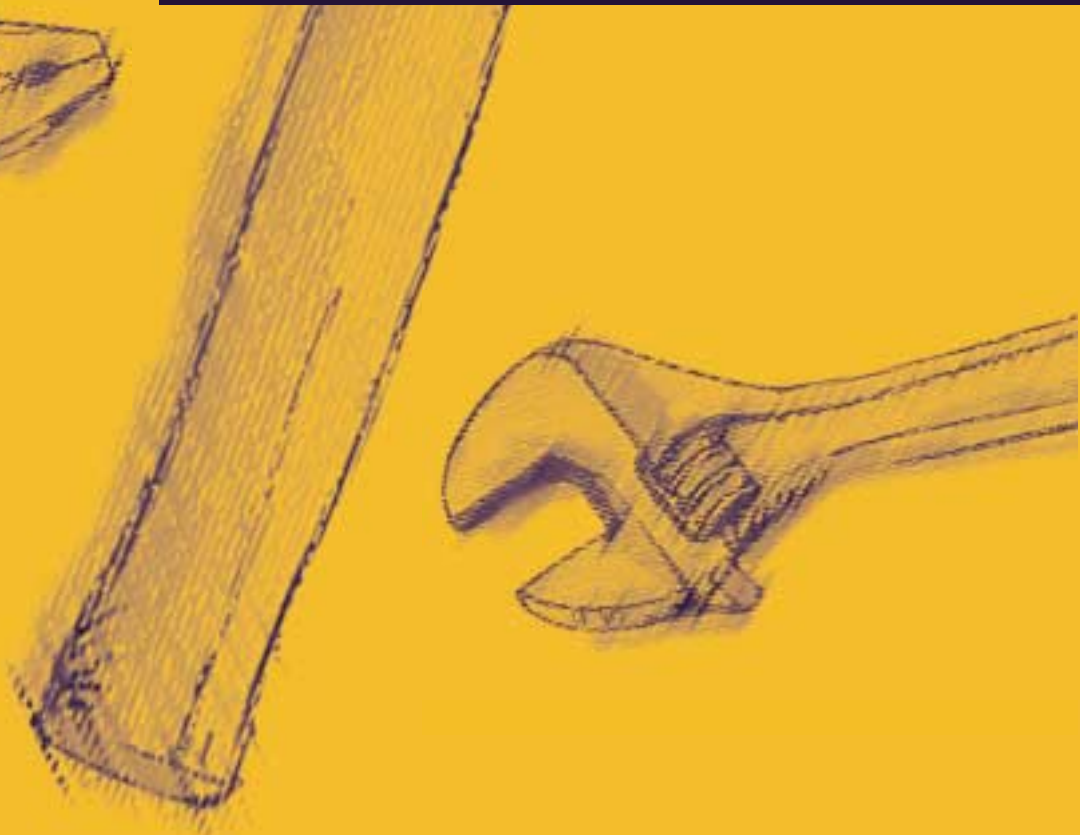
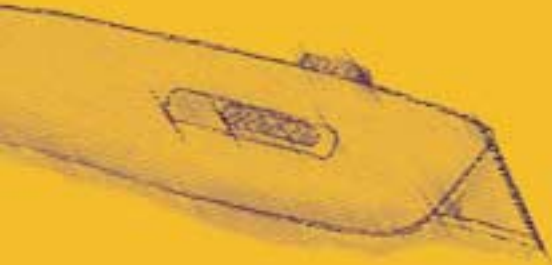


Jasmine wants to be a Joiner



Report from the
Gender Equality in Career Choice Conference
November, 2000

Organised by
Women and Manual Trades and
the DTI Promoting SET for Women Unit



Women and
Manual
Trades
Logo

promoting



for women

Report produced by Women and Manual Trades
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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is accurate. Should any unintentional errors have crept in we apologise and would appreciate being informed of them.

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St Martins, year 10.

May, 2001



“You cannot be young in the world that I am young in
and you do not know the world I will be old in”¹

Traditional and stereotyped views still influence young women’s career choices. They restrict the opportunities to take up vocational training or employment, which may best suit the individual’s abilities and aspirations. It is evident that there are still very few young women in crafts and technical jobs. In the Construction Industry, whilst women form approximately 10% of the overall workforce, women working in the trades form less than 2%. The barriers to be overcome in choosing a career in this field begin with attitudes imbued at an early age².

