help you identify those job traits that are important to you and then evaluate how your job is living up to your hopes and expectations. Articulating your own career aspirations—and disappointments—is a necessary prerequisite to identifying and overcoming the obstacles which stand in your way.

Below you will find a range of job traits and characteristics. First, rate each trait on a 1-to-5 basis, 5 being a trait you would **most** desire to find in your job, while 1 would indicate a trait which is not important to you. Then, in column 2, indicate the degree to which your job is actually characterized by each trait, again on a 1-to-5 basis. A 5 would indicate a trait that is very much present in

your job while a 1 would indicate a trait that is completely absent from your job. Students might evaluate a given set of jobs according to what they know of them. Alternatively, as an assignment, students can request workers in various occupations to complete the questionnaire.

Career education, sex equity, and campus based women's re-entry and counseling programs will find the Audit to be particularly helpful as a preparatory activity to viewing **The Willmar 8**.

When finished, subtract each figure entered in Column 2 from the figure in Column 1 and enter the result in Column 3. (If Column 2 is greater than Column 1, enter 0). This figure is your Job Satisfaction Index, a rough measure of whether your job is satisfying your needs in each particular area. A 0 indicates that your ambitions are being fulfilled. Too many 3's and 4's indicate extreme dissatisfaction with your job.

Column 1 DESIRABILITY OF JOB TRAITS					JOB SATISFACTION SELF-AUDIT AND INDEX					Column 2 TRAITS DESCRIBING YOUR JOB					Column 3 JOB SATISFAC- TION INDEX				
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5			
1 Not important to you						1 Not characteristic						(If col.2 is larger than col.1, enter 0.)							
↓						↓													
5 Very important to you						5 Very characteristic													
Col.1						Col.2						Col.3							
_____						_____						_____							
UNIQUENESS: I feel that the work I do is unique, novel, different from others' in some way.																			
_____						_____						_____							
STATUS: I have a position that carries respect with my friends, family, community and co-workers.																			

Col. 1		Col. 2	Col. 3
	HIGH INCOME POSSIBILITIES: I have work that can lead to substantial earnings or profit enabling me to purchase essential items and the extras of life I desire.		
	EXPERTISE: I am respected and sought after for my knowledge and skill in a given area.		
	RELATIONSHIPS: I develop close friendships with my co-workers and other people I meet in the course of my work activities.		
	VARIETY: I do a number of different tasks and have the setting and content of my work responsibilities changed frequently.		
	LEARNING: I am able to learn new skills continually and to acquire new knowledge and understanding.		
	LACK OF DEMAND: I have work duties that demand very little energy or involvement.		
	SECURITY: I am able to depend on keeping my job and making enough money.		
	AUTHORITY: I am responsible for the planning and implementation of many tasks and projects as well as for the people involved.		
	PREDICTABILITY: I have a stable and relatively unchanging work routine and job duties.		
	PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: I see opportunity to work hard and move ahead in my organization.		
	USEFULNESS: I feel that what I do is necessary for the survival or welfare of others.		
	PARTICIPATION: I have opportunities to express my ideas, reactions, and observations about my job and the ways it might improve.		
	INDEPENDENCE: I am able to direct and control the course of my work, determining its nature without a great deal of direction from others.		
	RECOGNITION: I am visibly and publicly appreciated and given credit for the content and quality of my work.		
	OTHER:		

Questions for Discussion

1. Consider these two statements. Which of them do you agree with and why?
 - "I don't care one way or the other about job satisfaction as long as the money is good."
 - "You spend a large part of your life at work so it ought to be satisfying."
2. Go down the list of job traits in the Audit. Which traits do you consider most important? Why? Surveying the group as a whole, identify the jobs which tend to exhibit these "key" traits and thus have rated a high ("0" or "1") Job Satisfaction Index? What, if anything, do these jobs have in common? Do they tend to be male-dominated or female-dominated occupations?
3. What are some of the reasons for jobs rating a low ("3" or "4") Job Satisfaction Index? Who generally receives less satisfaction from their work, men or women? Why might this be?
4. Do you feel your present job is utilizing your skills and abilities? Conversely, does your job require skills and abilities for which you rarely get credit or recognition?
5. How does management view you?
 - A human resource to be valued and developed.
 - A potential human resource if you prove yourself.
 - An employee who performs a specific function.
 - An appendage to a process or a machine.
 - A woman.

THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

A Woman's Lot?

Has your boss ever asked you to run out for lunch or buy personal gifts for his wife? Or has he informed you that you won't be getting a raise this year after you refused a dinner invitation from him? Has a man in your office, who has qualifications similar to yours and does work that requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility, been given a higher salary or a different job title?

Most of us have experienced some form of unfair or unequal treatment solely on the basis of our sex. Sex discrimination limits our opportunities and leads both to low pay and to a lack of respect for our work. Incidences of sex discrimination can range from being asked to make the coffee to being fired for putting on a few pounds, or simply watching a man take credit for work we have done.

Sex discrimination often occurs in subtle

about until the post is filled or the salary discrepancy like the promotion that is not heard between a female and male employee that is not discovered for some time.

Initial reactions to an incident of sex discrimination are disbelief, shock, embarrassment, or fear. Sometimes we even blame ourselves. A Houston office worker told a reporter, "We're southern ladies here, and we're not supposed to be angry." The role of a woman as activist, challenger of the status quo, and fighter for her rights is a foreign one to most women. We are trained from childhood to be passive and agreeable, to be the person who smoothes things over. Women are socialized to assume roles which are often submissive, emotional, and dependent. Anger, assertiveness, and competence are not put forward as legitimate forms of female expression.

Reactions to Discrimination: Sharing Work Memories

The Willmar 8 tells how eight traditional, non-feminist women finally asserted themselves in the face of continual sex discrimination. To do so they had to overcome a socialization process which pressured them to remain passive and silent. In this informal "rap session," women will be urged to recall instances of sex discrimination they have encountered at work, how they reacted, and why they did or didn't feel they could take action. It will provide a framework to evaluate the appropriateness of the Willmar Eight's responses and to examine the film for insights into the origins and implications of sex-typed behavior in one's own situations.

Ask each participant to share with the whole group the most memorable incident that happened to her at work merely because she is a woman or ask individuals to give examples of the pettiest office procedures they were required to perform. Men can be asked to share incidents they have witnessed . . . or been party to. If no one responds right away, be prepared with your own examples. The following true stories might help:

- A woman was hired as a file clerk, made to do typing, and then fired for inaccurate typing work.
- A secretary was asked to clean her boss's dentures.
- A woman in a bank was asked to train a man for her job. She was then transferred to a different department. Her former job, now held by a man, was upgraded to an officer's position.

Sharing and analyzing these stories will help women realize their experiences were not unique, but shared by others in the group. In so doing, they should realize that such incidents did not reflect some amorphous "personal problem." Rather the incidents were common acts of sex discrimination which they have the right and responsibility to oppose. The women will also learn that their responses probably were not unusual, but the result of a life-long process of female socialization which has resulted in identifiable roles, common to most women, that they have been programmed to act out. These roles often constrain us from challenging oppressive behavior.

Questions for Discussion

You can use the following questions to help analyze the stories and responses.

1. When this happened to you, did you do anything about it? Why or why not?
2. What was your own initial reaction? Anger? Embarrassment? Fear? What social pressures and fears prevented you from making a more assertive response? What rewards or punishments did your reaction bring you?
3. Did you tell any co-workers about the incident? Why not, or how did they react?
4. Did you feel that you had anywhere to turn? The personnel department? Your supervisor? A union steward? A government agency? A women's organization? Your family?
5. If there was support, where did it come from? If there was resistance, where did it come from?
6. What was the outcome? Did anything change? How did you feel at the end?

The Film: **ACTIVE VIEWING**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE WILLMAR 8

*B*efore viewing the film, define the following unfamiliar terms which are likely to confuse the audience. If you are not an experienced film projectionist, be certain to first read through **Appendix A: Checklist for a Successful Film Screening**.

Unfair Labor Practices—Unfair labor practices are those judged to be outside federal labor law. An example would be an employer's attempt to intimidate, coerce, or harass an employee for engaging in organizing activities. Poor pay and working conditions do not constitute unfair labor practices according to law. Should a strike be judged to be "directly caused" by an unfair labor practice, not only must the practice be corrected, the strikers are entitled to reinstatement and back pay. One of the legal criteria for evaluating "direct cause" is the time lag between when the unfair labor practice took place and the initiation of the strike.

NLRB—The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is the federal watchdog agency charged with enforcing federal labor law. NLRB "judges" are empowered to hold hearings to determine whether employers and unions act outside the law (engage in "unfair labor practices") during labor disputes and whether such practices affected the outcome of the dispute.

EEOC—The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal watchdog agency charged with enforcing federal equal employment law. The EEOC may bring charges in behalf of any individual against the employer (as well as unions and employment agencies) alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or age. Cases taken to the EEOC often take several years to adjudicate.

STRIKE CHRONOLOGY

The narrative of *The Willmar 8* follows the progress of the women's strike. Refer to this chronology of the strike should you find the course of events as described in the film confusing.

October 1976

Bank hires Kevin Bostrum, a young man with little experience and a high school degree as a management trainee. The senior teller and bookkeeper are asked to train him. The senior teller who worked in the bank for 18 years and the bookkeeper are both refused opportunities to apply for the position.

Early November 1976

All of the female clerical employees file a class-action sex-discrimination suit with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. After filing the charge and realizing that it might take years to be processed, the women approached bank management as a group and asked for pay increases and promotional opportunities. The bank president responded by saying, "We're not all equal you know."

February 1977

The women decide to organize an independent union.

Spring 1977

The bank commits several unfair labor practices. It promised union supporters better treatment, loans for their families, and transfers to better jobs if they withdraw from the union.

May 1977

An election is held among the tellers and bookkeepers at the bank. They win by an overwhelming majority. On May 20, the Willmar Bank Employees Association, Local 1 is certified as the official bargaining agent for bank employees.

June 1977

Negotiations between the Employees Association and the bank begin and are held throughout the summer and fall. Little or no agreement is reached on any major issues.

November 1977

Negotiations drag on without progress. The bank refuses to bargain over an arbitrary change in hours of work.

December 7, 1977

The bank women meet and review all that has happened so far. They decide that if progress is not made at the next negotiating session, they will strike until they can get a contract.

December 14, 1977

When negotiations remain at a standstill, the women file unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and go on strike. The strike is ruled to be an economic strike rather than an unfair labor practice strike, which means that, if the women lose the strike, the bank is not required to give the women their jobs back and can hire other workers to replace them.

January 1978

The NLRB judge finds that, although the unfair labor practice charges that had occurred in the spring were, in fact unfair labor practices, they cannot be included as evidence because the women did not file them within six months of the time they occurred. The women are not reinstated, and back pay is not authorized.

February 1978

The women appeal this decision to the NLRB, but in 1980 the judge's ruling is upheld.

1981

The decision of the US Circuit Court of Appeals upholds the NLRB decision.

Reflections: **THE ROOTS OF DISCRIMINATION**

*T*he background essays, activities, and discussion questions in this section are intended to help the group examine the film just screened for insights into their own socially determined attitudes and behavior as well as their own employment conditions. They will serve to refocus the viewers' attention from the problems in Willmar, Minnesota to their own situations as they begin to identify and analyze the obstacles—both personal and on-the-job—to gaining equality.

The two modules explore subjective and objective themes respectively. "Women's

Worth: Taking Charge of Your Own Worklife" is designed to help the group identify and overcome those sex-role traits which effectively discourage women from challenging oppressive structures. "Separate But Not Equal: Occupational Segregation and Inequity" explores the mechanisms which act to maintain a female "job ghetto."

The discussion questions at the end of each module will provoke viewers to examine the ideas in *The Willmar 8* in light of their implications for the viewers' own behavior and job opportunities.

WOMEN'S WORTH: TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR OWN WORKLIFE

"I'll bet you that every bank president in this state is looking at that Willmar strike. And I'll bet you that most every employee working in a bank is looking at that strike hoping that them girls win. And if they do, you're going to see some other banks follow through."

Bob Killeen, UAW representative
from *The Willmar 8*

Overcoming Sex-Role Socialization

The action taken by the Willmar Eight has significance far beyond their own lives. It represents an important watershed in the century-long fight for equal rights on the job. An entrenched structure of occupational segregation, the myriad forms of discriminatory personnel practices, and the entrenched attitudes of management, are not the only obstacles to equity. One of the most important barriers has long been women's own deeply entrenched and socially conditioned attitudes.

Years of sex-role conditioning effectively discourage and inhibit women from chal-

lenging authority. Aggressively confronting discriminatory personnel practices and fighting for what they believe is not a role with which many women feel comfortable. The Willmar Eight, however, did just that.

Jane Williamson, Diane Winston, and Wanda Wooter have written succinctly about the consequence of this life-long process of sex-role socialization:

"Beginning with the pink and blue blankets in which newborn babies are wrapped, everything in their environment conspires to transmit all-important sex-role messages. Unless they are con-

sciously attempting to break down sex-role stereotypes, most parents begin treating their child according to its sex from birth. A full-blown but unconscious set of expectations settles in. Little boys will be expected to show bravery and curb their tears, they will be encouraged in rough, active play and will be dressed accordingly. Their misbehaviors will be less severely chastised—boys will be boys, after all—and they will be helped into independence and self-confidence. Little girls, on the other hand, will be allowed and encouraged to show fear and depend on others. They will be taught to think of themselves as too fragile to take part in most "boys' games" and will often be dressed for nothing other than quiet, indoor play. A more rigid set of rules for behavior will be imposed on them; little ladies simply don't do certain things.

