

# North East Newsletter

## North East Newsletter Women's Forum



Welcome to the **fourth** edition of the **North East Women's Forum Newsletter**.

**February 2006.**

This edition contains an article by Glynis Winestein, discussing ways to tackle disadvantaged part-time workers. A detailed piece of research on the components of the 'Eradication of world poverty'. Health Matters; by Margaret Huscroft, identifies how we all can help ourselves in the case of an emergency, by adopting the 'ICE' advice. Also in this edition is your opportunity to run in the 'Edinburgh Marathon!' for the CWUHA. Finally, 'Only words' also by Glynis Winestein.

### REMEMBER;

**International Women's Week 2006**

International Women's Day is on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and is celebrated around the world to mark women's struggle for equal rights, justice, peace and progress. Events are organised across the UK including, theatre, dance, creative activities, discussions and what women are involved in today's society. Men are also welcome at most events as the day is also about co-existence and equality is the focus of the whole week.

Please see [www.nusonline.co.uk/women](http://www.nusonline.co.uk/women) for information on the history and aims of International Women's Day, and some useful contact points.

Sharon Callahan West Yorkshire Branch

### Problems for part time workers

More than half the UK's part-time workers are in jobs that they feel fail to capitalise on their qualifications, skills and previous management experience. Working part-time in low-paid jobs can 'scar' their income, earnings potential and promotion prospects for life while the economy loses essential skills.

The way to tackle the stigma and disadvantage faced by those who work part-time is by opening up flexible working practices at all levels of the economy and by opening the right to request flexible working to parents of older children and carers. 78 per cent of Britain's part-time workers are women - many of whom work in low-level jobs in administration and service industries. A key trigger for working part-time is the need to balance work and caring responsibilities. Britain is facing a crisis if it does not address the need for flexible hours at work. Women are hardest hit by the part-time 'penalty' which channels them into low-paid jobs with poor prospects often because they take on more of the caring role at home. What we need is to enable parents of older children and carers to ask their employer to work flexibly, and encourage employers to offer better-paid jobs on a more flexible basis. Only that way can we keep essential skills in the economy whilst allowing people to do the vital role of caring for others.

By Glynis Winestein,  
West Yorkshire Branch.

### HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO DO A SPONSORED MARATHON?

**Edinburgh Marathon - 11 June 2006**

If you have always wanted to run a marathon, this is your chance! Taking place in the historic city of Edinburgh, And no matter what your finishing time, by running the Edinburgh Marathon for the;

**Communication Workers Union Humanitarian Aid**

You will feel like a real winner, as you will be  
**'Bringing a smile to needy children'!**

Researched by Trish Vollans, NE Women's Form, Vice Chair.

## **Raising the absolute position of the 'worst off' is what should concern proponents of social justice?**

Justice is a concept fundamental to principled theory and political philosophy. It is associated with the concept of equity (or impartiality) and equality (or fairness). When referring to social justice we need to recognise the injustices within society, unobjectionably representing the 'worst off'. By ascertaining whom is the 'worst off', the question remains 'should we be proficient in reducing the gap between the well off and the 'worst off?'. The principles of poverty are not without complication, however global and industrial opportunities have demonstrated that capitalism is a way of redistributing capital, should therefore, we not be in a position to eradicate the actuality of the 'worst off'?

Condorcet predicted in the 18th century, that there would be; **'the abolition of inequality between nations, the progress of equality within each nation, and the true perfection of mankind'** (See; O'Neill in Ash et al pg 5). He forecast that we would have a society where those causes of inequalities would diminish, allowing a society without differences in wealth, status and education.

Conversely by introducing rationality on decisions of social importance may well have been the basis of equality but in doing so, it inspired capitalism, which has become as important as equality itself! The concept of poverty has been a topic of perpetual disagreements and misunderstandings in all areas of society. By relating to the failure of equality of opportunity within many of societies groups, e.g. the ethnic and disabled groups within society, are more likely to be poor than able bodied and whites, because the implications of being ethnic or disabled can be both the cause and the effect of poverty, we can establish the reasons behind poverty.

**'Social exclusion occurs within all societies, but has different meanings and manifests itself in different forms'** (See Lister, 2004, pg 76). A rare example of attempts to govern social exclusion can be sought after in the formation of Labour's 'Social Exclusion Unit 1977'. By generating policies to support those on low income, poor housing or experiencing poor health by the providing access to food, shelter and healthcare, relevant to the human rights periphery, tackling the problems that inequalities transmit. But still poverty remains in the UK, a report taken in 2004 by BBC News claimed that more than 3.6 million UK families live below the defined poverty line, which stands at 60% of the average income and that the poorest 10% live on less than 3%, the richest 10% living on 28%, of the national income. In recognising that wealth is disproportionably dispensed, those proponents of social justice need to be familiar with real poverty figures. By distinguishing between relative and absolute poverty, we can evaluate methods of decreasing the poverty gap.