Women and Manual Trades has been working to overcome these stereotypes and as part of this work has joined with other organisations to look at ways of breaking down the barriers preventing girls and women from making these career choices.

As part of its ongoing work WAMT has been involved in a partnership with four other European organisations looking at ways that career advice affects choice. The Gender Equality in Career Choice Conference was held as the culmination of this two year project and much of the information found in this report is from that conference.



¹ Quote supplied by Career’s Advisor at the conference. Source unknown

² In this report it is the situation in Britain and Europe that is being discussed. In some other cultures women working in construction is seen as typical.



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Why should girls want to choose a non traditional Career?

“Women are the country’s biggest single most under-valued and therefore under-used human resource”²

The national average wage in this country is about three hundred and ten pounds a week. (£309.60) If we compare this figure to the earning of women in some of the more traditional ‘female’ roles, (£200 for a Care Assistant, Sales Assistant £182.80) we can see just how unequal this is by looking at how much a man might earn in a traditionally ‘male’ role. A bricklayer will earn £310.40, a carpenter £320, and a scaffolder £443.60.

Gender stereotyping is rife in job choice and this is having a detrimental effect in many ways.

Speaking at the conference, Baroness Valerie Amos explained that as long as young women choose these professions, there would be a continued maintenance of the pay gap.

“We have to encourage young women into all jobs. More women in widening career choices also means greater diversity and indeed, increased numbers of skilled and talented employees. As well, many employment sectors are experiencing skill shortages. It is not only about social justice and equality, but also about economic survival. Industries, which face a shortage of talent, do not have a secure future”.

The Baroness went on to describe how subject preferences are also prevalent in the training that young women and men choose. For example, the Construction Industry

Training Board Research into Trainee numbers illustrated that women account for just 4% of New Entrants.¹

Subject and training choices in early life are leading to a lifetime of lower earnings and lower pensions for women as well as a reduction in the contribution young women make to their family income.

This level of occupational segregation means that 60% of women work in just ten occupations such as sales assistants, checkout operators, secretaries, childcarers, cooks and caterers. These are not highly paid jobs and they are certainly not as well paid as comparable “male” jobs.

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has announced that 350,000 new recruits will be needed over the next five years. Currently the Construction Industry is not being viewed as a positive career choice for females or males. With such a demand for skilled workers this is potentially the time for the industry to consider the work conditions that prevail and the image the Industry has. The Industry is also one of the most monocultural in terms of the make-up of the employers and workers. By becoming more diverse the industry would be more representative of the clients it serves. In order to become more diverse recruitment and retention methods need to be examined. The opportunity is there for the industry to look at the way it operates and for the traditionally established work patterns to be updated to accommodate a modern workforce.

The conference heard from a variety of projects and organisations that are concentrating on bringing attention to various aspects of these issues.

² 1993 Science White Paper – Office of Science and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry, UK

¹ CITB Training Numbers Survey 1999/2000



What is being done to increase the career choices open to girls?

In Schools

In the experience of WAMT women have successfully qualified at their trades and gone on to run successful businesses or work on site within the Construction Industry. There have been many barriers to overcome on the way but this has not deterred a number of women.

However, these women are very much in the minority throughout the industry and as Baroness Amos explained at the conference “the routing of young men and women into traditional areas of male and female employment is fed by choices made in the classroom”.

It was generally agreed at the conference that the earlier children are introduced to non-stereotype information the more likely they are to remain open minded to a wider range of career options. Research carried out by WAMT showed that younger children had far less fixed ideas about roles that men and women have. As children progressed into their teens they were found to have more gender identified views on careers and occupations.³ This was a view reinforced by conference participants and the need to work with young children, parents and teachers at a much earlier stage was seen as necessary in order to redress the balance of choice.

Promoting positive images

Role Models

WAMT has found that one of the most successful ways of presenting a craft trade as a positive choice is by example. For many years tradeswomen have been going into schools to talk of their own experiences. WAMT has also organised ‘Taster’ sessions where schoolchildren have had the opportunity to try a trade for themselves under the tutelage of a qualified tradeswoman. This has served both the purpose of giving the schoolchildren a chance to see what working in a trade involves but also to question the stereotypical view that trades are only for men.