"One of the classic pieces of sex-role research provides a grim insight into society's opinion of the sex roles it prescribes. Seventy-nine psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers were given a list of personality traits. They were asked to assign the traits to any of three categories: 'mature, healthy, socially competent male,' 'mature, healthy, socially competent female,' or 'mature, healthy, socially competent adult.' Their responses were overwhelmingly consistent. The 'mature, healthy, socially competent adult' and the 'healthy adult male' were nearly indistinguishable. Compared to the healthy adult standard, however, the female was not healthy, mature, or socially competent."¹

The traditional female upbringing of the Willmar Eight imposed certain qualities upon their personalities, such as passivity, submissiveness, and a low sense of self-worth which circumscribe permissible female behavior. Community pressures were another source of constraint. Yet those eight tellers

and bookkeepers at the Citizens National Bank in Willmar, Minnesota still managed to stand up and fight, to take responsibility for changing their condition and winning control over their lives. Bundled in snow suits against the harsh Minnesota winter, where the windchill factor dropped to 70° below, they walked a picket line on strike for 18 long months. Their action pointedly demonstrates that the traditional socio-psychological impediments to female activism can be overcome by women everywhere. As women change themselves, workplaces will change as well.

History teaches many things. Most all will agree that one of its indisputable lessons is that change comes only when those affected fight for it. The old cliché that reforms are not given, but won, still rings true. Just as the suffrage movement had to do battle to win the right to vote, and the civil rights movement had to battle to win the outlawing of segregation, only a strong, aggressive movement of working women will win equity in the workplace.

But activism not only transforms that which is acted upon, it transforms the activist as well. Perhaps the greatest significance of *The Willmar 8* lies in the film's portrayal of women wrestling with all the social barriers and personal sex-role "baggage" which for so long contributed to keep women "in their place."

The Willmar Eight were rather "ordinary" women, typical of their community. Except for voting, politics was foreign to their world. They had never been involved in political activity. Their attitudes towards unions had been ambiguous at best. They certainly didn't consider themselves feminists. They grew up in and were socialized by the institutions of a common, middle American "Christian" community. Its attitudes and value system were similar to those in towns from one side of this country to the other. According to Louise Mack, the head of the local NOW chapter, when the women walked out

1. Jane Williamson, et al, *Women's Action Almanac*, William Morrow, New York 1979

on strike, "They were risking their friends, they were risking their jobs, they were risking . . . that they never would be able to get a job in this town again." Willmar felt threatened by their challenge to "life of usual." Said one man, "I think they should call it off . . . after all, this is a Christian town and it'd be nice if we had peace." Willmar expected its women to "be assertive in a nice way without being overly aggressive."

But in overcoming such obstacles the

women discovered the possibilities of new social roles and found within themselves strength and courage, abilities and skills they never knew they had. The eight forged their own supportive and self-reliant group. They became more assertive. They learned to speak in public. They wrote all their own leaflets. Though they eventually lost the strike, the Willmar Eight gained a sense of dignity and self-worth that had been denied them on the job and a sense of community they never had known before.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Sex-roles impose crippling limitations on all of us. The following quotations from the film will help viewers identify some of the factors of sex-role socialization which shape women's attitudes and behavior and which tend to inhibit women from fighting for their rights. With something as deep-seated as sex-role socialization, just recognizing its existence is half the battle. The quotations should be discussed in light of the participants' own experiences.

1. **Poker Player:** "I think that when you feel confident in yourself you can be assertive in a nice way without being overly aggressive."

Have you ever been branded as "unfeminine" or "unladylike" for being overly aggressive? Make a list of the characteristics of expected female behavior. How are women expected to respond to wrongs done to them?

2. **Man:** "I think they should call it off. After all, this is a Christian town and it would be nice if we had peace."

Poker Player: "We hesitate to discuss it too much for fear that there might be some ill feeling."

How important is maintaining peaceful and tranquil relationships to you? Has the fear of confrontation, of unpleasantness, of causing a disruption ever prevented you from confronting a situation which bothered you? Did you find it

easier to let the problem slide? Was it easier? What was disturbing about the possibility of a confrontation? What was the price paid for not confronting the problem?

3. **Man:** "None of these eight women thought of themselves as people who had any real power over their lives when this began. But it's through this kind of affront . . . that people learn, through political action, that they really are worthwhile people."

Do women often feel that they have no real power over their lives? The Willmar Eight lost the strike, but what did they gain? Was it worth it? (You might make two lists, "what the women gained" and "what the women lost" and compare the two for purposes of answering this question.

4. **Glennis:** "My pastor gave me this book to help me. 'I suddenly realized what was wrong in our family—I had been out from under my husband's authority and we were all suffering because of it.' And another one, 'When a woman has a truly submissive spirit, she has far greater power to appeal than most people realize!'"

How prevalent are these beliefs and how are they propagated? Do they occur in subtler fashion? Do husbands and boy friends ever feel threatened when wives and girlfriends have their own independent work and careers,

join a women's organization, or involve themselves in a cause? Do you ever have difficulty challenging "authority" even when you know the authority is wrong?

5. Glennis: "Two years ago my awareness was in a different place . . . a feminist was a woman-libber, was somebody who was out of control, and just totally strange, kinky if you would."

What is the image of a feminist in your town? Where does this image come from? Why wouldn't all women naturally identify with women who fight for wom-

en's rights? Why might some women be fearful of being labeled a feminist?

6. Mike Pirsch: "(the bank management took the strike) personally and said, 'How could my employees do this to me?' "

To what do you attribute this attitude? Does the management at your company seem to take a condescending and paternalistic attitude towards its employees? Does your management or company newsletter ever refer to the company as a "family"? Why would management desire to foster this attitude among employees?

Factors Inhibiting Activism: Taking a Personal Inventory

Taking an inventory of community attitudes, social pressures and one's personal behavioral traits can help women discover and isolate those factors which tend to inhibit them when confronted with discrimination at work.

Make up and fill out a **Personal Inventory Sheet** such as the one below. First indicate the issues that concern

you at work. Then note any action that you may have taken to address these problems or, failing that, action you would like to take. In the last column are a set of categories of factors which influence behavior. Under each category, list the values, fears, pressures, and other forces which have prevented you from taking effective action to rectify your work-related problems.

Discriminatory Practices and Problems That Concern You At Work	Possible Actions Addressing These Problems	Obstacles Preventing You From Taking Effective Action (Make a list under each category; use additional paper if necessary)
		1. Own Personality Traits
		2. Family Relationships
		3. Social Pressures
		4. Co-workers Attitudes
		5. Lack of Knowledge and Skills
		6. Isolation
		7. Financial Hardship
		8. Management Attitudes
		9. Fears
		10. Other

Questions for Discussion

1. Review the completed Inventory Sheets. You might complete one together as a group process on the blackboard or sheet of paper. What were the issues that led the Willmar Eight to strike? Do any of these problems appear on people's sheets? Which problems are most common to the group?
2. Do you feel that the issues you listed are private, personal problems specific to you as an individual or are they common to other women at your worksite as well? How does this understanding of whether a problem is private or social affect one's capabilities for resolving these problems?
3. Did you approach the problems listed alone or as part of a group? Where and how could you have obtained support? Who can you best discuss your work problems with?
4. Which of the obstacles identified in column 3 seem most common among the group? Which hurdles are most common to women and which to men? How would you describe the differences? How does being a woman relate to these obstacles?
5. Go down the list of obstacles you entered in column 3 once again. This time, opposite the list of obstacles, draw up a new list, a list of forces you might be able to enlist for support and which would help you minimize or overcome the inhibiting factors. The Willmar Eight forged a strong, supportive group which was instrumental in their ability to hold out. List some instances of how this supportive community sustained the strikers. Are you a part of a group that could potentially serve as a supportive community? How might you enlist support from your family, church, and co-workers (male and female)?

SEPARATE BUT NOT EQUAL: OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

The Primary Cause of Low Pay for Women

It is no coincidence that the Willmar Eight were all women. All the tellers and bookkeepers—the lowest paid positions at Willmar's Citizen's National Bank—were female. The managerial posts were all filled by men.

Women workers perform essential functions in our society. They are the teachers of the nation's children, the main providers of health care, and the backbone of the entire financial and business world. Yet, on average, women earn only 59 cents to every dollar earned by white men. Minority women earn only 53 cents to a man's dollar. The Equal Pay Act ordering equal pay for equal work was passed in 1963. Yet, over the last 20 years, the wage gap has been widening, not narrowing.

Why, then, are women still paid so little? There are many reasons and there are even more myths. But the primary cause of women's low pay is that most women work in "women's jobs," female occupational "ghettoes" where more than 70% of the workers are women. Most women workers are confined to clerical, rental, service, and domestic jobs at the bottom of our nation's pay scale. For example:

- 99.3% of secretaries are women.
- 72% of sales clerks are women.
- 95% of seamstresses are women.
- 80% of all clerical workers are women (and 1/3 of all working women are clericals).

This pattern is rampant even within occupations. Take, for example, teaching, a traditional female occupation. In 1975 women were 98.6% of preschool teachers, 85.4% of elementary school teachers, 49.2% of secondary teachers, and only 31.1% of college and university teachers. The higher the grade and pay level, the lower the number of women.

This division of the workforce into "men's jobs" and "women's jobs" is called **occupational segregation**. Occupational segregation can depress wages in the following ways:

1. Once a job is sex-segregated, employers can justify low pay for women's work by putting a lower value on the tasks required for the female jobs.
2. Job segregation "crowds" women workers into a small number of job categories by limiting their choices.

Employers are then able to pick and choose from a large pool of women wanting work and pay low wages without fear that women will go elsewhere . . . women have nowhere else to go.

3. Women's jobs tend to be in the least organized sectors of the economy. Without the strength of a union, women workers have not had the power to demand change.

According to the Women's Action Almanac, "Equal pay for equal work doesn't mean much to women who are only competing with other women for the same low-paying clerical jobs. Their problem is not that men are being paid more for doing the same work—their problem is that 'women's work' does not pay as well as 'men's work.'" Occupational segregation is so thorough that many claim there is no such thing as the labor market; there are two labor markets, one male and the other female.

The Growth and Feminization of the Work Force

A brief glimpse at the history of office work provides a graphic illustration of the relationship between job segregation and pay and working conditions. The following account has been excerpted from testimony at the EEOC's hearings on job segregation (April 29, 1980) by Ellen Cassedy, the program director of 9to5.

"Let's travel back in time to visit a typical office of the mid-nineteenth century. You climb a narrow stairway and open a glass door. You find yourself in a large, dim, and musty room, quite different from the fifty-story fluorescent-lit office buildings of today.

"You see the owner of the business sitting at a high rolltop desk, looking out over the room. Working side by side with the owner are the members of his office staff—all two of them, the clerk and the bookkeeper. They are sitting on high stools, wearing greenshades, writing with quill pens.

"You notice certain similarities between the owner and his clerk and bookkeeper. All three are white, all three are male, and probably all three are from the middle class. The clerk and bookkeeper hold positions of responsibility and trust, and the owner delegates many of his responsibilities to them. Some of these clerical workers are treated like members of the owner's family. In fact, some of them are members of the owner's family: his sons or sons-in-law.

"What happened? How was the work of a few clerks and bookkeepers transformed into the mass occupation which we know as clerical work today? How did this high-paid, high-status male job turn into a low-paid, low-status woman's job?

"The changes started one hundred years ago. This was the birth of monopoly in American business, the time when

a relatively small number of entrepreneurs controlled much of the country's money. Business grew enormously. And as businesses expanded, the office also grew to meet the new demands for record-keeping, communication and coordination.

"The clerical workforce grew too. And it has kept right on growing. One hundred years ago one in every hundred workers was a clerical. Today, one in five American workers is a clerical.

"In the early days, three-quarters of clerical workers were male. Today, the tables are turned—more than three-quarters are female.

"At the same time as the workforce was feminized, pay declined. In 1900, clericals earned twice the wages of production and transportation workers. Today, the average clerical pay is among the lowest in the country—less than the average wage for every kind of blue-collar work.

"Today the nation's 17 million clerical workers far outnumber steelworkers, electrical workers, and auto workers combined. Clericals are 90% unorganized and they are 78% women. Even within the clerical category, female pay is only 63% of male pay, and job segregation is considerable."

Clerical work is generally dead-end work. Few clerical workers are promoted from within. The entrance of women into managerial jobs in some white-collar industries is not being accomplished through the creation of career ladders leading out of the typing pool. Rather, these new female managers are often recruited from outside the company. In many white-collar industries, men are recruited into entry-level positions that pay more and have longer career ladders than the "women's jobs." Women enter

at lower salaries and remain in low-level, low-paying jobs for their entire careers.

DISCRIMINATORY PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Integrating the workforce will require dramatic changes in the personnel practices of employers. Laws which prohibit discrimination in hiring, promotion, and wages have been on the books for 15 years now. Yet little progress has been made.

Employers do not wish to change sex divisions in the labor force because it enables them to take advantage of low-paid labor. On the other hand, sex discrimination costs the employer as well. It's a cause of low morale, high turnover, poor communications and a "who cares" attitude, all of which contribute to lowered productivity and underutilization of human resources. There is a growing recognition that organizations that thrive are those best able to develop and make use of all their "human capital."

No matter what their intent, however, many personnel practices have the effect of maintaining a sex-segregated workforce. A supervisor may seriously believe women are better at some jobs and men at others; skilled jobs may be filled from the outside rather than from the existing workforce; job openings may be the private knowledge of supervisors rather than be posted throughout the workplace; only certain jobs may have built-in "career ladders" and promotional opportunities; training opportunities may not be provided to secretarial and clerical employees; the lack of an objective periodic job performance appraisal system invites subjective (and biased) judgements by supervisors. And even if all the abuses were corrected, without making special efforts to train and promote women and minorities who have been left behind for years, the workforce will remain segregated for the foreseeable future. (See Establishing an Affirmative Action Committee in the "Women and Union Organizing" module.)

