



The Bluestocking Institute

for Global Peace and Justice

Annual Report 2013-2014

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, publications and its website.

Report from the Management Committee

Over the past financial year (1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014), we've been focused on community education and scholarly engagement with contemporary debates. We've done this through a quarterly bookclub held in Perth, and by publishing a book on how people are changing the production, consumption and disposal of everyday items. We look forward to continuing the work of the Bluestocking Institute in the coming year.

- Sky Croeser, Shae Garwood, Michelle Hackett, Kelly Gerard, Lucy Roberts, Karen O'Sullivan, Kate Riddell, Liza Beinart, and Christalla Yakinthou.

Activities

Book and film club

The Bluestocking Institute's Bookclub meets on a quarterly basis. This year it has covered themes of global inequality ("The Spirit Level"), the history of global finances (book "Debt"; podcast "History Is A Battle Between Creditors And Debtors") and co-operative ventures ("Humanising the Economy"). Each meeting produces a book review which is published on the Bluestocking Institute website and Facebook page. Membership of the bookclub is open to all members of the Institute and meetings are advertised in advance via Facebook. Members who have attended the meetings have reported it is a useful and interesting forum.

Publications

In early 2014, we released an edited book as part of the Lifecycles project, called *Lessons for Social Change in the Global Economy: Voices from the Field*. The book provides a global perspective on different efforts to create social change. Contributors ground their case studies in strong relationships with activists and advocates, while introductory and concluding chapters aid the reader in understanding the common themes which tie these case studies together. The book, published by Lexington Books in January 2014, was edited by Shae Garwood, Sky Croeser and Christalla Yakinthou.

Book synopsis:

In the face of globalization's massive social and economic transformations and dislocation and persistent inequality, activists, labour organisers and advocacy NGOs are seeking, and creating, change beyond the confines of formal state politics and across national borders. Given the breadth of local issues activists face, the ways they define the problem and seek redress vary widely. *Voices from the Field* provides a unique perspective on these efforts, gathering together into one volume concrete examples of the implementation of different strategies for social change that highlight the challenges involved. This provides useful lessons for those involved in social change, as well as for those studying it. Contributors to the volume are scholars and practitioners around the world, and draw on strong connections with people working in the field to improve working conditions and environmental standards of global production systems. This allows the reader to develop a more comprehensive and grounded understanding of strategies for social change.

The strength of the book is in the balance between breadth and specificity. It provides an overview of the themes of social change, which contextualises and draws common threads from the chapters grounded in specific geographic locations and political spaces of change. The chapters analyse environmental and social problems and varying degrees of success activists

have had in regulating industries, containing environmental hazards, and/or harnessing aspects of an industry for positive social and economic change. Contributors draw upon different ways of creating change, which include corporate social responsibility schemes, fair trade regimes, and community radio. By providing an insight into the potential and limitations of actions taken at different levels, the book encourages a critical perspective on efforts for social change, grounded in an understanding of how conditions around the world can affect these activities.

We also developed discussion questions, available on the Bluestocking website, for educators and others who want to use the book for their class or book club.

Looking ahead

Writing Circle

In the coming year the Bluestocking Institute will commence its 'Writing Circle' event. Prior to each event participants are invited to share via email a piece of writing, and participants will then meet to discuss feedback and ideas on each other's contributions.

The first theme is 'Beyond the Circle', inspired by our recent review of Martha Nussbaum's *Political Emotions* that considered the place of 'love' in modern political discourse and how 'patriotic love' might be channelled for social justice ends rather than negative outcomes. This prompted the question why individuals are motivated to feel compassion beyond their immediate social circle.

The shared piece of writing can be fiction or non-fiction, and include poems, blogs, articles, children's fiction, comic strips, or song - whatever form is preferred. Writing Beyond the Circle meetings will be held at least twice a year and publicly advertised through the Bluestocking Institute facebook page and blog.

World Press Photo Exhibition

Bluestocking is planning on making the most of a new link with the World Press Photo Exhibition due to arrive in Perth in July 2015. The exhibition showcases the very best press photography from around the globe and is renowned for shining a light on current human rights / global conflict issues.

Blue Stocking is hoping to secure a private tour of the exhibition in July 2015

with the Dutch curator, focussing on gender themes. We also plan to attend a film preview of the exhibition in February 2015 in Fremantle to hear an Indigenous photographer talk about her work on family violence. Both events will be publicised through our networks and, we hope, will continue to inform our 'beyond the circle' thinking.

Book and Film Club

We will continue the quarterly Book and Film Club held in Perth and on-line.

Membership

From inception until 30 June 2014, 63 members had signed up through the Bluestocking website, and 113 people had joined the Bluestocking Institute's Facebook group.

The Bluestocking blog site had approximately 3600 pageviews over the 2013-2014 financial year.

Governance

The management committee is responsible for the governance of the Institute. For the financial year, the committee board consisted of Michelle Hackett (Chair), Kelly Gerard (Vice-Chair), Shae Garwood (Treasurer), Sky Croeser (Secretary), Lucy Roberts, Karen O'Sullivan, Liza Beinart, Kate Riddell and Christalla Yakinthou.

Treasurer's Report

The balance of the account as of 30 June 2014 was \$667.