The Provisioning Research
Summary and Preliminary Resume

Compiled By Marge Reitsma-Street, Catherine van Mossel, Crystal Gartside and Donna Barker, Fall 2006

We look in a new way at the work women do. We believe that women’s work cannot be neatly divided into categories of paid and unpaid work. They work in the arenas of family, employment and the community in complex and overlapping ways. We are trying out the concept of provisioning to describe the work that women do. By provisioning we mean all the activities that women do to provide the necessities of life for all those they are responsible for inside and outside the home. This research project examines the patterns of provisioning relationships and activities that women do in their households, communities and jobs.

We are especially interested in the provisioning work that women do in the community. We know less about this area of women’s work than we do about their work in the family and paid employment. We are interviewing women who are part of groups that define themselves as low income, immigrant, ethno-racial, youth or older. Such women are often at the mercy of government programs and policies, social service providers, employers, and businesses that have restrictions and regulations about how to access them, when and how often. Government, business and social programs, while helping, can add work to women’s lives or give help that is not useful. In looking at women’s community work, we want to find out how government policies and programs and the organizations that affect women’s lives can be changed to better support the provisioning work that women do.

The two objectives for the project are: (1) To find new ways to understand the endless amount of work that women do to maintain the lives of those they feel responsible for, especially the work they do in the community. (2) Two. To develop better social practices, programs and policies that make it easier for women to provide for others without sacrificing their own well-being.

There are six research sites, each with community advisory boards. The sites and researchers are:

- Stephanie Baker Collins, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, York University: a food cooperative in southern Ontario.
- Judy Cerny, Ph.D. candidate in Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto: a tenants’ group in a social urban housing complex.
- Sheila Neysmith, DSW, Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, a community of older age urban dwellers.
- Elaine Porter, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Laurentian University: a community resource centre in northern Ontario.
- Marge Reitsma-Street, Ph.D. Professor and Principal Investigator, Studies in Policy and Practice, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria: an employment program for abused women.
- Sandra Tam, Ph.D. candidate in Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto: an employment resource centre in an urban community of young immigrant women.

For further information contact Principal Investigator: Dr. Marge Reitsma-Street, Studies in Policy and Practice, University of Victoria, 250-721-6468, mreitsma@uvic.ca or Donna Barker, Research Secretary dbarker@uvic.ca.

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Marge Reitsma-Street (hat on the left), Sandra Tam, Sheila Neysmith, Stephanie Baker Collins, Judy Cerny and Elaine Porter.

I. Refereed Publications


II. Academic Conference Papers


Revised text and photos available on www.esp.ca and www.uvic.ca/spp


III. Reports, professional documents, popular articles, media submissions, electronic publications


2005 Sandra Tam. Caregiver or worker: Young women’s contradictory experiences of provisioning. October. (25 pages). University of Toronto. Toronto, ON.


2005 Catherine van Mossel and Marge Reitsma-Street. The provisioning of a women’s organisation: Focus group findings of the provisioning project in a Western Canadian city. (26 pages). University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. Report for the Bridges for Women Society.


2004 Sheila Neysmith. “Provisions for the new economy: Recognizing women’s unpaid community work”. In Reach Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. Toronto, ON. P. 6.


Undated Sandra Tam. “Understanding Young Women’s Provisioning: The Social Organization of Youth Employment.” Pamphlet

IV. Papers to Academic, Professional and Community Audiences


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Presenters/Authors</th>
<th>Title/Abstract/Description</th>
<th>Event/Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Elaine Porter, Marge Reitsma-Street, Sheila Neysmith and Stephanie Baker-Collins.</td>
<td>“It Takes a Day Care Centre to Raise a Village”.</td>
<td>Wedge Provisioning Research Symposium, University of Toronto</td>
<td>August 1.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Sandra Tam.</td>
<td>“Caregiver or Worker: Young Women’s Contradictory Experiences of Provisioning”.</td>
<td>Wedge Provisioning Research Symposium, University of Toronto</td>
<td>August 1.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Research Symposium: Provisioning, Work, and Communities.</td>
<td>“ Provisioning: Conceptualising the work of individual women and groups of women.”</td>
<td>University of Victoria, Victoria, BC</td>
<td>March 17.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Presentation for PhD Student Association, Colloquial Series, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. Faculty of Social Work: “Revisioning Youth ‘At Risk’: Young Women’s Perspectives”.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>April 3.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>“Performance-Based Funding”.</td>
<td>Stopping the Violence Branch, Ministry of Community Services and Minister Responsible for Seniors' and Women's Issues.</td>
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<td>May.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Community Forum: Panel Presentation sponsored by the Social Assistance Reform Committee Niagara at Regional Headquarters.</td>
<td>“Findings and Recommendations of the research project are presented to the community”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 27.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Address to Older Women’s Network Annual General Meeting, Toronto, ON.</td>
<td>“Older Women: Centre Stage”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>June.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Address to Bridges for Women Society Annual General Meeting, Victoria, BC.</td>
<td>“Can Community Groups Help Women Develop Alternatives.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>October.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Research Symposium Wedge Research Project: Women, Provisioning, and Communities.</td>
<td>“All the work women do: Imagining household and collective provisioning.”</td>
<td>University of Victoria, Victoria, BC</td>
<td>October 17.</td>
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V. Submitted Publications


Wedge Research Team Summer 2006
From Top Left: Sheila Neysmith, Elaine Porter, Sandra Tam
Middle Left: Marge Reitsma-Street with Mario Liegghio middle right
From Kneeling Left: Catherine van Mossel, Crystal Gartside, Stephanie Baker Collins, Judy Cerny. Front Oxana Mian  Photo by Michael Milner