Other ways of presenting positive role models are to ensure that the information available in the classroom includes a wider balance of images e.g. women and men in non gender specific roles, non-gender specific language etc.



³ Schoolchildren's Perceptions of the Construction Industry Clare Potter and Jennifer July 2000, Unpublished report available from WAMT



Careers Advice

Ensuring Diversity of Choice

Gender bias remains instilled in careers advice. The Cabinet Office Women's Unit recently held a consultation exercise called 'LISTEN UP'⁴ in which girls told of their negative experiences of both stereotyping and lack of awareness of equal opportunities in subject and career choice counselling.

*"Female and ethnic minority students reported examples of insensitivity to and unawareness of the harm of racial and gender prejudice. Little discussion of equal opportunities took place."*⁵

From the conference it was felt that the following action points would encourage better understanding of the issues and help to break down the bias.

- Equal opportunities need to be incorporated into mainstream training and development, delivery and structures. The Equal Opportunities Commission 1 offers guidelines on this.
- For the Connexions Service to prioritise gender and racial equality
- Careers Advisors to work more closely with companies so that they have some knowledge of expectations.
- Careers Advisors and schools to establish partnerships between employers and parents to address cultural issues

At the conference delegates heard how the Danish Careers Guidance System begins when the schoolchildren are 10 years old. An Individual career plan is mapped for each student. Regular contact with the student is then available for the student for up to five years on leaving school. The Danish model

features co-operation between companies, social partners, colleges and teachers, who share a joint responsibility to ensure continuous implementation of the system.

Annette Williams and Ros Wall of Let's TWIST (Let's Train Women in Science and Technology) spoke of their organisation who employ a team of advisers and trainers. Their role is to advise organisations when examining their policies, practices and culture in order to improve access to areas where women are under-represented.

Through staff development seminars with Careers Advisers, they are raising the awareness of:

- the need for widening career choices for women
- factors affecting entry into non-traditional careers
- implicit and explicit stereotyping in guidance work
- support mechanisms needed and available in non-traditional careers

Material for Careers Advice

As part of the Interventions Project research was carried out to ascertain the view schoolchildren have of gender based roles in non-traditional careers. The main emphasis was of their opinions of women working in the trades in construction and engineering.

This research found:

- Age 10 – had less-fixed ideas about what women and men can do
- Age 14 – fixed ideas about stereotypes, and gender-identified views on careers and occupations

⁴ 'Listen Up!' A Dialogue with Young people, The Home Office April, 2000

⁵ Key Findings, The Impact of Race and Gender on Progression from GNVQ Construction into the Industry. Royal Holloway University of London. Report prepared on behalf of the CITB and funded by Further Education Development Agency. February 2000



Comments from pupils on the content of images:

- Liked seeing women and men working together
- Liked seeing people enjoying work and working hard

Feedback from teachers:

- Children very much enjoy practical work and it has the largest impact when learning

The Go For IT! poster campaign initiated by the DTI 'Promoting SET' (Science Engineering and Technology), for the Women's Unit, have elicited valuable research conclusions.

Feedback from teachers and school pupils identified motivational factors affecting career choice:

- Being useful
- Being creative
- Having social relevance
- Financial remuneration

The material should be appropriately produced to appeal to academic and non-academic young women, as well as those intending to leave school at 16. There is also a realisation that there must be consultation from teachers and pupils alike when planning materials to go to schools.

Feedback from teachers suggests that 90% of material goes into the bin, 9% is filed and only 1% is used. Teachers say that the material should:

- be gauged to children onward from age 10
- be age-specific
- be linked to the National Curriculum
- be developed with teachers and schools
- be piloted with the target group

- be sent in April or May when there is more free time
- enrich curriculum material
- have teacher support notes
- contain enough copies or be easily photocopied
- have 'attainment targets' clearly identified

Promoting SET for Women is endeavouring to reach out to younger girls by producing SPARK, a magazine that will go out twice a year, geared to the 11-14 year age group. It will be published to time with the launching of the Learning and Skills Council in 2001. A report documenting the research and the development of the posters, called Get With It! Will be available from the Unit from June 2001.