Questions for Discussion

1. Are women equally represented in all job classifications at your place of employment? Which job classifications are primarily male? Which are female? How do wages and promotional opportunities compare?
2. (From the film) John Mack: "The bank never conceived of these women as possible managerial material. They got the best possible women they could for their jobs—and these were some pretty high caliber individuals—and then it forgot about them."
Is this true at your workplace? Why would management desire to maintain a segregated workforce and minimize the promotional opportunities open to women? Why wouldn't they want to fully integrate women into all their job categories?
3. When the Willmar Eight complained to the bank president that they were being denied the chance to compete for promotions with men, he responded, "We're not all equal you know." Can women do "men's jobs?" How would you answer those who argue that women can't do the heavy work and anyway, men and women are just better at different kinds of jobs?
4. Employers often argue that it is not worth training women for better paying "men's jobs" because they leave to have families. How would you respond to this argument?
5. You often hear the argument that if women want to do men's work they must take the good with the bad, that the protective laws which shield women from particularly strenuous or dangerous working conditions should be repealed if we are to have full equality (employers have argued strongly for their repeal). Others argue that the responsibilities of parenthood and domestic work are not yet shared equally. The main burden still falls on women and thus they should be more protected. Furthermore, some argue, the protective laws should be **extended** to men, that equality should never be achieved at the expense of one group **losing** its rights. What is your view on these questions?
6. How do the factors listed below act to prevent women from entering "men's jobs" at your workplace?
 - **Conscious policy of management.**
 - **Attitude and sex-bias of supervisors.**
 - **Sexual stereotyping of jobs.**
 - **Women not qualified.**
 - **Women in "dead-end" jobs (or no short career ladders attached).**
 - **Lack of an objective job performance appraisal system.**
 - **Irrelevant and unfair job qualifications.**
 - **Women training men for positions above them.**
 - **Men objecting to having female bosses.**
 - **Lack of an effective affirmative action program.**
 - **Other.**
7. Some employers argue that mandating personnel practices that restrict their prerogative to hire and promote at will and otherwise implementing regulations that "tell me how to run my business," is an attack on the freedom and autonomy they need to operate a successful company. In what ways might a company's "autonomous" personnel practices which restrict minorities and women adversely affect the company's performance? How would you argue to your employer that taking steps to integrate the workforce and improve pay and promotion opportunities is in the interest of the organization as well as its employees? Are there instances when the freedom of corporate managers to pursue a profit clashes with other rights? Which should prevail?

From Insight To Action:

FOUR PATHS TOWARDS EQUITY

*T*his follow-up section suggests activities to translate the concern, indignation, and insights generated by the screening of *The Willmar 8* into social action. It is comprised of four modules, each addressing a distinct arena in which advances must be won if a more equitable workplace is to be achieved. Choose the one (or more if time permits) most appropriate for your group.

1. Focus on Your Workplace: Challenging Personnel Practices.

Company personnel practices must be changed in many ways. Not only must all jobs be opened to women, but women in existing low-paying, dead-end jobs must be provided training and the opportunity to apply for promotions. This includes special efforts (Affirmative action) to provide these opportunities to those who have heretofore been under-represented.

2. Women and Union Organizing.

Unions must address women's concerns and convey to women the advantages unionization can bring. Unionized workers have been able to bargain for higher pay, job reclassification, and other measures which result in greater control over company personnel practices than comparable nonunionized workers.

3. Comparable Worth.

Current wage structures must be changed. Present salary and job classification systems often provide higher salaries to predominantly male job classifications than they do to predominantly female classifications even when the female job demands higher levels of skill, training and responsibility. The principle of comparable worth calls for equal pay for work of equal

or comparable value, not merely work that is identical.

4. Community Action: Six Ways to Support Equal Employment Opportunity.

If women are to be treated differently at work, this ultimately means a change in the values and practices of our entire society. The support of community institutions (governments, churches, civic groups, and of course women's organizations) will have to be enlisted in order to increase the pressure on employers to change their employment practices.

(A fifth path, discrimination suits and enforcement of existing law, is beyond the scope of this manual. Note, however, that pressure can be brought on the EEOC, NLRB, Dept. of Labor, State Fair Employment Practice Commissions, and other agencies to scrutinize closely the personnel practices of employers. Many women have brought suit against their employer, alleging that they pay "women's jobs" less than "men's jobs." Class action settlements worth millions of dollars have been won. Just the threat of these suits have compelled many employers to improve personnel practices. For further information you might consult 9to5 or the book *Sue Your Boss* (see Appendix C: "Resource List"). Appendix B, "Know Your Rights: A Guided Tour of the Law," explains the various existing anti-discrimination laws and includes a checklist of employment practices which have been ruled illegal.)

Each module contains a variety of activities. Note that some should be carried out on the spot while others demand time and a group that meets regularly. Again, select those activities most appropriate for your group.

FOCUS ON YOUR WORKPLACE: CHALLENGING PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Sex discrimination is often a direct result of personnel practices. The Willmar Eight were openly denied promotional opportunities by a company whose president said, "We're not all equal, you know." But most sex discrimination does not take place in such an overt, blatant manner as that experienced by the Willmar Eight. It may not even be intentional and many managers would truthfully deny being sexist. When viewing **The Willmar 8** bankers have been heard to say smugly, "That couldn't happen at my bank." But sex discrimination does occur though on a much more subtle and pervasive level.

Discrimination arises as a result—sometimes intentional, often not—of the personnel policies of the employer. It is not the **intent** of the practices, but their **effect** which is important. The hidden sex bias of many of these policies might be difficult to recognize, but their effects are just as pernicious. For example, if a white male supervisor has complete discretion over promotions, white males are more apt to be promoted, even if the supervisor does not mean to discriminate. When a white male supervisor is forced to decide between a white male and black female, for example, he'll tend to select the white male, not because of any overt desire to discriminate, but simply because he intuitively feels that it will be easier to work with and relate to a man whose background mirrors his own and with whom he is likely to feel more comfortable.

There are many other examples of how personnel practices can have discriminatory effects. How can a woman even apply for a promotion if the job opening is not posted? How can a woman bargain for a raise if her job description inaccurately understates her duties and responsibilities? How can she develop her skills if training is not available to those in her (predominantly female) job classification? Company employment practices must be qualitatively changed if we are to break down occupational segregation and integrate the workforce.

The materials that follow in this section are designed to help you monitor and evaluate management practices which affect wages, working conditions, and opportunities open to women. Appraising current employment practices is the necessary first step in the process of changing them. Once you understand the potential impact of corporate personnel practices on your future, you may agree that such practices are too vital simply to be left to management. Equitable employment practices are an essential prerequisite to a satisfactory working life.

This module concludes with suggestions for designing alternative career paths and company human resource development policies, plus an Action Checklist of tactics for bringing pressure upon your employer.

Monitoring Your Workplace: Compiling a Sex Discrimination Scorecard

Do-it-yourself workplace sex discrimination analysis can be an exciting and effective educational and organizing tool. By emphasizing an investigation of one's immediate workplace, this grassroots data gathering activity can involve even the most apathetic employee and union members.

This section contains three approaches that women can use to investigate and understand discrimination patterns at their workplace. The results can be tabulated into a sex-bias profile or Workplace Discrimination Scorecard of your company or department. The Scorecard can be posted in your

office, circulated in leaflet form, published or otherwise publicized. This will provoke discussion of the seriousness and prevalence of sex discrimination in your office and build support among co-workers for efforts challenging it.

Trade unions, of course, would provide an effective vehicle for publicizing the Scorecard. But most offices are unorganized. However, in many firms there exist relatively autonomous employee-run organizations. They range from United Fund Drives to sports clubs to Women's Awareness Programs. Why couldn't these organizations be used for this purpose instead? Trade unions themselves first originated as burial societies. Existing organizational forms should be utilized and pushed to their limits.

You might also present the Workplace Discrimination Scorecard directly to management. Data is an important tool for negotiating change. Feelings and impressions are easily dismissed by the press, political leaders, and community institutions, let alone your employer. But data is concrete evidence which management cannot ignore or refute.

You might even find it necessary to publicize your problem outside the company in order to bring pressure upon management. The Scorecard can be used for this purpose

as well. You can present it as evidence to support your cause in discussions with women's groups and civic officials, newspaper articles, and even in appearances on local TV and radio programs (the press is often attracted to "angles" such as the Scorecard on which they can "hang" a story).

The investigative methods below are not comprehensive nor will the results be entirely accurate. But they will serve to indicate the degree of occupational segregation at your company, identify those discriminatory personnel practices which tend to maintain this segregation, and their impact on wage rates. They will also allow you to identify special problem areas and assess how strongly others feel about the situation and whether they will support an attempt to change it. The activities might even alert you to things which are so bad at your firm that you might have a case for a discrimination suit (see Appendix B, "Know Your Rights: A Guided Tour of the Law"). In any case, these activities point to a valuable means for involving employees in what is traditionally a management prerogative: company personnel policies.

Students can become involved in workplace monitoring too. Select a local workplace to investigate as a class project. While some employers will refuse to cooperate, no doubt you can find one that will. Be tactful.

Survey of Current Employment Trends

The Survey of Current Employment Trends will help you develop a profile of the sex-segregated nature of your workplace by compiling figures on the number of men and women in each job classification and salary grade. The information needed to complete the Survey may be available from your local union, should you have one. The NLRB has ruled that employers must supply unions with information regarding the race and sex composition of the workplace. This includes the requirement to supply the union with a list of promotions by sex, race, and Spanish surname within a 12-month period showing the job grade prior to and subsequent to

each upgrade, should you desire to be more ambitious. If you don't have a union, some of the information may be available from your personnel office. They may or may not be willing to provide you with the employee gender breakdown for each job category, but the job categories themselves are public information in many companies and sometimes even the associated salary levels. This information will allow you to get started. Firms with 50 or more employees who do \$50,000 or more worth of business with the federal government are required to draw up Affirmative Action Plans. The plans are required by law to contain this information and

they are open to employee inspection (see "Accessing Mandated Filings" later in this module). In most cases, however, you will want to acquire the information by actually surveying your co-workers themselves, perhaps while on coffee breaks or at lunch. This will provide you with the opportunity to involve them in this workplace investigation

as well. Depending upon the type of company you work for, the Survey includes irrelevant categories or overlooks others.

The same Survey can be used to note racial trends as well. Add categories for the total and percentage of white employees, blacks, hispanics, and others in each job category.

Survey of Current Employment Trends						
Job Categories and Grades	Wage/ Salary	Total Employees	Number Male	% Male	Number Female	% Female
Officials and Managers						
Professionals						
Supervisors						
Technical						
Crafts (skilled)						
Operatives (semi-skilled)						
Laborers (unskilled)						
Service Workers						
Sales						
Office and Clerical						

Rate Your Company: A Women's Worth Checklist

This Women's Worth Checklist will enable women to identify the many ways in which personnel practices maintain job segregation and depress wage and benefit levels. Participants can use it to identify and articulate specific grievances concerning pay scales, promotional opportunity, the availability of career ladders, training programs, attitudes of management, and job descriptions and evaluation procedures at their firm.

The Checklist is best completed at the

workplace, for then it will provide a means for engaging others in discussion about work problems. Participants can either fill in the Checklist themselves after informally surveying their co-workers or they can encourage their co-workers to fill out the Checklist. Alternatively, each individual can fill out the Checklist on-the-spot, following the screening, basing their responses on their own impressions and experience. The group could also answer the questions collectively by pooling their responses.

Women's Worth Checklist

WAGES

1. Are women at your firm paid less for substantially the same work as men?
2. Is the **average** rate of pay for women less than that of men?
3. Are there periodic job performance evaluations and salary reviews?
4. Does your company have a set salary grade system?
5. Are you paid for overtime?

HIRING, CLASSIFICATION AND PROMOTION

1. Is the hiring rate different for women and men?
2. Are certain jobs or departments staffed entirely or almost entirely by males, others by females?
3. Were women told they would not be hired, promoted, transferred, or given certain jobs because:
 - a. They have children.
 - b. They might miss too much work.
 - c. They might quit if their husbands are transferred.
 - d. They might not take their work seriously because they are not the "primary bread winners" of their families.
 - e. They are, or they might become, pregnant.
4. Are women not hired, appointed, or promoted to certain jobs, while men with less experience and tenure are?

Yes No

5. Do jobs in grade and salary levels that are predominately held by women ever require higher qualifications and skill levels than jobs in the same grade or in higher grades that are predominately held by men?
6. Are duties and responsibilities spelled out in written job descriptions?
7. Does the job description inaccurately define the job, e.g. are women employees titled and salaried as secretaries while actually performing administrative, technical or other high paying work?
8. Are jobs classified as light or heavy, and are light jobs paid less and automatically assigned to women with no testing to determine whether women could do the heaviest work if they desired?
9. Do women sometimes train men to fill jobs that are higher paying than their own?
10. Do women occupy the majority of dead-end jobs (jobs that are not attached to career ladders and offer little possibility for promotion)?
11. Are all job openings posted and circulated throughout the company?
12. Do announcements of job openings specify that positions are for men only or for women only?
13. Does the company recruit outsiders rather than promote from within?

Yes No

14. Does the company encourage workers to acquire more skills, offering and actively recruiting women for training programs?
15. Do women supervise male employees who earn more than they do?
16. Does the company have an affirmative action program?
17. Does the company have an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) Manager or AA (Affirmative Action) Manager to oversee its affirmative action program?

