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Durban.MEMORANDUM ON ORGANISATION FOR ENGLISH  
LITERACY TEACHING FOR INDIAN WOMEN IN  
SMALL NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS - -DURBAN.

27.3.53.

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(Course to be issued by S.A. Institute of Race Relations.)

This memorandum is being sent to all those Indian women in Durban who have already expressed interest and willingness to help in organising and undertaking this project. We ask you to use it to assist this office in compiling records of those willing to train as lay teachers for groups and undertake the teaching work; of those desiring to become learners in groups at certain local centres or in homes in their own neighbourhood. We also need to know places where such groups could meet for such a course. We need to be able to judge what demand there is in each area so that lay volunteer teachers who have trained in the method may be allocated accordingly.

An initial primer in English has already been drafted by Mrs. Quintin Whyte, the Adult Education Officer of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, with the help of a group of Indian women drawn from the various sections of the Indian community in Durban. It is intended for the use of Indian women who :-

- either 1) Cannot speak English, and wish to learn to speak, read and write it.
- 2) Those who can already speak some English, but wish to learn to read and write it.

These two groups will be taught by two different methods with the same material which is designed for both. It is hoped that one of Mrs. Whyte's Instructors will spend a week in Durban to train a group of teachers in these methods as soon as the course is published and we are sufficiently organised here to be ready to institute classes.

This group who have been trained in the method (the 'teaching group') will then undertake the training in method of the lay teachers who, in turn, will teach English to the small groups of women who wish to learn. Only the prescribed method can be used with this material. If it is followed it is hoped that learners will be able to speak, read and write in a useful vocabulary of about 200 words in :

60	one-hour	lessons	if	they	cannot	previously	speak	English
30	"	"	"	"	can	"	"	"

Lessons may be two, or sometimes where suitable even three, per week. The estimates of the length of the course are of course approximate and will vary a little with individuals.

The requirements of a place for a group to meet for classes would be simply such that for an hour the group could meet there in reasonable quietness without disturbance or interruption during their work, round a table or tables on which they could write in a good light. There is no need for a classroom arrangement, nor is it desirable, as each learner will be taught individually although they meet in groups. For this reason the fact that learners may be at different stages and go at different paces will not matter, for the teacher will take each one independently at her own pace every time she comes to the class. The learners will need to bring pencils and notebooks and to pay for their primers which will probably cost a few shillings.

If this primer course is taken up, it is hoped that Mrs. Whyte will, with further help from Indian women here, produce a/

a second book to carry the vocabulary up to about 500 words, and assist by demonstrating the techniques of writing follow-up material, so that the courses may go on and develop.

Our present need is to find out exactly what the demand and resources are in this area. A small committee to be responsible for the training of lay teachers and regular seminars between them and the teaching group, and the establishment and supervision of the learning groups will shortly be set up.

If you are interested in helping to get this scheme started, I shall be very grateful if you will make yourself responsible for getting to know the demand and possibilities in your particular neighbourhood. I suggest you team up with any others who intend volunteering in your neighbourhood and divide it into definite areas between you so that your enquiries do not overlap. Then by door to door enquiry, find out and list:-

1. Which families would be interested. Names , addresses, phone numbers.
2. How many of the womenfolk in each between, say, schoolage and about 45 will wish to join our classes when they start in perhaps about 2 months time.

State their religious and vernacular language group.

3. What grouping of these women do you suggest ? (Groups should not contain less than 2 or more than 10)
4. What centre would be suitable for the learning groups ? e.g. somebody's home or one person's home for one week and another for the next or a rota system for so many weeks each.
5. On a separate list I should be glad to know of any other people suitable to train as lay teachers.

Please put your name, address and 'phone number clearly at the head of your list underlining it so that I know you are the person responsible for collecting it and send it to me as soon as you possibly can.

I suggest that you warn the women with whom you are in contact that it may be a month or two yet before the course is available. It is not quite ready for publication and the preliminaries take time. But it is very important so start on a sound method, however, and we must keep that interest until this is available and try to spend the interim period making good preparations so that we can get off to a good start in due course.

I should be very glad to help with any enquiries.

Please let me have your list in the next few days if you possibly can. I greatly appreciate your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

*Olive M. Gibson*

Olive M. Gibson,  
Field Worker

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