¹ Quote supplied by Career's Advisor at the conference. Source unknown

² In this report it is the situation in Britain and Europe that is being discussed. In some other cultures women working in construction is seen as typical.



Post-16

Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities into training delivery

Let's Twist has been working on a training package with trainers in FE and HE to look at issues of recruitment and retention of women in under represented areas. This has included enabling trainers to look at their own stereotype views and to be more understanding of the situation faced by women in what has traditionally been a predominantly male setting.

WAMT implemented a Diversity Awareness training course with trainers of the CITB. This again has involved looking at attitudinal stereotyping and prejudices, and working on creating a more inclusive environment in the training setting.

National Policy

At the conference Baroness Valerie Amos gave an account of the Government's intentions. In 2001, the new Learning and Skills Councils will take over responsibility for education-business links and for work experience. Furthermore, the Government has given the new National Learning Skills Council a statutory duty to promote equal opportunities. The National and local Learning Skills Councils will be instructed to "work with schools and employers to provide work experiences for young people which widen career choices and which challenge stereotypes."

The LSC Recruitment Education and Careers restructuring proposals will provide for:

- An Advisory Committee on the Learning and Skills Council who will direct their findings to Business Area Teams, Education Careers Teams and Area Management Teams.
- A Business Plan that will embrace diversity and all the issues associated with it leading on to particular targets to be achieved.
- Utilising a positive image campaign to enhance education resource materials for undergraduate and graduate entry.
- Promotion of work-based learning.
- Quality, coherence and rigour in all education and training curriculum work placements.

The Government is committed to tackling the pay gap on all fronts. A "Five Point Plan of Action" has been announced to sustain and speed progress on closing the pay gap.





This includes:

1. Tackling gender stereotyping
2. Improving support for women returning to the labour market,
3. Helping women reconcile work and family life
4. Raising skill levels and provides everyone with access to lifelong learning
5. Ensuring women receive equal pay for work of equal value.

The DTI 'Promoting SET for Women' is one of the UK's organisation's concerned with the issues of gender equality in career choices. The 1993 Science White Paper "Realising Our Potential" acknowledged that women are the country's biggest single most undervalued and therefore under-used human resource. To add to this, the Government believes that there is massive scope to attract more women into science and engineering. The role of Promoting SET for Women, is to promote and facilitate the role of women in science, engineering and technology; and to stimulate, encourage and co-ordinate action between existing expert bodies.

The focus of unit is to:

- Work to improve the working culture of SET related areas in higher education and industry
- Tackle the image and perception of SET careers
- Undertake research to underpin policy
- encourage Women in SET to network and achieve and play a full role in policy development



At an Industry Level

The Construction Industry National Training Organisation

The CITB is undergoing policy and strategy transitions within 2000 – 2005 regarding recruitment, education and careers. It is CITB's purpose to provide a positive experience of construction for young people, adults and their role models to improve knowledge, understanding and skills to enable informed career choices to be made.

CITB's Recruitment Education and Careers Restructuring Proposals will make provision for an Advisory Committee on the Learning and Skills Council. They will direct their findings to Business Area Teams, Education Careers Teams and Area Management Teams.

A new Business Plan will embrace diversity and all the issues associated with it. Promotion of work-based learning will be seen as key to this process as it is viewed as an essential element in ensuring successful outcomes. Quality, coherence and rigour in all education and training curriculum work placements are crucial. To achieve this, the CITB proposes to work in closer partnerships with organisations redressing these issues.

As part of National Construction Week, CITB proposes to

- Increase young presenters by 50%
- Increase teacher placements by 50%
- Increase graduate work experience placement by 50%
- To achieve this, partnerships must increase by 10%.



The Role of Employers

Dr. Barbara Schöler-Macher spoke of the surge in Germany to recruit young women into non-traditional occupations. However, there was a fear that once trained, the jobs would not be available. Therefore Life co-ordinated the 'Interventions Project'. Interventions networked with teachers, career advisers, vocational trainers and women from *Life* to support young women who were choosing non-traditional professions. *Life* established that one of the key processes was to put teachers and career advisers on the road to "Empowerment to Encourage".

"Push" Agents (Who influences career choice?)

- Parents
- Family environment
- Peer groups

"Pull" Agents (What attracts young women in their choice?)