FRINGE BENEFITS**PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY BENEFITS**

1. Is seniority during maternity leave treated differently from seniority during other temporary disabilities?
2. Can women return to their same job or a job of the same level after maternity leave?
3. Are women denied sickness and accident insurance benefits while disabled by childbirth or complications arising from pregnancy?
4. Are pregnant employees denied the same medical and hospitalization benefits given other employees?
5. Are they denied pregnancy benefits available to the wives of male employees?
6. Are the policies regarding the use of accumulated sick leave during disability due to pregnancy more restrictive than the sick leave policies for other temporary disabilities?
7. Are women required to quit working at a fixed point in a pregnancy?

Yes No

PENSIONS

1. Does the pension plan have a provision in which age is a qualification for participation, and may men join the plan at an earlier age than women?
2. Does the pension plan provide for a lower mandatory retirement age for women than for men?
3. Are there differences in premiums or benefits between male and female employees?

INSURANCE

1. Are a man's dependents covered, but a woman's not?
2. Are better benefits available to an employee who is the "head of the household" or the "principal wage earner"?
3. Are spouses of women employees eligible to receive the same benefits as spouses of male employees?

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Is there tuition reimbursement for career-related courses? Is this available to all employees?
2. Are women required to do personal errands such as serving coffee, buying presents for spouses, etc.?
3. Does the company have a formal grievance procedure?

Yes No

Accessing Mandated Filings: Reviewing Your Company's EEO and AA Performance

Any firm having 50 or more employees and holding \$50,000 or more in federal contracts is required to develop an affirmative action plan. Certain states also require such plans. Any employee has the right to see the plan. Usually it is on file in the personnel office and the employee must sit there taking notes during the lunch hour or during other free time. The plan may often be several hundred pages long. But it is worth the effort for you will find a wealth of data which can be used to evaluate the company's equal employment opportunity performance.

Affirmative action plans are required to contain the following information:

- **A policy statement which states the employer's commitment to equal employment opportunity.**
- **A list of applicable federal, state and local laws.**
- **A list of company officials responsible for implementing Affirmative Action and their specific responsibilities.**
- **A description of the role and composition of any Affirmative Action advisory committee.**
- **Statistical information on the company's workforce by race and sex in broad occupational categories.**
- **Short and long term goals for achieving**

adequate representation by race and sex and the progress to date.

- **An explanation of the grievance procedure.**
- **A description of the monitoring and evaluation process.**

All public employers with over 100 employees must annually file a detailed report to the EEOC on the make-up of its workforce and the efforts it is making to provide equal opportunity. This report is called the State and Local Government EEO-4 Report. You can obtain a copy from your regional EEOC office. School districts and universities with more than 15 employees must file similar reports called EEO-5 and EEO-6 Reports respectively.

Employers often conduct surveys to determine present employment patterns at the firm. These may or may not be public information. Check with your EEO manager (if your company has one), your personnel office, or your union.

The NLRB has ruled that unions may ask the employer for copies of all charges filed with the state or federal agencies alleging sex discrimination by the employer. These files are often a rich source of information. Because employees are often so isolated from each other, you may be completely unaware of these problems.

Design Your Own Career Ladder

We've all heard stories about the grizzled newspaper editor who started as a copy boy or the worldly president of a conglomerate who rose from a lowly clerk. They worked their way up through the corporate ranks, one step at a time, each successive position more skilled, responsible, status laden, and better paid than the last. Alfred P. Sloan, the chief executive of General Motors, wrote in 1941 that "the corporation (is) a pyramid of opportunities from the bottom toward the

top with thousands of chances for advancement."

Of such stuff myths are made, and myths they are. A secretary can begin as a secretary; usually that's about as far as she'll rise.

While most women work in dead-end jobs which lead nowhere, some jobs do have "career ladders" affixed. Career ladders are promotional pathways that exist within a workplace. These jobs are viewed by man-

agement as not simply employees performing a function, but as providing the learning and skill development necessary for another, higher-valued position. The development of the individual along a career path is seen as integral to the development of the organization. Promotion is built in to the job itself.

There is no reason why career ladders shouldn't be built in to every job. Doing so would increase work satisfaction because work would provide greater opportunities for involvement, and personal growth. Evidence also indicates it would lead to more successful organizations. Capital, machines, real estate, processes—no matter what their value—are only as effective as the people who combine and operate them. It stands to reason that the more people are encouraged to learn and develop themselves, the more successful the enterprise. But, since American management can lay off and hire practically at will, since it can draw from a large pool of unemployed—and therefore cheap—labor for production and office jobs, since it undervalues the work of women, and since American management is among the most backward of any the industrialized countries of the west, it has greatly neglected training and development except for a select few of its employees.

Designing your own career ladder will provide you with an alternative sense of your future career possibilities. It will allow you to see whether career paths at your company could be designed and organized to meet the needs of its workers more than they do at present. The following questions will provide you with some guidelines:

1. Identify your career goals: more skill, responsibility, pay, autonomy, flexibility, etc. (You might want to refer back to the Job Satisfaction Self-Audit completed in the Preparatory Activities section.)
2. What positions in your firm are characterized by these traits? If none, what jobs in another organization might?
3. Take an inventory of your skills—what you're able to do with people, data, and/or things.
4. What additional steps—skills, experience, training—are needed to prepare you for the position you desire?
5. Does the job description for the position include qualification criteria which are not truly related to the job? For example, the job may require a college degree when what is actually demanded is a demonstrable ability to write.
6. Does your present job have built-in promotional opportunities or is it "dead-end?" If so, do you have transfer rights to a job that is not dead-end?
7. How can your present job be restructured so as to provide the opportunity to develop more skills and responsibilities?
8. Which steps necessary to qualify for the position can be taken within your firm and which require specialized instruction, training, or experience only available somewhere else? How might job and training programs in your firm be restructured to provide these opportunities for you?
9. Where in your firm are in-house promotional opportunities suspended in favor of hiring outside people—new college graduates or technical personnel and managers recruited from other firms?
10. Make a list of other obstacles preventing you from moving up.
11. Group jobs in your workplace into "families" which share related skills and job functions, progressing up a "ladder" in terms of difficulty, supervisory responsibilities, and experience.
12. Where would additional training be required to progress up this ladder? Where might horizontal transfer possibilities between job families be instituted allowing those working in job families with short ladders to transfer to jobs offering greater career possibilities?

Guidelines for Workplace Action

1. When you've completed the workplace investigation, note the problem areas and compile the results into a Workplace Discrimination Profile which can be posted at your worksite or circulated in leaflet form.
2. Poll your co-workers to determine what problem areas are priorities for them.
3. Be sure you have the support of co-workers before you tackle an issue. Acting alone may stigmatize you as a troublemaker and lead to harassment from your employer. Circulate a letter or petition requesting the needed changes to your fellow employees.
4. Form a group or committee and write a memo to management requesting a meeting to clarify particular problems and to discuss possible solutions.
5. Inquire about grievance procedures and other remedies provided by your employer for investigating unequal treatment. Try to use them first to obtain a satisfactory resolution of the problem. Be aware of how much power the person you're dealing with actually has.
6. Discuss your findings with elected and appointed officials, the local or regional Commission on the Status of Women, and church and other civic leaders. They may be able to use political pressure to bring about change.
7. Release the results of your survey to the press and otherwise publicize the problems after exhausting all administrative remedies with your employer. Your employer will be forced to take a public position on your complaint. Seek out and develop sympathetic reporters and media people. Keep them informed of new developments.
8. File a complaint with state or federal agencies charged with investigating sex bias.
9. Develop allies and look for help and advice. The Willmar Eight's isolation contributed to their defeat.
10. If you file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, you should realize that it may take them several years to get to your case. Ask for a right-to-sue letter which entitles you to file a suit within 90 days of the receipt of the letter.
11. Be aware that the National Labor Relations Act protects your right to organize with co-workers for mutual aid and protection. Harassment and intimidation by your employer is illegal. Keep records of all correspondence, meetings held, and who attended.

Join 9to5—National Association of Office Workers

In 1977 a group of women office workers fed up with the low pay, denial of equal opportunity, and lack of respect in the heart of American business gathered together and formed 9to5—National Association of Office Workers. Today 9to5 boasts active chapters in a dozen cities and a membership of 12,000 in 45 states. Over that time their accomplishments have been many:

1. Millions of dollars in back pay for women office workers won through discrimination suits.
2. Improvements such as cost-of-living wages, job posting, written job descriptions, promotions and access to training programs won at 50 targeted companies across the country.
3. Thousands of individual women helped to win raises.
4. Thousands of women counseled about their legal rights on the job.
5. State and federal investigation and public attention focused on employ-

ment practices in the "office" industries.

9to5 is not a trade union. It combines activities as diverse as bestowing Pettiest Office Procedure awards, lunchtime demonstrations, bake sales, lobbying, and discrimination suits to bring pressure upon employers. Joining 9 to 5 can provide you with the information and support you need

in your efforts to gain fair treatment and respect through their counseling, legal support, skill development seminars, newsletter and public clout. Write 9to5 and inquire about their activities, the address of a chapter near you, and ask to join.

9to5—National Association of Office Workers

**1224 Huron Street
Cleveland, OH 44115**

WOMEN AND UNION ORGANIZING

While 42% of the entire workforce is now female, less than 11% of women workers belong to a trade union. This compares to 29% of their male counterparts.

Until relatively recently, most labor unions ignored women. In 1828 hundreds of young female mill workers went on strike in Lowell, Massachusetts, protesting a rule that fined workers for being late to work and for talking on the job. The women lost. So did most of the similar job actions that occurred throughout the factories of New England during this period. By the 1870's only 2 of the by-then 30 national unions, the cigar makers and the printers, allowed women to join. Keeping women out of unions was a way to keep them out of the trade or limit their participation. Male leaders of the American Federation of Labor attacked the presence of women in the workforce, saying that women's wage scales undercut the efforts of men to win higher pay.

By 1900, one fifth of America's 25 million women were in the paid workforce. A great many of these women worked in the garment trades, the shoe industry, and food processing. In 1903, the Women's Trade Union League, an organization of middle class and working women, was formed. Their goal was to encourage women to join unions and to work for legislative reform. Although the WTUL was endorsed by the American Federation of

Labor, it received little financial support from the AFL.

The AFL continued to disregard the attempts of women to organize and made a deliberate decision that organizing women did not justify the expense. This was also a reflection of the larger societal view of women—women at this time still did not have the vote. Without the support of the growing labor movement, women lacked access to organizations that might have made lasting improvements in conditions for working women.

In 1921, the WTUL petitioned the AFL to issue federal charters permitting women to organize into sexually segregated locals. Even this proposal was rejected. Not until the formation of the CIO in 1936 did unions begin to accept women as equal partners with men in the trade union movement.

Today, unions are beginning to recognize women as the serious, fulltime workers they are. Women are also beginning to look at unions in a new way. In the past, many women, especially those working in white collar occupations, have found it hard to identify with male, blue collar unionists.

But, as the economic situation worsens, more and more women are coming to see organizing as an attractive option. **Wages of organized workers are 30% higher**

than for those who do not belong to unions. Trade unions are reaching out to women in the clerical and service sectors, hiring women organizers, and using innovative organizing approaches. When one of the Willmar women was asked why there wasn't more cooperation and contact between the Willmar Bank Employees

Association and local unions, she replied, "We just weren't familiar with unions, and they weren't familiar with us. I think we'll be able to work more effectively with unions as we become more familiar with each other." In fact, Glynnis Anderson, one of the Willmar Eight, now works for the Minnesota School Employees Association.

What Can A Union Do For Women Office Workers?

Employees who are organized into unions have more power to bring about workplace changes than individuals or small groups of employees working alone. Unions can provide legal and technical advice, financial support, and public pressure in workplace disputes. Most important, however, a united group of people working together is not subject to harassment and intimidation the way an individual is.

Study after study has shown that wages, benefits, and working conditions for unionized employees are much better than non-unionized employees throughout the economy. For clericals, a Department of Labor survey reports that unionized clericals earn 31.6% more than their nonunionized counterparts.

The grievance procedure and the contract provides women protection from the whims of supervisors. The contract is an

agreement between the employer and the union which specifies wages, work rules, and job conditions. The contract includes a process for hearing and resolving complaints and charges of contract violations called the "grievance procedure." This protects women from being called upon to perform a function such as making coffee not included in her job description. Similarly, being unfairly passed over for a promotion is also the basis for a grievance. The grievance procedure consists of several steps until both parties are willing to accept the result. If there is no agreement, the last step is binding arbitration, a decision by a neutral third party which is binding and even enforceable in court.

Lastly, a union can bargain for specific women's concerns ranging from educational and training opportunities to maternity leave. Some of these are discussed later in this section.

Questions for Discussion

1. The women in the film chose to form a small independent employees association rather than affiliating with a larger union. Why do you think they made this decision? What were the advantages from their point of view? Would the outcome have been different if they had affiliated with a larger union?
2. What did the unions in the area do to support the women? What else could they have done? Why didn't they?
3. In the film an older woman from Willmar who was a long-time union member said, "We know what it means to belong to a good, strong union. I hope the women get a favorable settlement." Were others in the community familiar with unions? How could the women have encouraged a better knowledge of what unions are and why they are important?
4. Make a list of the mistakes the women made. What might they have done differently?

Increasing Participation in Union Affairs

Just like the employers they bargain with, unions are dominated by men. Of the 35 members of the executive board of the AFL-CIO, two are women (and two are black—one of whom is also one of the two women). If unions are to successfully organize women, they must become more responsive to women's concerns. They must begin to change their own structures to encourage greater involvement by their existing female members. The path to better representation of women at all levels of the union leadership begins at the grassroots.

