

Applied Science

A group of feminists with backgrounds in science are now working to challenge the masculine face of science. The group, 'Women for Science for Women'⁹, will soon be launching a Women and Science Centre based at North London Polytechnic.

It aims to be many things to many women. A key idea is to establish a resource and information centre that any woman or women's group can use for advice or information. How we define 'science' is important here. We take it to mean the myriad ways that science affects women, as well as anything to do with women in science: from reproductive technologies and computing to nature conservation and the implications of Star Wars.

Women on the whole have less access to scientific knowledge than men. So the centre will initiate courses for women who want to learn about science but not necessarily train for a career in science or technology. Several women in the group are already exploring feminist ways of teaching science.

Still another role of the centre is to link up with others involved with the many issues around women, science and technology. For instance, several groups in Britain have done much to promote the non-sexist teaching of science in schools and to encourage girls to study science. A nationwide network would help to co-ordinate initiatives and, through a newsletter, disseminate information quickly.

The Women and Science centre will also host a series of lectures and discussions on everything from scientific language in the 17th century to life as a laboratory technician.

Ultimately the centre will thrive as a political force if it can become a pressure group with clout: able to act as a clearing house for ideas and information, produce critiques of government or industrial policies and generate positive reforms. Able, in short, to give a scientific voice to women at last.*

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