- An attractive company is one that offers:
Interesting, versatile jobs and personal development
Qualified training and further training
An open welcome atmosphere with an interest in "diversity management".
Responsibility, low hierarchies
Good salaries

A training module was developed and implemented to achieve this goal. This comprised of two parts, the Company visit and a Workshop entitled The Ability to Encourage. The aim of the training module is to sensitise the participants, to address the job-related wishes of women who want to train in a technical or skilled trade, and to take these often hidden wishes seriously.

The participants are also taught methods of how to interest young women in such trades and to inspire, encourage and acknowledge them in their choices.

This done, it was necessary to network with women-positive companies. Criteria for the selection of such companies were:

- Readiness to co-operate with visits
- Readiness to give inside views on training and employment
- Openness to dialogue on equal opportunities
- Offer of modern team-oriented vocational training

Life identified companies that are striving to meet these conditions. The next step was to support the three groups of participants: Teachers, Career Advisers and Companies

The first training session was carried out with 16 men and women from Network Interventions. The findings were then evaluated and a second session will be carried out for those who wish to continue with the training.

It is acknowledged that good companies are agents of change. When looking at employers it is very important to ask these very simple and frank questions.

- What are the best employers doing already?
- What other things could employers be doing?
- What is stopping employers from doing these things?
- How can employers be encouraged?
- What support do they need?
- How do we get the message out?
- How can employers ensure non-traditional career opportunities are seen as 'women positive'?



Conclusion and Summary

Summary

“What we have learned from our partnership is the difference in government attitudes towards women in non-traditional skills and careers. One of our partners comes from a vocational education and training system which is more than 450 years old and can be described as a cultural bridgehead between the European (German) dual apprenticeship systems and the school-based models of the Nordic countries. We have also learned that in other countries in spite of Equal Opportunities Policies in government, implementation is slow and difficult”.⁶

The conference has demonstrated that effective progress can and is being made by:

- Stimulating girls and young women’s aspirations and choice by providing them at an early age with both traditional and non-traditional career choices
 - Challenging our own and others’ preconceptions and stereotypes that perpetuate job segregation
 - Enabling women to deal with the barriers they face by giving them support and the tools and skills they need to feel empowered in the workplace
 - Promoting the use of gender-inclusive and non-jargon language in all communications and promotional materials
- Enabling girls and young women to:
 - meet role models
 - have work placements that are women-friendly
 - have the opportunity to try new things in a supportive environment
 - be mentored
 - be made aware of promotional activities
 - be put in touch with support networks
 - Monitoring and continuing to lobby / influence governments to rigorously implement policies and action plans to ensure equal opportunities policies are in all sectors of society.
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of local and national Learning and Skills Councils to promote equal opportunities policies and challenge stereotypes.
 - Collaborating with government departments, career services primary and secondary schools, FE and HE colleges, training organisations, CITB and companies to stimulate positive attitudes towards wider career choices for girls and young women.
 - Observing and implementing best practice models from other regions and countries.



⁶ Dr Barbara Schöler-Macher



Appendices

Appendix 1

The Interventions European partnership

The Interventions Project began at the end of 1998. The partners had a consensus in their goals, but each partner had differing roles and interventions in achieving these goals.

Consensus:

1. To do something against stereotypes
2. To widen vocational choices beyond the stereotypes
3. To improve young women's access to non-traditional training

Life based in Berlin is a non-profit organisation, which runs a women's training centre. *Life* has over ten years of experience in training women in ecological and crafts fields. It offers vocational training in construction trades, further education and project consulting. *Life* is the co-ordinator within the INTERVENTIONS partnership. *Life's* focus in the INTERVENTIONS work has been the creation of a network with an ethos of gender equality in career choice. This network includes persons and organisations that are concerned with the transition from school to training such as teachers, career advisers, trainers and human resource managers in companies. The experiences and resources of all involved organisations have been put together to find ways of improving the access of women into technical training and employment.

- Networking with teachers, career advisers, companies
- Training Modules and Workshops
- Company visits

Aarhus Kommunale Skolevaesen from Aarhus, Denmark is the educational authority of the municipality of Aarhus. This organisation is, among others, responsible for youth guidance and the counselling of students during their transition from school life to vocational

training. They are also responsible for the in-service training of career advisers and teachers. As well, they work together with youth guidance centres, vocational schools and larger firms in the region.