Many women have problems becoming active in union affairs because they have two jobs—as workers during the day and as wives and mothers during the evenings and on weekends. Obviously, the problems of women participating in union affairs will not ultimately be solved until domestic duties are shared between husbands and wives and until childcare becomes universally available. But there are things unions can do to minimize the problem.

1. **Day care should be available at all union meetings outside working time.** This might sound like a formidable task, but it can make a big difference for women with children. All it requires is an extra room and some volunteers willing to staff it—perhaps from the husbands from the women members!
2. **Schedule meetings during work time.** The right to hold bargaining unit meetings during work time with no loss of pay has been negotiated into some contracts and should be expanded.
3. **Provide time off with pay for union representatives to carry out their duties.** This is common practice already in a number of workplaces. Extending this practice would encourage women to take on union office.

FORM A WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

A Women's Committee, organized at the local level, is a vehicle for women trade unionists to meet, articulate their concerns, and develop programs and policies that advocate the particular needs of working women.

In the workplace, the Women's Committee can survey members to determine specific grievances and problem areas, help women process grievances, recommend contract language, and even initiate legal action. The Committee could also develop career training and apprenticeship programs for women.

Within the union, the Women's Committee would act as watchdog for women's interests. It would certify that existing union policy towards women is enforced. It would educate the entire membership on women's issues, and make new policy recommendations. The Committee would also work to draw more women into union activity by assessing union practices which discourage female involvement. Sponsoring conferences and leadership training programs for women, and recruiting women for union executive bodies and training programs are other ways to increase female involvement. A number of unions have begun to reserve a minimum number of seats for women on their executive boards.

In no case, however, must the Women's Committee become a token gesture, a special nook that isolates women's concerns and devalues women activists by separating them from the mainstream of union activity.

JOIN C.L.U.W.

In order to promote the concerns of women trade unionists, an inter-union women's organization was founded in 1974, the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). CLUW has thousands of members and many chapters across the country. It is officially

sanctioned by the AFL-CIO and both advances women's interests within the trade union movement as a whole as well as ad-

vancing labor's interests within the women's movement. (See Appendix C: "Resource List.")

Establishing an Affirmative Action Committee

"Imagine a race run by two groups who are equally fast. Suppose that one group were forced to carry a load of rocks. It suffers from discrimination. As the race continues, the group carrying rocks gradually falls farther and farther behind. Now suppose that the rocks are removed. An equal opportunity society has been created.

"But the group that has already fallen behind, being equally fast, never catches up. It could catch up only if it were intrinsically faster than the group that has not suffered from discrimination.

"Logically there are only three ways to solve the problem of past discrimination. 1) The economic race can be stopped and started over. But this means everyone is stripped of his or her human and financial assets. 2) The group that is ahead can be forced to carry rocks until the race equalizes. This requires active discrimination against society's dominant group. 3) The group that is behind can be given special help."

Lester Thurow in
Working: Changes and Choices

The third initiative described above—special help for those left behind because of discrimination—is known as **affirmative action**. Many of those who have suffered the effects of past and present discrimination are already qualified for better jobs. There are also others who, because of unequal opportunity throughout their lives in many of society's institutions, may need additional help to become qualified for better jobs. Because discriminatory practices continue to have an unequal effect on certain groups—even when these practices have been discontinued, and where there is no conscious at-

tempt to discriminate—the courts have firmly established the necessity of affirmative action as a means of rectifying discrimination effects.

Affirmative action is poorly understood. It is not "preferential treatment" for women and minorities, nor is it "reverse discrimination" against white males, nor is it an artificial "quota system" unrelated to individual qualifications and job competence.

An affirmative action plan has three basic aims:

1. The recognition and removal of barriers to equal employment opportunity.
2. The identification of those persons who have been held back or unfairly excluded.
3. The creation of specific measures enabling previously excluded persons to compete for jobs on an equal basis.

Firms with 50 or more employees and federal contracts over \$50,000 are required by law (Executive Order 11375) to develop written affirmative action programs. The implementation of these programs is monitored by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Many other firms not required by law established affirmative action plans as well, either voluntarily or under pressure from employees and the community.

There is often a large gap, however, between intention and accomplishment. Plans can be poorly written and loosely enforced. Supervisors may not take the plan seriously. The problem is not so much the law, but effective enforcement. The union can play an important role in guaranteeing the implementation of effective affirmative action

programs by establishing an Affirmative Action or Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (AA/EEO Committee) at the local level.

The AA/EEO Committee is able to play both watchdog and advocacy roles—gathering information, investigating company personnel practices, consulting with management in designing and implementing EEO/AA programs, monitoring progress in the implementation of the program, acting as advocate for members in matters of employment discrimination, and developing specific contract language.

Below is an example of sample contract language on affirmative action taken from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees' (AFSCME) publication, **Affirmative Action: A Union Guide**. It is an excellent resource and can be acquired from AFSCME. Other excellent publications are the Coalition for Labor Union Women's (CLUW) booklet, **Effective Contract Language for Labor Union Women**, and the Women's Labor Project's **Bargaining for Equality**. Addresses for these and other publications can be found in Appendix C: "Resource List."

The language below, of course, will have to be adapted to reflect your particular bargaining situation.

1. Include a policy statement.

Example:

The employer and the union agree to cooperate in a policy of equal opportunity for all employees. To this end, both parties agree to continue to prohibit discrimination because of sex, race, age, marital status, color, national origin, religion, political affiliation, or union activity, and to promote a full realization of equal employment opportunity through a positive and continuing effort.

2. Incorporate the Affirmative Action plan into the contract.

Example:

The employer agrees to implement the goals specified in the _____ Affirmative

Action Plan. Sufficient funding will be provided to accomplish the goals within the established time limits.

3. Establish a joint Affirmative Action Committee and outline its duties.

Example:

A Joint Affirmation Action Committee shall be established. The Committee shall have eight (8) members, four (4) to be selected by the union and four (4) to be selected by the employer. Committee members shall receive their regular pay for all hours spent attending Committee meetings. The Committee shall meet no fewer than six (6) times per year.

The Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities.

- a. To work with the Equal Employment Opportunity Director in annually updating the Affirmative Action Plan. The Committee will review statistical information concerning employment patterns and recommend corrective action.
- b. To develop training and apprenticeship programs to provide upward mobility for women and minorities and to examine qualifications for promotional jobs so that appropriate modifications can be made to provide career ladders.
- c. To monitor progress in achieving the goals of the Affirmative Action Program.

4. State an intent to patronize only firms committed to Affirmative Action.

Example:

Both the employer and the union agree to purchase goods and services from firms that have demonstrated a commitment to equal employment opportunity.

5. Make Affirmative Action complaints subject to the contract grievance procedure.

Example:

All complaints arising under this Article may be processed through the grievance procedure provided in Article ____ of this agreement.

In addition, it is imperative that a clause be negotiated which obligates management to provide the union on a regular basis with

employment information broken down by sex and race on wage rates, occupations, recruitment, training, and other questions rele-

vant to sex discrimination at your firm. Some of this is required by law, but should be specified in the contract nonetheless.

Checklist of Sample Contract Demands

1. Specific written job qualifications which do not exceed those required for satisfactory job performance.
2. Right to review of all job qualifications and tests on a regular basis.
3. Regular and objective job performance appraisals.
4. Permanent posting of all job classifications and their rates of pay.
5. Posting of all job openings throughout the workplace.
6. Job vacancies to be filled by current employees rather than outsiders.
7. Notification (in person or in writing) of reasons for rejection of applicants for job openings.
8. The right to grieve when unfairly passed over for promotion.
9. A trial period to encourage employees to try new jobs without fear of penalty for failure.
10. Meaningful career ladders and transfer rights attached to all jobs.
11. No loss of pay nor seniority upon transfer to new job.
12. Advanced entry level for women and minorities into positions previously segregated.
13. Tuition reimbursement for job-related courses or for courses to improve qualification for advancement or transfer.
14. Paid educational leave according to term of service.
15. Establish job training programs in areas that have been highly segregated.
16. Provision by the company of all race and sex data for the composition of all job classifications and wage grades, promotions and upgrades.
17. Salary shall reflect job content; persons doing comparable work shall receive equal pay.
18. Periodic and unbiased re-evaluation study of all job classifications according to worth to be performed by an outside consultant agreeable to union.
19. Upgrading of pay scales of underpaid women's jobs identified by study.
20. Discriminatory wage rates subject of the grievance procedure.
21. Full union rights for part-time employees.

Special Concerns: Maternity Leave and Child Care Maternity Leave

Women pay for having children by losing many crucial employment rights. Leaving a job to have a child often means dismissal. The mother is then faced with finding another job when she returns to work, starting at the bottom of the ladder once again.

There are no legal provisions in this country guaranteeing maternity leave, let alone maternity pay. Even when women are lucky enough to resume work with the same employer, taking time off usually means losing all previous seniority rights and the benefits

that go with them—such as medical insurance, pension rights and so on. This compares extremely unfavorably with the situation which prevails by law in European countries:

- Austria:** 1 year paid maternity leave
- France:** 14 weeks leave at 90% of basic pay
- Hungary:** 5 months leave on full pay; 3 years leave with monthly cash allowances
- Italy:** 20 weeks leave at 80% of basic pay
- Sweden:** Leave for either parent after the birth, with cash benefits payable on equal terms to either mother or father.

In all these countries; of course, dismissal on grounds of pregnancy is illegal and all guarantee full reinstatement rights after maternity leave.

Clearly, a government that won't pass the E.R.A. is not about to move quickly on these issues. For this reason, a push for progress must come from expanding collective bargaining initiatives. Negotiating maternity leave is a must for trade unionists who are serious about improving the status of women. Here are some points to consider during negotiations:

1. No dismissal on grounds of pregnancy.
2. A right to maternity leave of a specific duration at a set percentage of basic pay.
3. Reinstatement with full seniority rights after an even longer duration—the "right to return."
4. Full continuity of employment, i.e. continued accrual of benefits that come with seniority.
5. Leave without loss of pay to attend prenatal clinics.

6. Paternity leave. We need to think in terms of childrearing for both sexes.

7. Maternity leave should never be counted against sick pay; pregnancy is not an illness!

CHILD CARE

Maternity leave can mean little in practice if a woman cannot find child care facilities that enable her to return to work. Child care should probably be provided through government initiative but clearly this is unlikely in the short term so effort should be concentrated on persuading employers to provide facilities. In Sweden, universal child care is available, subsidized completely by employers. Sweden views child care as the most essential element in its drive for equality between the sexes. One measure of their success to date is that women now make 92 cents for every dollar a man makes, compared to 59 cents here.

Here are some things you can do now in preparation for negotiating child care:

1. Assess demand within your workplace.
2. Contact other workplaces that might be interested in joint centers if there is insufficient demand at your workplace.
3. Find suitable premises either at the workplace or in the neighborhood.
4. Develop a budget for the center. Don't forget to provide for adequate staff wages; workplace child care centers mustn't be run cheaply.
5. What should the employer pay? A full subsidy? 2/3? Don't forget to provide initial capitalization costs as well as operating costs.
6. Who should run the facility? It should not be left to management. Representatives of both the union and parents should be involved.

COMPARABLE WORTH

The Equal Pay Act mandated that a man and a woman performing the same work must receive the same pay. When the Act was passed in 1963, many women's rights leaders believed that the wage gap would shrink and that women would soon be paid as much as men. It was not to be.

As we have seen, the workforce is segregated according to sex; women are concentrated in a few fields where they have traditionally worked. These jobs are usually paid less than male-dominated jobs even when the jobs require similar levels of skill, knowledge, education, experience, and responsibility. Studies have shown that much of the difference between men's and women's wages has nothing to do with the nature or difficulty of the work. Women are most often underpaid precisely because they work in jobs traditionally held by women.

One solution is to integrate the workforce. If men and women were evenly distributed among all occupations, there would be no "women's work" and the wage gap between men and women should disappear because of the language of the Equal Pay Act. Efforts to stop discriminatory personnel practices which obstruct equal employment, training, and promotional opportunities for women (such as those described in the previous module) are aimed towards this goal. Today, women have begun to finally make their way into most occupations, even such traditional male fields as police, firefighter and coal miner.

But it will take years before occupational segregation is ended and the workforce is fully integrated.

Many are now recognizing that it is vital to mount a complementary effort aimed at raising the existing wages of underpaid women's jobs. This is the concept of "comparable worth." It asserts that different jobs requiring similar levels of skill, responsibility,

and so forth—jobs of comparable value—be paid the same **even though the jobs are not identical**. Under this system, for example, the wages paid to the female dominated occupation of keypunch operator would be increased to a level similar to those currently paid to overwhelmingly male warehouse workers.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, past chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, called comparable worth, "the most important unresolved area left in equal employment opportunity." Employers have also recognized the importance of comparable worth. In public hearings they have called it "impossible," "impracticable," "too costly," and even "illegal."

Implementing comparable worth would mean a radical departure from the way wages are set today. Pay for a particular job is usually set according to the prevailing wage rates for that job paid by other companies in the area. These rates are only tempered by size of the available labor market (a large pool of unemployed searching for work enables companies to lower salaries) and the upward pressure unions are able to bring to bear. But pay according to prevailing rates simply ties wages to the low rates generally paid women in the first place.

Instead, if comparable worth were adopted as an employment standard, each job would be paid according to its **value**. Jobs would be rated by a number of factors such as skill and knowledge, interpersonal skills, responsibility and accountability, and working conditions. The wage level would reflect the total value of the job, determined as objectively as possible. Jobs which are different, yet of similar value, would be remunerated equally. Only in this manner will the pay scales of traditionally under-paid women's jobs—such as secretarial work—be upgraded to that of comparable men's jobs—such as custodial work.

What is Your Job Worth?

