



# The Bluestocking Institute

for Global Peace and Justice

**Annual Report 2010-2011**

## Purpose

The Bluestocking Institute fosters dialogue on issues of global importance including peace building, sustainable development and social movements. Its purpose is to inform and inspire people to become active and engaged citizens in their local communities and beyond. We work in four main areas: globalisation, social inclusion, knowledge and power, and peace and conflict. The Institute provides public education through workshops, discussion groups and its website.

## Report from the Management Committee

*NB: This Annual Report covers Jan 2010 – June 2011. Subsequent annual reports will cover the financial year from 1 July each year to 30 June the following calendar year.*

Throughout 2010 and the first half of 2011 the Bluestocking Institute continued to engage in public education and outreach addressing social, political and economic issues of global significance. Most of the Institute's activities in 2010 were part of its Lifecycles Project, including public workshops, on-line resources, and regular contributions to the Bluestocking blog.

In February 2011, the Management Committee met to determine its priorities for the year and plan for upcoming activities. The Committee defined several areas to focus on in 2011: (1) consider developing an edited book as part of the Lifecycles Project, (2) convene a monthly discussion group, (3) offer a class on globalisation through UWA extension, and (4) continue to develop on-line resources such as the bibliographic library. Each of these projects are well underway, and will continue to be the focus of our work in 2011-2012.

We have accomplished a tremendous amount this year given that all of our activities are volunteer-run and everyone involved has other work, family and

community commitments. We look forward to continuing the work of the Bluestocking Institute in the coming year.

- Shae Garwood, Sky Croeser, Michelle Hackett, Kate Riddell, Kelly Gerard, Liza Beinart, and Christalla Yakinthou

## Activities

### Workshops

- In 2010, the Bluestocking Institute's theme was Lifecycles, specifically focusing on the production, consumption, and disposal of food, clothing, and electronics. We are often separated from the people and processes involved in what we consume. We don't know where our food is grown, who makes our clothes, where electronics go when we throw them out. This makes it difficult to see the effects of our choices on the environment and on people in other parts of the world. It also separates us from the pleasures and lessons that we learn from growing food, sewing, fixing, and engaging in other activities that sustain us. In 2010, we ran three workshops on the lifecycles of food, clothing and electronics. The workshops were held at the Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice in Fremantle, WA. In addition to a presentation and discussion, each workshop included a practical element. For example, people were asked to bring food to share at the food workshop, spare clothes for a clothing swap at the clothing workshop, and unwanted mobile phones to the electronics workshop.
- Representing the Bluestocking Institute, Shae delivered a lecture on transnational advocacy at Curtin University in October 2010. The lecture was part of a unit on social justice and human rights.

### Discussion group

We launched a discussion group series in 2011 to provide opportunities to discuss issues of global, regional and local significance. For each discussion group, the topic was posted on a Facebook event page, often with relevant articles attached for participants to read ahead of time, or for people to read who were unable to attend the discussion. Following the discussion, we posted a summary on the Bluestocking blog and opened up the discussion for comments. Topics included:

- February - What will the Egyptian uprising mean for women's rights?
- March – corporate lobbying
- April – nuclear energy today – safe or susceptible
- June – China's 'jasmine revolution'

## **Building relationships**

- Throughout the year, management committee members participated in the Human Rights and Development Network in Perth. They attended quarterly meetings, posted events on the joint calendar, and participated in a member survey.

## **On-line resources**

- For Fair-trade Fortnight in 2010, we added blog posts on issues related to fair trade, added books on fair trade to the Bluestocking library, offered a fair-trade prize pack for a new Bluestocking member chosen at random, and developed a You-tube channel with fair trade resources.
- Updated website to share information and resources. The site has received over 2,000 visitors since it was launched.
- Continued to add to online Bluestocking library with book recommendations in the following categories: globalisation, peace and conflict, knowledge and power, social inclusion and children's books. This library currently contains over 100 books.
- Blog posts included summaries of discussion group topics, commentary on current events and sharing information on special events and activities.
- Advertised discussion groups and Lifecycles workshops via Facebook event pages.

## **Planning ahead**

- The Lifecycles project will continue in a second phase in 2011-2012, with preliminary steps towards developing an edited book.
- Michelle, Sky and Kelly developed a course on globalisation to be taught at the University of Western Australia. The course, Globalisation: "Another world is possible", seeks to give participants a deeper understanding of globalisation. From the anti-globalisation protests in Seattle to the role of Wikileaks in the recent Egyptian uprising, we ask: How is globalisation changing the world, and how does this affect our everyday lives? The course is composed of four weekly, two-hour sessions that will investigate globalisation's various faces; from the rise of terrorism and the role of the internet, to the infiltration of Coke and McDonalds to the four corners of the globe. The course will include an overview of the major issues and debates, with some real life accounts and examples of globalisation in action. Each session will end with a casual group discussion around some tea and snacks, where participants are encouraged to explore and share their ideas. The class will be offered through UWA extension in the second half of 2011.

## Membership

Fifty-six (56) people have joined as members via the Bluestocking Institute website. Others participate via Facebook or the Bluestocking blog. As of 30 June 2011, 103 people had joined the Bluestocking page on Facebook.

## Governance

The management committee is responsible for the governance of the Institute. The Committee consists of Shae Garwood (Chair), Kate Riddell (Vice Chair), Sky Croeser (Secretary), Kelly Gerard and Michelle Hackett (co-Treasurers), Liza Beinart, and Christalla Yakinthou.

The Bluestocking Institute operated this year completely on volunteer labour. Volunteers provided their time to keep the website up to date, lead discussions, and coordinate the globalisation course at UWA extension.

## Treasurer's Report:

The balance of the account as of 30 June 2010 was \$417.

The Bluestocking Institute gratefully acknowledges in-kind donations from the following people:

- The Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice donated space to host the Lifecycles workshops.
- Participants at the Lifecycles workshops provided food, and clothing for the clothing swap.