The main task of *Aarhus Kommunale Skolevaese*, within the Interventions project, has been to widen career choices to include non-traditional skills, especially for girls and young women from migrant worker background. The Danish partnership has initiated smaller project groups in schools to support access to working life for these girls and young women.

Centre for the Innovation of Education and Training – CINOP from 'sHertogenbosch, Netherlands is an organisation that is closely associated with the education world, government and business. As a centre of expertise and innovation *CINOP* is developing qualification standards, curricula, and concepts of organisational adaptation. As well, it is promoting equal opportunities in vocational and adult training. Within INTERVENTIONS *CINOP* has contributed the experiences from the Netherlands of mentoring young women students towards technical jobs. Like their Danish partner *CINOP*, they have also given special attention to girls and young women from migrant worker backgrounds.

- Innovative career choices
- Guidance for young women of ethnic minorities

The Educational and Psychological Counselling Institute of the Czech Republic (IPPP) from Prague, is an institute for educational and psychological counselling. It was founded in 1994 by the Minister of Education, Youth and Sport. *IPPP* ensures the co-ordination of the counselling and guidance system and the further training of teachers and counsellors. Within INTERVENTIONS, *IPPP* has explored the problems and barriers to equal opportunities in education and jobs, especially in non-traditional fields. In addition, *IPPP* has built up a network with all relevant organisations and persons who are responsible for counselling to promote gender equality in career choice.



- Statistical data
- Investigations
- Legislation

Women and Manual Trades is a voluntary sector organisation which has worked for more than 25 years with women who are working or training in non-traditional jobs in construction and allied trades. For the INTERVENTIONS project work, *WAMT* has examined existing material to gauge the most successful format for breaking down gender

stereotyping in career choices. Through the Interventions Project *WAMT* has brought Careers Advisers and school teachers together with Construction Industry and organisations working on the issue of Equality of Opportunity and diversity in non traditional fields.

- Networking
- School research, presentation in schools
- Seminars, conferences on gender equality in career choice

Appendix 2

Labour Force Survey Figures

Latest figures from the government's quarterly Labour Force Survey show the Industry's attempts to attract more women are starting to bear fruit with an 11.9 per cent jump in the number of women working in construction during the third quarter of this year compared with 1999. However, to date there is no conclusive breakdown of these figures and therefore it is not yet clear which areas of the Industry have had an increase.

	Summer 2000	Summer 1999	Change (X)
Male	1,825,000	1,787,000	28
Female	194,000	173,000	11.9
Employees	1,334,000	1,275,000	4.6
Self-employed	654,000	658,000	-0.6
Average gross weekly earnings	£387	£359	7.7

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office of National Statistics

Appendix 3

The Speakers and Workshop Leaders at the Gender Equality in Career Choice Conference (in Programme Order)

Baroness Amos, House of Lords
 Carol Biggs, WAMT
 Dr Barbara Schöler-Macher, LIFE, Berlin
 Dr Jan Peters, DTI Promoting SET for Women Unit
 Kate Howard, CITB
 Ros Wall, Let's Twist

Annette Williams, Let's Twist
 Carole Elliott, The DTI
 Clare Potter, Research "Schoolchildren's Perception of the Construction Industry. Lisa Clegg, CITB
 Beate Haensel, LIFE, Berlin
 Irena Coufalikova, IPPP, Czech Republic
 Kate Hollinshead, Construction Best Practice Programme
 Annemarie Cordes, LIFE, Berlin
 John Sharman, Equal Opportunities Commission
 Teis Trane, Aarhus Kommunale Skolevaese, Denmark
 Marion de Groot, CINOP, Holland

Useful Web addresses:

www.set4women.gov.uk

www.scienceyear.org.uk

www.wamt.org

European Intervention Project Partners

www.msmt.cz/ipp

www.cinop.nl

www.aaks.dk

www.life-online.de

Useful contacts:

Construction Industry Training Board	01732 460 561
Department of Education and Employment	087000 12345
Equal Opportunities Commission	0161 833 9244
Women and Architecture Group	020 7580 5533
Women as Role Models	020 7607 6416
The Women's Engineering Society	020 7589 5111

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Joan Wright has an international background in human rights work. Currently she is taking a gender equality brief to the South East of England on behalf of the Women's Training Network. She has a special interest in developing a gender-inclusive language policy.