The following two exercises will provide vivid evidence that "women's jobs" are paid less than jobs of equal or even less exacting requirements usually performed by men.

The two jobs on the next page were recently posted at a major bank. Pass out copies of the two job descriptions or read them to the group. Ask the group to guess the title of each position and the salary offered.

What's Your Job Worth?

EXERCISE A COMPARE THIS JOB:

POSITION: _____

DUTIES: Maintains accounting cost records for all protective equipment installations, removals and service calls; processes RPP records; controls its charges for protective equipment; processes and balances statistical and expense reports; researches material and projects budget; types correspondence and various statistical reports, technical manuals, purchase orders and equipment records; analyzes invoices and determines allocation of charges to be expensed or capitalized; assists accounting clerk in maintaining records and accounting procedures of materials and components of sophisticated alarms and other protective devices; answers telephones, takes messages and service calls information.

ABILITIES: Excellent statistical and figure aptitude required to compile information, assemble figures and reports, compute and maintain data derived from various sources. General knowledge of accounting and purchasing payables procedures. Must be well organized and able to work independently. Accurate statistical typing. Ability to demonstrate good judgment. Excellent telephone etiquette. Budget and expense experience would be helpful.

SALARY: \$ _____ - \$ _____

TO THIS JOB:

POSITION: _____

DUTIES: Perform shipping and receiving duties in the furniture department; receive incoming shipments; assist in unloading; store and deliver items to appropriate location.

ABILITIES: Able to lift equipment in excess of 100 pounds; legible handwriting; no condition of illness which may affect ability to do this job.

SALARY: \$ _____ - \$ _____

EXERCISE B

Below are two lists of occupations. Give participants a copy or list them on the blackboard. Ask participants to rank the occupations from 1-5 (1 is the highest) as to how they think the jobs should be paid.

Participants should base their ratings on considerations of skill, education, responsibility, working conditions and other factors that they deem important.

GROUP A		GROUP B	
Occupation	Deserved Rank	Occupation	Deserved Rank
Registered Nurse	_____	Truck Driver	_____
Computer Programmer	_____	Typist	_____
File Clerk	_____	Sr. Librarian	_____
Recreation Center Supervisor	_____	Carpenter	_____
City Painter Supervisor	_____	Private Secretary	_____

Answers**EXERCISE A**

The first position is that of General Clerk. The vast majority of general clerks at this bank are women. The salary offered was \$745-\$1090. The second position was that of

Shipping and Receiving Clerk. The vast majority of shipping and receiving clerks at this bank are men. The salary offered was \$1030-\$1100.

EXERCISE B

1. How did you rank the jobs? Why? What factors did you give the most weight to?
2. To what extent do you think the ranking you gave the jobs reflect their actual wage levels? Why?

Below are the same jobs ranked according to their actual wage scales. The right hand column indicates the extent to which the job is a male or female dominated occupation.

GROUP A			
Actual Rank	Occupation	Hourly Wage	%Female
1	City painter supervisor	\$13.52	2%
2	Computer programmer	\$11.23	29%
3	Recreation Center Supervisor	\$ 6.97	84%
4	Registered nurse	\$ 5.18	96%
5	File Clerk	\$ 4.50	86%
GROUP B			
Actual Rank	Occupation	Hourly Wage	%Female
1	Carpenter	\$12.42	2%
2	Truck Driver	\$12.10	2%
3	Senior Librarian	\$11.67	85%
4	Private Secretary	\$ 9.30	99%
5	Typist	\$ 5.21	97%

Questions for Discussion

1. What factors play a role in determining actual rates of pay? Discuss the following factors: the labor market; the sex of the workers; unions; government; social mores.
2. Employers claim that the labor market is an equitable determinant of wage rates, that wages will rise or fall to their "proper" levels reflecting the true value of the job according to the laws of supply and demand. What factors do you think should be considered when determining the "proper" value and pay level of a job? To what extent are these factors incorporated into existing wage rates?
3. **"To raise the pay of working women high enough so that median pay for women would be equal to that of men would add billions of dollars to payrolls."**

Fortune Magazine

"Individual women workers have subsidized and will continue to subsidize our nation's economy—at a high cost to each of them—as long as this sex-based wage disparity is allowed to exist."

Virginia Dean

Comparable Worth Project

Do you feel that our society can "afford" to raise the wages of currently under-paid women workers? Do company profit and loss calculations reflect all the costs to our economy of wage rates or are there other costs—the health and well-being of workers and their families for example—which are never entered in corporate balance sheets? What is the "cost" to working women of maintaining current pay systems? How should we as a society weigh these two apparently conflicting goals?

Conducting Your Own Comparable Worth Study: A Model From AFSCME

An essential prerequisite to winning equal pay for comparable work is to prove that it is actually sex discrimination and not other factors which account for the difference in wages paid to men's and women's jobs. A study documenting that lower-paid female occupations demand a similar level of job complexity and skill as higher-paid jobs held by men can place comparable worth on the agenda.

Unions in particular have been pursuing this course, commissioning comparable worth studies and using the results to push for special pay increases for the under-paid women's occupations.

Comparable worth studies evaluate different job categories according to a set of criteria such as skills, education, and responsibility. Jobs with similar ratings are grouped together in their own "comparability grade." They then are examined for disparities in pay which correlate to the degree of segre-

gation of the jobs. For example, a study of San Jose city workers rates legal secretaries and instrument repair technicians as two positions with the same relative job value. The study found that the predominantly female legal secretary earned \$9,432 a year less than the predominantly male repair technician. The union (AFSCME #101) used this information when negotiating with the city. After a strike, the union won \$1.5 million in extra raises for three years to help bring the under-paid female occupations up to parity.

Here are some other examples of what unions have won:

- In the 1980 contract with Bell Telephone, the Communications Workers of America negotiated a job evaluation plan that included the concept of equal pay for jobs of comparable worth in establishing uniform measurements for all jobs.

- The International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE) has successfully used the grievance and arbitration process and the courts to settle wage rate and job classification disputes for women workers it represents. These have resulted in the upgrading of jobs and substantial back pay orders.
- The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), representing University of California Librarians, bargained for a 2.5% special "inequity increase" after a study found librarians' salaries far below comparable academic non-female dominated professions.

Facilitators may want to introduce their group to the following model for comparable worth studies developed by AFSCME. Conducting your own comparable worth survey will allow students to rate their own jobs, comparing its value and pay to others at their workplace. It will help them determine whether they are underpaid simply because they are women. The result of this informal study can help awaken others to the problem and provide evidence to support the commissioning of an official, impartial study. Conducting one's own study will also better help workers judge the job evaluation and classification system currently used by their employer. Although traditional job evaluation studies may appear objective and even scientific, they are usually designed to justify and perpetuate existing discriminatory systems. Most job evaluation procedures continually undervalue women's jobs, and are also likely to downgrade other non-supervisory jobs. It is probably unlikely that a completely "objective" job evaluation system can ever be developed. However, systems which go a long way towards minimizing sex-bias can certainly be devised.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A job evaluation study begins by preparing detailed job description for each job. It is imperative that they are as accurate as possible. Existing job descriptions may have to be rewritten.

1. Does the job description accurately reflect what the job-holder does? It may be that the job actually entails important tasks and responsibilities that are not mentioned; or conversely, duties may be given prominence they do not deserve.
2. Do the qualifications accurately reflect the job requirements? Education and training qualifications may be unnecessarily high, making it impossible for lower level employees to move into them. For example, if an administrative assistant job description calls for a college degree, could the job be done as well by a high school graduate who has some ability to write? On the other hand, a job description may require only a high school diploma for a job that actually requires college level work. In that case, the job description and the pay scale should reflect this.
3. Does the job description accurately reflect the level and complexity of the job? Watch out for words such as "routine" and "simple." Filing licenses in alphabetical order may be simple and routine, but maintaining a complicated filing system for a research department is not. If a job requires patience, tact, and the ability to work under pressure, for example, traits necessary to work in a welfare office, this should be noted in the job description.

RATING THE JOB — FACTORS AND POINTS

Once the job descriptions are written, the jobs are ranked in relation to each other. To do so, criteria must be established to measure components of the job, such as skill and responsibility, as well as working conditions. These criteria are called "factors." A range of possible point values is assigned to each factor according to how important it is. For example, responsibility and accountability might be given a possible weight of 20 points and working conditions 10 points.

This brings us to a number of subjective variables. What is the relative importance of the different criteria? Should "responsibility" be weighted more heavily than "working conditions" and if so, by how much? This will be subject to much discussion. But whatever the answer, the factors and their relative

weights must be the same for all jobs. Heavily weighting "working conditions" in a blue-collar job, for example, while giving it little weight in a white-collar job, will merely insure that prevailing discriminatory wage patterns are maintained. Different factors and different weights for different jobs obviously makes comparisons impossible.

In most job evaluations systems, the following factors are used. We have taken the liberty of weighting ourselves for the purpose of our example.

1. **Skill and knowledge—20 points.** This factor is rated heaviest in most systems. The ratings for manual skills should not undervalue clerical skills such as typing and shorthand in comparison with blue collar skills such as driving a truck, operating a backhoe, or using simple hand tools. Other skills common to women's jobs, such as the ability to organize the way work is processed should receive appropriate recognition. So should the actual education requirement.
2. **Interpersonal skills—15 points.** Points for this factor have traditionally been based on how "important" the people are with whom the employee interacts. However, credit should be given for tactfully and

sympathetically dealing with the public or with clients who may be difficult.

3. **Responsibility and Accountability—15 points.** The amount of supervision both exercised and received should be considered. But there are other aspects. What kind of impact would failure to do the job well have, both in monetary terms and in stress and inconvenience to others, including the public. Take into account responsibility for both people and property.
4. **Working Conditions—10 points.** Consider not only the physical environment—cold wet, noisy, dirty—but also restricted movement, constant interruptions, physical danger, and stress. Police jobs—usually male—are recognized for being hazardous and stressful. But aides in psychiatric facilities—often female—also experience stress and hazards. Credit should be given for heavy lifting but remember to recognize the difficulty of frequent repetitious lifting of lighter objects or working in tiring positions, often characteristics of women's jobs.

Each job should be rated according to the level of each factor required to do the job; then the points should be added together to give a total value for the job. For example:

	Warehouse Worker	Keypunch Operator	Correction Officer	Licensed Practical Nurse
20 points				
Knowledge & skill	6	7	9	11
15 points				
Interpersonal skills	2	2	11	12
15 points				
Accountability	2	3	6	6
10 points				
Working conditions	3	2	5	3
TOTAL	13	14	31	32

ASSIGNING WAGE RATES

Once the jobs are rated, group jobs that have similar ratings into comparability grades. For example, the Warehouse Worker and Key punch Operator above would be placed in the same comparability grade as would the Correctional Officer and the Licensed Practical Nurse, since in both cases the two jobs received a similar number of total points. Then compare salaries and the

gender composition of the job, revealing the degree of pay discrepancy for jobs of comparable value.

Your union research department or 9to5—National Association of Office Workers, will be happy to provide you additional help and advice if you're considering commissioning an official study.

Community Action:

SIX WAYS TO SUPPORT EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

*T*he Willmar Eight were isolated in their own community. Had just a few of Willmar's churches, service clubs, press, or political leaders come out publicly in favor of the women's demands, Citizens National Bank would have had much greater difficulty withstanding the strike. Businesses operate in a public environment. Their managers are a product of that environment. Their attitudes and behavior are conditioned by it as much as the attitudes and behavior of women are socially determined. But, in addition, businesses, as public institutions, are sensitive to unfavorable publicity. Good will is important to business, especially a business whose customers are the public.

Churches, unions, civic organizations and other groups can be important allies to individuals or groups who are pursuing fair treatment at work. Indeed, working women suffering from similar problems often comprise a significant portion of the membership of these organizations. Many of the activities in this handbook intended for working women could also be carried out by community groups. However, there are many steps that community organizations can take as a community organization. Often conflicts over sex discrimination go on in our communities right under our eyes, even though they haven't yet generated public attention. Investigate your community. Are there any conflicts over sex discrimination occurring? Perhaps a group of women is suing their em-

ployer for equal opportunity. Your support can help pressure the employer to settle. Or perhaps an organization is attempting to have your town or city adopt an ordinance committing it to the concept of comparable worth. Again, your organization's support can be of much help.

Here are suggestions for lending support.

A RESOLUTION ON SEX DISCRIMINATION

Encourage your organization to adopt a resolution condemning sex discrimination and supporting campaigns aimed at equal opportunity. Resolutions can be made by organizations ranging from churches to city councils and state legislatures. Since most organizations are representative institutions rather than direct democracies, the resolution will have to be presented to and debated by the organization's executive body, be it a church's executive board, a school district's school board, or a city's board of supervisors or city council. Discussion of such a resolution will enable the issue to be brought before the entire membership or public, men as well as women.

Make sure you include a statement which goes beyond condemning the offending party and commits the organization to a specific action. For example, include a clause that prohibits your organization from dealing with employers which have been found to discriminate on the basis of race,

sex, color, religion, national origin, age or handicap, and which encourages others to do the same.

PUBLICITY

Publicize your organization's stand. Write an article in your newsletter announcing the resolution, explaining why it was made, and encouraging all to support it. Write up a press release announcing your action and send it to the press. Hold a press conference. The press will be interested; don't feel that your organization and its stand is somehow "not important enough." Include your organization's name on any public list of endorsers of the campaign which can be released to the press. There are as many ways to publicize the issue as your imagination, time, and money allow. A particularly concise and readable guide is *The Media Book: Making the Media Work for Your Grass Roots Organization*. While written for right-to-choose movement, the can be equally applied to almost any campaign. (See Appendix C:

LOBBY

Write a letter to the chairman of the board of the offending employer outlining your support for women's concerns, (make sure you send a copy to the complainant). Even better, include in this letter a request to meet with the chairman of the board to discuss the issue. This is particularly effective if your group has financial ties to the institution. Make sure your request for a meeting does not get shunted to the director of public relations, however. They get paid to smooth things over; they don't have the power to make changes.

