



The Bluestocking Institute

for Global Peace and Justice

Annual Report 2011-2012

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

Over the past financial year (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012), we've been focused on community education and scholarly engagement with contemporary debates. We've done this through monthly discussion groups held in Perth, teaching a community short course on globalisation at the University of Western Australia Extension and making the materials available on-line, and compiling a book on how people are changing the production, consumption and disposal of everyday items.

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.

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

Activities

Short Course

- Michelle, Sky and Kelly developed a course on globalisation which was taught at UWA Extension. The course, *Globalisation: "Another world is possible"*, sought 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, they asked: How is globalisation changing the world, and how does this affect our everyday lives? The course was composed of four weekly, two-hour sessions that investigated 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 included an overview of the major issues and debates, with some real life accounts and examples of globalisation in action. Each session ended with a casual group discussion where participants were encouraged to explore and share their ideas.

Discussion group

Our discussion series continued this year. For each discussion, 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:

- July 2011: The ban on live animal export
- August 2011: Carbon tax
- September 2011: The future of NGOs
- March 2012: Occupy Oakland
- April 2012: The ASEAN Civil Society conference: a 'people-oriented' ASEAN?
- May 2012: Kony 2012
- June 2012: Democracy in Burma?

Publications

We're continuing our work on developing a book as part of the Lifecycles project. Earlier this year, we invited scholars and activists from around the globe to contribute chapters. The book will include chapters from activists and scholars in India, Hong Kong, Australia, Sweden, South Africa, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic. The book analyses strategic points for changes in the lifecycles of everyday products. The questions guiding the book are:

- What are the social and environmental impacts of product lifecycles?
- At what points can activists create change in product lifecycles? How

- can they create change at those points?
- Which strategies actually work? Which strategies make people feel good, but don't actually work?
- What systems of governance exist in different industries and are they effective in regulating those industries?

The book will investigate ways of connecting the interwoven political actions of workers and activists along supply chains and promote networks that re-establish connections between local and global systems. Some examples of this include connecting producers and consumers through fair trade, creating markets for certified and labeled products, and providing transparency tools that allow consumers to see where products come from. It will also examine various systems of governance across different industries.

The purpose of this book is dual:

- (1) to make supply chains of everyday products more visible, and;
- (2) to critically engage with existing efforts to remedy poor working conditions and environmental degradation from production to consumption to disposal.

We're currently in the process of editing the chapters and communicating with publishers. Estimated publication date for the book is mid-2013.

On-line resources

- Updated website to share information and resources. The site has received over 2,500 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.
- 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.

Looking ahead

- We will continue the monthly discussion group held in Perth and on-line.
- The Bluestocking Institute is offering the globalisation course at the Mature Age Learning Association (MALA) in August – September 2012 and will make the resources available on-line.
- The Lifecycles project will continue in a second phase in 2011-2012 with the publication of the Lifecycles book.

Membership

Sixty-two (62) people have joined as members via the Bluestocking Institute website. Others participate via Facebook or the Bluestocking blog. As of 30 June 2012, 107 people had joined the Bluestocking page on Facebook.

Governance

The management committee is responsible for the governance of the Institute. The Committee consists of Sky Croeser (Chair), Shae Garwood (Vice Chair), Michelle Hackett (Secretary) and Kelly Gerard (Treasurer).

Treasurer's Report:

The balance of the account as of 30 June 2012 was \$817 (with \$300 still to be withdrawn for the short course expenses).