Carol Biggs has been the Development Worker for WAMT since 1997. She has a background in Construction.

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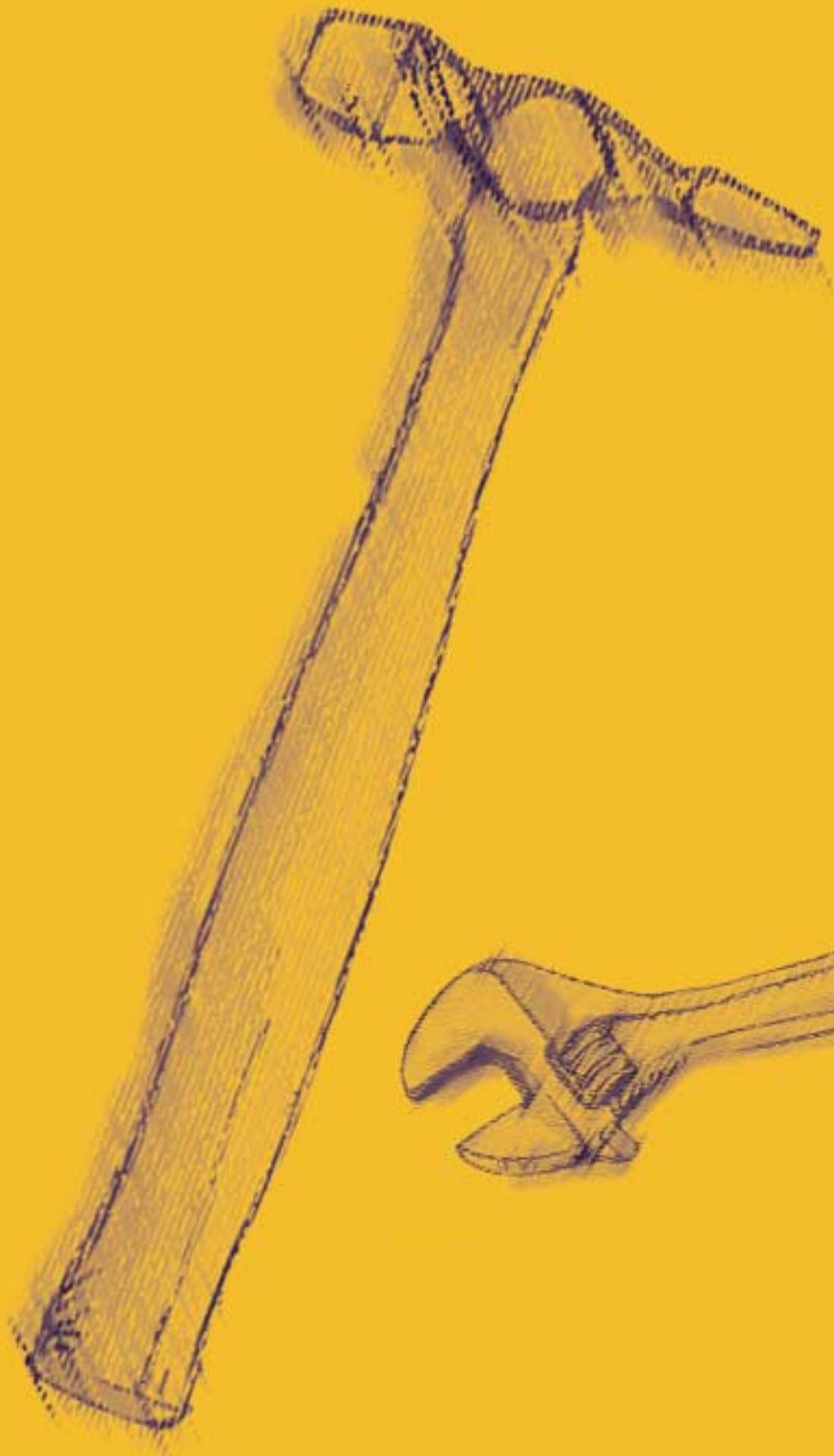
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