You can also target community leaders and politicians. Meet with them and request them to add their names and support to any resolution, list of public endorsers, or even to the advisory board for the campaign.

FINANCIAL PRESSURE

In our society this is often the most effective means one can bring to effect change. Many organizations have financial ties to the offending institution. You might be a depositor at a bank, have a policy with an insur-

ance company, be a buyer of a product or service, or even own stock. This is particularly true in the case of public organizations. Cities are huge purchasers of goods and services. They also have pools of money, usually public employee pension funds, which are invested in corporate stocks and bonds. Any of these positions allows you to place financial pressure on the offending company. You can boycott its goods and services, withdraw your funds from your bank account, change insurance policies, or sell your stock. You can also sponsor or vote your stock in support of a shareholders' resolution demanding that the company address the issues being raised. Attend the annual meeting if possible and raise the question there. Consider holding a press conference outside the meeting.

PREVENTIVE ACTION: YOUR BANK'S PERSONNEL PRACTICES AUDIT

As pointed out earlier, pay scales for clericals and office employees in banking (85% of which are women) are among the nation's lowest. Furthermore, the banking industry is the country's worst violator of EEO laws. At the conclusion of *The Willmar 8*, the Department of Labor targeted the banking industry as top priority for EEO enforcement and, as a result, millions of dollars in law suits have been won and working conditions began to improve. This policy has now been rescinded by the Reagan administration Labor Department.

Because practically every individual and institution maintains a bank account, banks are highly visible and susceptible to community pressure. A Bank Personnel Practices Audit will enable your group to conduct a simple evaluation of the personnel practices of your own bank or savings & loan. Should the bank fail the audit, you can demand a meeting with the president, threaten to withdraw your funds, and publicize the results unless changes are made. Such an audit can be conducted using the Survey of Current Employment Trends and Women's Worth Checklist contained in "Focus on Your Workplace: Challenging Personnel Practices." Management should be approached directly with your questions so that they become aware their personnel practices are

being scrutinized by the public. Employees, of course, should be contacted as well in order to either corroborate or contradict the date given you by management.

ENDORSE THE WOMEN OFFICE WORKERS BILL OF RIGHTS

9to5 has written up an Office Workers Bill of Rights. Like any bill of rights, it enumerates

a set of minimum standards that should be guaranteed to all. Management of your bank or other employers with which your organization is connected can be approached and asked to endorse and post this Bill of Rights. As with the Audit, failure of the employer to agree to the terms of the Bill of Rights can be cause for you to threaten to withdraw your funds or business.

Women Office Workers Bill of Rights

1. The right to respect as women and as office workers.
2. The right to comprehensive, written job descriptions specifying the nature of all duties expected of the employee.
3. The right to defined and regular salary review and cost of living adjustments.
4. The right to detailed descriptions specifying compensation, terms, conditions, and benefits of employment.
5. The right to compensation for overtime work and for work not included in the job description.
6. The right to choose whether to do the personal work of employers (typing personal letters, serving coffee, running out for lunch).
7. The right to maternity benefits and to having pregnancy and other gynecological conditions treated as temporary medical disabilities.
8. The right to benefits equal to those of men in similar job categories.
9. The right to equal access to promotion opportunities and on-the-job training.
10. The freedom to choose one's lifestyle and to participate in on-the-job organizing or outside activities which do not detract from the execution of assigned tasks.
11. The right to written and systematic grievance procedures.
12. An end to discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, national origin, marital status, parenthood, or disability; an end to discrimination on the basis of affectional or sexual preference.

Appendix A.

CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL FILM SCREENING

EQUIPMENT

16-mm Projector: Borrow or rent a 16-mm projector. Some models are easier to operate than others, so be sure the projectionist knows how to work your model. Check that it works properly and make sure its take-up reel is big enough to accommodate a 2,000 foot (60 minute) film. Have a spare projector bulb and extension cord with the right size adaptor handy.

Screen: A light-colored wall, ironed sheet, tablecloth or big pieces of paper will be adequate, but a projection screen brings out the color and crispness of the images. Screens are usually available at the same places as the projectors.

Sound: The single biggest problem! If you have a choice, use a quiet or "dead" room with curtains and soft furnishings

rather than a loud or "live" room walled with concrete. Adjust the volume. Remember, a full hall soaks up more sound than an empty one. Check sound quality away from the projector. If the sound is not clear and crisp enough, turning up the volume does **not** help. Instead, turn the **bass control** down and the **treble** up! Is the film correctly threaded around the head? If not, the film will sound as though it is coming from under water.

Picture Size: The biggest is not necessarily the best. A small bright picture may be better than a large dull one.

Speakers: If you have external speakers place them high (shoulder high is ideal), otherwise, the sound gets lost in the audience's feet. Place the speakers up front by the screen.

PUBLICITY

Good publicity can help you recruit for the film showing as well as generate media coverage in the local press. Even if your group meets at a regular time, a simple leaflet will increase your attendance. Distribute these leaflets at subway stops, downtown office buildings, and other meetings of your organization.

If the film showing will be held as a special event, mail announcements to members and other organizations so they will arrive at least 10 days in advance. Put an announcement of the event in your regular newsletter as well. Almost all daily and weekly newspapers have "calendar" or "special event" sections. They will list your screening, but they usually need three weeks advance notice, so plan to know the time and location of the screening well in advance.

Radio stations do regular 10 and 30-second public service announcements of upcoming events. Be sure to send public service announcements at least two weeks in advance. Follow-up these announcements with a phone call to make sure your notice was received.

Don't overlook the possibility of a feature article about your film showing. This may involve another angle with appeal beyond the event itself. You may be able to connect *The Willmar 8* with the plight of women employees in your city or with a union campaign already under way. Be creative.

In order to convince a writer to do a feature, you have to do some groundwork. Get to know who the feature writers are in your area. Contact these individuals or the editors of "women's" sections of paper and suggest stories that they can do.

Appendix B:

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: A GUIDED TOUR OF THE LAW

*A*nti-Discrimination laws were first passed in response to the civil rights struggles waged by Black Americans to right hundreds of years of oppression. The laws now go beyond those boundaries. They protect women, ethnic minorities, religious groups, the aged, the handicapped, and veterans.

The nature of discrimination complaints has changed over the past few years. Many of the blatant forms of discrimination have decreased, but certainly, as seen in **The Willmar 8**, have not disappeared. Often discrimination occurs as a result of a less obvious factor: the bias of a supervisor, unrealistic job prerequisites, faulty employment testing, and so on. The laws, however, have been interpreted by the courts to outlaw practices if the effect is discriminatory. No matter what the intent, to paraphrase the courts, according to Robert Brady's **Law for Personnel Managers**, "If your policies are not truly job related, and they limit the opportunities of minorities and women, we will infer from statistics that discrimination has occurred. Actual intent to discriminate need not be conclusively proven." The only way for companies to avoid liability under these rules is to have numerical parity for minorities and women. If not, they must be able to show why it is not possible for them to achieve such parity.

The laws passed by Congress on the federal level and by legislatures at the state level are interpreted by the courts and enforced by federal and state agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The agencies write rules and regulations which mandate how the law is to be carried out. Since the agencies enforce the law, complaints that the law has been broken must be filed with the relevant

agency. The agency's ruling can always be appealed to the courts.

State laws can raise the standards of federal law, but cannot lower them. States have often gone further than federal law in extending rights and protection to employees. So, consult your state laws as well. They may provide relief for problems not covered by federal law. Furthermore, it may be faster and easier to get relief under state law. Because we have 50 states, information on state laws is not included below. State laws are usually enforced by agencies with names such as "Civil Rights Commission," "Department of Human Rights," or "Fair Employment Practices Commission."

1. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. (Enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission—EEOC.)

Title VII is presently the most comprehensive law forbidding discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, and national origin in terms and conditions of employment. The Act applies to all private and public educational institutions.

The EEOC investigates discrimination complaints, attempts to resolve them through conciliation, or brings charges against the employer. If you suspect there is discrimination where you work, you can file a charge with the EEOC.

2. Executive Order 11246 (Affirmative Action). (Enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs—OFCCP)

This order provides that contractors with the federal government must agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant because of sex, race, color, religion or national origin. They must furnish reports and information to the OFCCP

as requested, file compliance reports, and include an equal employment opportunity clause in every subcontract.

In addition, every contractor with 50 or more employees who gets a contract for \$50,000 or more must develop an affirmative action plan which includes provisions aimed at sex discrimination.

3. The Equal Pay Act of 1963. (Enforced by the EEOC.)

This law says that a woman or minority may not be paid at a lower rate than a man or a white who is doing substantially the same work if the jobs require equal skill, effort, and responsibility. The jobs do not have to be identical or have the same title.

The courts have found that occasional or slight differences in the jobs do not warrant a difference in pay. Female and minority workers are also entitled to equal benefits.

4. Age Discrimination in Employment Act. (Enforced by the EEOC.)

This Act prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of age against any person between the ages of 40 and 65 in hiring, firing, promotion or other aspects of employment. The law applies to employers of 20 or more employees.

5. Overtime. (Enforced by the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor.)

All employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act must be paid time and a half for any hours worked in excess of 40 hours in one week (7 days). Generally, all clericals and hourly paid employees are covered by this law.

6. National Labor Relations Act—NLRA. (Enforced by the National Labor Relations Board.)

The NLRA guarantees employees the right to organize themselves to form or join unions or to engage in other group activity for collective bargaining or mutual aid or protection. It makes illegal any employer's attempt to intimidate, coerce, or harass an

employee for participating in such activities.

Any employee acting to improve working conditions is covered by this law. You do not have to be unionizing to be protected.

7. State Fair Employment Laws.

Many states have fair employment laws that forbid discrimination against women and minorities in employment. The state laws vary greatly as to who they cover, what they prohibit, what exceptions they permit, and how they treat the state's protective labor laws for women.

Federal laws set minimum standards; states are free to enact laws with greater protection, but may not lower federal standards. Check with the EEOC in your area or the state's Attorney General's office to find out about this law in your state.

ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE CHECKLIST

A wide variety of fairly common personnel practices regarding job assignments and promotions have now been deemed to be discriminatory and thus illegal. The Checklist below provides some examples. How does your workplace measure up?

1. Race, religion, sex, age, and national origin may not be taken into consideration when hiring and promoting.
2. Job assignments may be restricted only on the basis of ability and willingness to do the work. No other restriction is possible. For example, jobs may not be classified either officially or unofficially as "male" or "female." Women cannot be barred from unpleasant or difficult work if they are capable of performing the job.
3. Stereotyped traits may not be taken into consideration in job placement and promotion; for example, that women are more capable of intricate assembly work, but less capable of aggressive salesmanship.
4. Opportunity cannot be restricted. This applies to all training positions.

5. Recommendations by supervisors may not be given unbridled reign. They must use objective criteria, and they must rate all qualified and interested employees, not only the ones they intend to recommend.
6. A woman or minority applicant may not be rejected and then later someone else hired who was no better qualified.
7. Experience and skills may only be required if they are necessary to perform the job. If they are not necessary to perform the job, they cannot be required.
8. All workers must be treated the same in terms of probationary periods, reprimands, training, etc.
9. Women and minorities may not be given undesirable assignments more than others.
10. Management must "support" female or minority supervisors who are faced with antagonistic employees.
11. It is very illegal for an employer to discharge a person who has filed discrimination or unfair employment practice charges with the EEOC or NLRB.

Appendix C: **RESOURCE LIST**

Women's Organizations

OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE

3800 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94611
(415) 658-0141

A membership organization concerned with the rights of middle-aged and older women. The League publishes a newsletter and has local chapters across the country.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON WORKING WOMEN

Center for Women and Work
2000 P Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 872-1782

An organization that seeks to influence policies affecting working women.

WOMEN'S EQUITY ACTION LEAGUE (WEAL)

805 15th Street, NW, Suite 822
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 638-1961

A membership organization interested in securing the rights of women through lobbying and providing assistance.

**WORKING WOMEN UNITED INSTITUTE
(Against Sexual Harassment)**

593 Park Street

New York, NY 10021
(212) 838-4420

A resource center on sexual harassment. Provides counseling and legal referral.

INTERFAITH CENTER FOR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Room 566, 475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115

An activist coalition of Catholic and Protestant groups working on a wide variety of concerns, including equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Request its list of publications.

9T05, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICE WORKERS

1224 Huron Road
Cleveland, OH 44115
(216) 566-9308

A national membership organization of office workers working to gain higher pay, promotional opportunity, and respect. Local affiliates and chapters involve members in local campaigns and offer leadership development.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN (NOW)

Box 7813
Washington, D.C. 20044
(202) 347-2279

A membership organization that takes action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society. Have local chapter as well as a special labor committee.

CHURCH EMPLOYED WOMEN

c/o Rockville Presbyterian Church
215 W. Montgomery Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 762-3363

A national membership organization of women employed in churches. Local chapters offer educational and advocacy assistance.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PUERTO RICAN WOMEN

Box 464, Radio City Station
New York, NY 10019
(212) 977-5740

An advocacy organization that aids Puerto Rican women with employment concerns.

WOMEN'S BUREAU

U.S. Department of Labor
Washington, DC 20210

The Women's Bureau publishes many reports on programs and laws affecting women workers.

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN (CLUW)

15 Union Square, 13th floor
New York, NY 10003

A national organization of women active in unions, CLUW has many local chapters which

engage in activities to promote organizing, affirmative action, and greater participation by women in union leadership. Publishes a bi-monthly newsletter.