Absolute poverty is individuals or groups that do not receive satisfactory resources to abstain a minimum level of physical health, i.e. calories for nutritional levels. Many share the notion that absolute poverty is within 3rd world countries (the South), a naive perception, provided to us by manipulated statistics, E.g.; a 1990 World Bank report suggests that those in severe poverty are actually a minority, the report suggests; 18% of the 3rd world is 'extremely poor' and 33% is 'poor'. It does this by implying that that the upper poverty line is set at per capita income of one US Dollar a day, and those in excess of \$1 a day are non-poor (Chossudovsky, 1997, pg 43). **This is clear evidence of non-representation of those in poverty. By recognising that those living in poverty, relative measures must be applied.**

But there are areas of apprehension on the definitions of relative poverty, a relentless grey area, as it is determined on what individuals or groups conceive as 'needs' and/or 'provisions'. In short; what is required to obtain necessities to live. Proponents of social justice need to recognise Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states **'Everyone... is entitled to realisation ... of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable to his(sic) dignity'**.

UNICEF, reported that the UK is 1 of the 24s richest countries where child poverty has actually been reduced, (LRD, 2004). The report suggests that the number of children living in poverty had actually risen in 17 out of these countries, implying 40-50 million children live in poverty! Director of UNICEF UK said, **"These are countries where there are no excuses for children living in poverty... Governments are allowing child poverty"** (LRD, 2004).

Susan George, *'How the Other Half Dies'*, relates to world poverty not as an unavoidable observable fact, but something which is a consequence of the system, that inequalities within the system are maintained by the political and social methods in place, which fall in with the normal workings of capitalism. By placing blame to the systems in place, George asks the question 'Why don't they do something about it?' by referring to 'they' she means, those ill-defined groups in positions of power who are supposed to be able to alter the status quo. The reply goes onto say that they do not do anything because; **'of course, it is because that it is not in their interests to change anything that would simultaneously reduce their power, prestige or profits'**

By recognising that dominant capitalistic components exist throughout society and suggesting that, the poor become worse off as the rich become richer. By accepting that the world's economy gap is widening and that it is consequential to the global social order.

By increasing the position of the 'worst off' is not going to be a simplistic accomplishment. Individual societies need to be taking ownership of a global problem, which has been created by the self-proponents who wish to eradicate it. By bringing the 'worst off' out of poverty, we can then establish a way forward to increasing the relative poverty situation.

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### **Your Union Needs You!**

We need more women Committee Members. If you are interested in getting more involved in your Union, or would like to know what it entails, please contact one of the officers of the North East Regional Forum.

I would also like to invite all women within the region to 'HAVE YOUR SAY', by emailing your articles or your suggestions for future newsletters to;

[trish.vollans@bt.com](mailto:trish.vollans@bt.com) **Trish Vollans, EDITOR**

#### **Coming Events and Conferences:**

NE Women's AGM 28 February 2006, Post office Club, York  
Retired Member Conference, 2 March 2006, CWU Headquarters.  
Women's Interfaith Network, *"The Power Of One"*, 7<sup>th</sup>. March 2006, Royal College of Physicians.  
CWU Annual Conference commences Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2006, Bournemouth.

## Health matters;

### Help out in a crisis - with ICE

A Cambridge-based paramedic has launched a national campaign with Vodafone to encourage people to store emergency contact details in their mobile phones. Bob Brotchie, a clinical team leader for the East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust, hatched the plan last year after struggling to get contact details from shocked or injured patients.

By entering the acronym ICE - for In Case of Emergency - into the mobile's phone book, users can log the name and number of someone to be contacted in an emergency. The idea follows research carried out by Vodafone that shows more than 75 per cent of people carry no details of who they would like telephoned following a serious accident.

Bob, 41, a paramedic of 13 years, said: "I was reflecting on some of the calls I've attended at the roadside where I had to look through the mobile phone contacts struggling for information on a shocked or injured person'. He goes on to say; "It's difficult to know who to call. Someone might have "mum" in his or her phone book but that does not mean they would want him or her to be contacted in an emergency. "Almost everyone carries a mobile phone now, and with ICE we'd know immediately who to contact and what number to ring. The person may even know of their medical history."

Vodafone spokesperson Ally Stevens said: "The Life Savers Awards already demonstrate, through practical example, how important a mobile phone can be when minutes matter in an emergency." The campaign is also asking people to think carefully about who will be their ICE partner - with helpful advice on who to choose - particularly if that person has to give consent for emergency medical treatment.

Bob hopes that all emergency services will promote ICE in their area as part of a national awareness campaign to highlight the importance of carrying next of kin details at all times. "Research suggests people recover quicker from the psychological effects of their loved one being hurt if they are involved at an earlier stage and they can reach them quickly."

He said he hoped mobile phone companies would now build the ICE contact into future models, adding: "It's not difficult to do. As many people say they carry mobile phones in case of an emergency, it seems natural this information should be kept there."

Nominations for the Life Savers Awards can be made by contacting the awards hotline on 0870 902 3333 or visiting [www.vodafone.co.uk/lifesavers](http://www.vodafone.co.uk/lifesavers)

**Information provided by Margaret Huscroft, NE Women's Forum, Assistant Secretary.**

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#### **Its only words... (And what they really mean...)**

\* **Competitive Salary:** "We remain competitive by paying less than our competitors"

\* **Some Overtime Required:** "Some time each night and some time each weekend"

\* **Self-Motivated:** "Management won't answer questions"