WOMEN EMPLOYED

5 South Wabash Avenue, #415
Chicago, IL 60603

A national organization of women working together to solve job problems and expand economic opportunity programs

COMPARABLE WORTH PROJECT

484 41st Street, #5
Oakland, CA 94609

A clearinghouse for comparable worth activity. Provides legal and organizing assistance.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COORDINATING CENTER

126 West 119th Street
New York, NY 10026

A clearinghouse for affirmative action activity. Files briefs and publishes a newsletter.

TRADESWOMEN, INC.

P.O. Box 4724
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

A national organization of and for women in blue collar work.

NEW WAYS TO WORK

149 Ninth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Encourages job-sharing as an alternative to full time work.

Agencies that Handle Discrimination Complaints

U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC)

Washington, DC 20506

For complaints of violations of Title VII, Equal Pay Act, and Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Check the phone book under "United States" for local agency address.

OFFICE OF FEDERAL CONTRACT COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS (OFCCP)

Employment Standards Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20210

For complaints of violations of Executive Order 11246

STATE AND LOCAL FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE AGENCIES

For complaints of sex or age discrimination under state and local law. Check your phone book (under your state, city or county) for "Human Rights Commission," or "Fair Employment Practice Commission," or contact your local office of the EEOC for information.

Labor Organizations

This is a partial list of unions that organize clerical workers or are active in industries that are predominately female.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

District 925 (Clerical Division)

2020 K Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20002

COMMUNICATION WORKERS OF AMERICA

1925 K Street

Washington DC 20006

UNITED AUTO WORKERS

District 65 (Clerical Division)

8000 E. Jefferson Street

Detroit, MI 48214

UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS

1775 K Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20006

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

815 16th Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20006

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES (AFSCME)

1625 L Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20036

Publications

Bargaining for Equality: A Guide to Legal and Collective Bargaining Solutions for Workplace Problems that Particularly Affect Women

WOMEN'S LABOR PROJECT

Box 6250

San Francisco, CA 94101

What About Sex-Discrimination?

Pay Equity: A Union Issue for the 1980's

Career Development Program Handbook

On the Job Sexual Harassment: What the Union Can Do

AFSCME

1625 L Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20036

Manual on Pay Equity.

Joy Anne Grune, Ed. Copies \$9.95 each.

CONFERENCE ON ALTERNATIVE STATE & LOCAL POLICY

2000 Florida Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC

Equal Employment Policy for Women

Ronnie Steinberg, Ratner, eds., Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.

International comparison of strategies in seven countries. Twenty-two essays for a 1978 Wellesley College Conference.

Job Evaluation: An Analytic Review

Donald J. Treeman, Washington DC: The National Academy of Sciences, 1979

This publication describes a major job-evaluation system in use today. includes case studies and an analysis of sex bias.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

2101 Constitution Avenue

Washington, DC 20418

Pay Equity: Issue Paper #1

Committee on Salaried and Professional Women

Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO

815 16th Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20006

The Earnings Gap Between Women and Men

Contains statistics and sources of data on occupational segregation.

The Women's Bureau

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

200 Constitution Avenue N.W.

Room S3002

Washington, DC 20510

Hidden Assets: An Analysis of Women and Minorities Employment in Banks

Pay Equity for Office Workers

What Are Office Workers Paid?

How to Ask for a Raise

Why Unionize and How To Do It

Discusses major issues concerning unionizing and describes steps to take to unionize

Starting a Group in Your City

Running meetings, local resources, filing charges, legal rights, and more.

9TO5

1224 Huron Road

Cleveland, OH 44115

Effective Contract Language for Union Women, Coalition of Labor Women (CLUW), 1979

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

15 Union Square
New York, NY 10003

A Working Woman's Guide to Her Job Rights, Woman's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 1979

WOMAN'S BUREAU

U.S. Department of Labor
Washington, DC 20210

Organize!

UNION WAGE

P.O. Box 40904
San Francisco, CA 94140

Women Organizing the Office, The Woman's Work Project, 1978

UNION FOR RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMICS

41 Union Square
New York, NY 10003

Equality on the Job: A Working Person's Guide to Affirmative Action

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COORDINATING CENTER

126 West 119th Street
New York, NY 10026

The Media Book: Making the Media Work for Your Grass-Roots Organization

COMMITTEE FOR DEFENSE OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

1638 B Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Women and Corporations: Issues and Actions, 1975

INTERFAITH CENTER FOR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

475 Riverside Drive, Room 566
New York, NY 10115

Human Rights of Women

A packet of vital information on selected women's issues, some from an international perspective. Includes excellent survey of women and employment worldwide.

THE SERVICE CENTER

7820 Reading Road
Cincinnati, OH 45237

A Special Supplement for **CHURCH GROUPS**

A major theme of *The Willmar 8* is the relationship of the women on strike to their church experiences and to the church as an institution. They were all church goers. They lived in a small town filled with faithful church members.

Yet, when their lives were critically affected by their involvement in the 18 month strike from their workplace, the church was noticeably absent. They found little if any support from their life long membership in Christian institutions, except through the strength they acquired in their personal faith.

For this reason, the story of the "Willmar 8" poses some unique concerns for church members who view it. It is a challenge to Christians to examine their own faith experiences in light of some specific questions:

1. **How does my church involvement affect my everyday life, particularly my "work life?"**
2. **Does my faith undergrid my personal struggle for human fulfillment and justice?**
3. **Does my faith inhibit or block such struggles?**

The film also is a challenge to the church as an institution:

1. **Does my church support the efforts of persons struggling for justice in my community?**
2. **Is my church open to hearing about the efforts of groups of persons attempting to improve conditions for working women? Does my church (locally or nationally) take actions to support such efforts?**

The steadily increasing employment of women outside the home has dramatically affected church life in America, for women are the major portion of church members

(over one-half in most denominations). What happens to women, more than any other one group, dramatically affects church life. Women have less and less time available for many of the volunteer activities on which the life of the church depends.

Women who are gainfully employed do have, however, many new skills, resources and experiences to bring to the church. By viewing *The Willmar 8* and giving serious thought to the issues it raises, **not only for women**, but for the total church, **women, men, youth, clergy, and laity**, the church may be moved to some new ways to accomplish its task, serve its members, and be a more faithful witness in its community.

The discussion questions in this supplement will allow you to add a church-related focus to the other activities already suggested in this handbook. They are intended for use immediately following the film screening and will help you examine five related themes: the church's role in community, the church as advocate for the oppressed, Christian Faith and its impact on individuals, Christian community, and women's role in society and the church. After the discussion, many members will desire to "do something." The handbook module "Community Action: Six Ways to Support Equal Employment Opportunity" contains a number of useful suggestions for follow-up activities.

REFLECTIONS

The film is a powerful portrayal of a critical time in the life of one community and of one group of women. The power of the story may leave viewers in a reflective state as many of the issues raised are not resolved.

If the audience is sympathetic to the women, as most will be, they will be left disappointed, perhaps even sad, for the immediate reaction is that the women failed to reach their goal, and that injustice, rather than justice, has prevailed.

After allowing some brief moments for the audience to silently absorb the impact of the film, lead the group in some individual, personal reflection. This will take about 15 minutes. The purpose is to allow each person to focus their thoughts and to reinforce clear perception of the film.

INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES

- A. Ask each individual to write 5 words that express her own feelings about the role of the women in *The Willmar 8* (approx. 5 minutes).
- B. Ask them to write 5 impressions about the role of the church in *The Willmar 8*, (approx. 5 minutes).
- C. Read the following 10 statements similar to those made in the film. Ask each person to indicate "Agree" or "Disagree" for each statement, (approx. 10 minutes).

1. For Christians, peace is more important than anything else in order to live together in a community of faith.
2. It is the responsibility of the church to represent the status quo, to hold the level of the society where it is.
3. A town can be called "Christian" when a higher than average percentage of its citizens attend church.
4. If a Christian finds something distasteful, the most effective thing to do is to keep silent about it, ignore it, and eventually it will go away.
5. Commitment is the most important ingredient in marriage, superceding even love, if necessary.
6. Males and females were not meant to be equal.
7. Because women are not the main or chief breadwinners in families they should not expect to make the same wages as men or get the same type of jobs as men.
8. It is appropriate to participate in scapegoating when an issue threatens to un-

dermine your own value system.

9. Women, as well as men, have a right to work toward personal career goals that keep them growing in skill/competency.
10. There are some areas of established cultural/societal patterns, particularly with regard to the role/place of women, that should not be questioned.

Now that individual exercises have been completed, here is a design for group discussion, first in small groups, then in a total group.

GROUP EXERCISES

Divide into groups of approximately 5 persons per group. Assign the following topics for discussion with questions suggested, along with those you would add, (allow 20-30 minutes for discussion).

A. Church's Role in Community

Background: The church exists as a social and religious body in practically every community in the United States. Its role in the community will be varied according to many factors, including attitude of members, leadership, religious understanding, etc. Some churches will have absolutely nothing to do with community life, others will be actively involved and, in some cases, the center of community life.

1. What was the role of the 29 churches in Willmar regarding the strike?
2. Why (in your opinion) did the churches play this role?
3. What is the Biblical basis for church involvement in the community?
4. What are the barriers to church involvement in community issues? How can these barriers be overcome?
5. Make a list of these barriers indicating the **restraining** forces for each item on the list. Indicate the **supporting** forces and how to maximize the supporting forces.

B. Church as Advocate for the Oppressed

The early Christian church was a small community of people who were among the powerless in their society. The disciples of Jesus also had to give up their own power to become followers of Jesus. Jesus himself related to the poor, the sick, and the weak. Often his ministry involved careful challenge to those in power, both religious and governmental. Throughout both the Old and New Testament there are many themes regarding the delivery of the captive people of faith (The Exodus, the teachings of the prophets, etc.).

The messages of deliverance, salvation and liberation are clearly described in the religious writings and teachings of the Christian church. Yet the institutional church has not always followed these teachings, especially regarding the role of women.

1. Who were the powerless in the film? Who were the powerful?
2. Was there any evidence of the church as supporter for the powerful? For the powerless?
3. What is the Biblical mandate regarding the church in relationship to those in power? Those who are powerless?
4. Where is your church involved in your community? Make a list, then evaluate the effectiveness of your church in its outreach.

C. Christian Faith and Impact on Persons

Many denominations have resolutions and policy statements about social issues. Some (United Methodists, United Presbyterians, American Baptists, Disciples of Christ) are clear and strong about the church's support for equality of women and men.

Yet many local churchpeople either do not know of these positions or do not support them. Many clergy preach the opposite of their denomination's official positions. Attitudes about social issues and

behavior in social contexts should be part of faith development.

Personal faith and belief can be an extremely powerful force in motivating an individual and in giving an individual strength in face of adversity. The ways that the church nurtures the development of faith affects its impact on the total society.

1. How would you describe the religious background of the persons in the film.
2. What evidence did you see of church involvement of the strikers?
3. Was the church a supportive agent (either personally or corporately) for the women in their efforts to work for justice in their own lives?
4. Think about times in your life when you faced a crisis. Did your faith have any influence on the resolution of the problem? If not, should it have?
5. When were you involved in a justice situation? Describe. What role did your faith have (if any) in working it out?
6. Name some of the church's teachings that inform you when confronting an injustice? Are there ways that the church restricts or limits your efforts in these areas?
7. Have you been involved in sex discrimination or witnessed it yourself? What did you do?

D. Christian Community

From the earliest history of Christianity there is evidence that Christian community is a primary ingredient in the practice of Christian faith. The "House Church" experiences described in the Epistles of the New Testaments give us some clear guidance on the character of Christian community.

Jesus chose a community with the Disciples as his earliest model of Christian leadership. Within that community and the numerous others that are held as examples, Christians are guided about the realities of Christian community with all its

wonders and joys as well as problems and conflicts.

1. How do you define Christian community?
2. Is there evidence of Christian community seen in the film? Is there a distinction between Christian community and Christian organization? Indicate some differences.
3. What examples of supportive community do you see among the strikers? List some specific examples of supportive community.
4. In your church and/or religious life, are there possibilities for Christian community? Describe these possibilities. Are they occasional or ongoing? What sustains these situations? Are they alive and vital? Do they have a ministry to the members in the group? Beyond the group? Describe.
5. What are the differences between individuals and groups struggling for change? How could a Christian supportive community be an agent of positive social change?

E. Women's Role in Society and the Church

The church has been both liberator and oppressor for women in their role in society. Naturally, the role of the Church is evaluated according to one's own view of what the role of women should be.

Some Christians, in their effort to achieve equality for women and men in all of life look to the model of Jesus who constantly related to women as intelligent, capable human beings, frequently going far beyond the accepted role for women

circumscribed by the cultural and social patterns of the time.

Other Christians, believing women inferior beings, or at least secondary to men, will cite Biblical stories to prove that women's primary role is to be wife and mother of many children, always subservient to men and male defined laws.

These differences among Christians have led to sharp conflict within the church today over the roles and relationships of men and women.

1. What are some of the underlying issues regarding women's role in society that are raised in the film? Which of these issues are relevant to church life?
2. Was there any connection between the lack of church support for the Willmar 8 and a particular definition of woman's "proper" role in society?
3. Describe some of the variety of images and attitudes regarding "family life" portrayed in the film. How did their concepts of family strengthen the strikers in their efforts? Were concepts of family presented that would have limited individual strikers in their efforts?
4. What role does your own church life play in advocacy for women? Are employed women included in activities? Are their needs addressed in church programs?
5. List the restraining forces in your church if it advocates full equality for women. List the supporting forces.
6. How can the restraining forces be minimized? How can the supporting forces be maximized? (List.)



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