



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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Ms Katona realised she would require special training to carry out the task ahead of her. She was able to make use of an Aboriginal Study Grant to travel to Queensland and work with two Aborigines - Jim Hamilton and Carol Archer - who visit schools in Queensland to teach children about Aborigines.

She was very impressed with the professional way in which the two Queenslanders worked, and felt she had been schooled in a very exclusive institution. Certainly, there is nowhere else in the world where she could have received such training.

The A.C.T. is a leader in this area of education and all credit belongs to Peter Darcy of the Curriculum Section of the A.C.T. Schools Authority, and those teachers who worked very hard to prepare the unit. I had the good fortune to spend some time with them in the earlier sessions on weekends, and it was an inspiration to see these people quietly and professionally working towards creating a better Australia for all to live in.

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(The following brief article has been reproduced from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation Newsletter No.17, Autumn 1975.)

PRE-SCHOOL ANNEXES AND PARA-PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Community Education Project, Coventry. Mr John Rennie,
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This scheme has capitalised on the facilities of a large nursery centre in a disadvantaged area by the creation of 'annexes', that is 'satellite' centres without purpose-built facilities, in a variety of informal locations. These are staffed by local mothers trained by the professional staff of the Centre. The project should provide further evidence on the operational possibilities of training and working productively with non-professionally qualified people at pre-school level.

After the initial training course, mothers spend some time on the Centre's Playbus used as a mobile annexe, gaining practical experience under the supervision of a qualified leader. When suitable premises for a playgroup have been found in the locality, they set up their own annexe and the Playbus moves on. Four annexes are now operating and further ones are planned. *(continued page 31)*

SEMINAR FOLLOW-UP

Because of the difference in schools and the variety of areas in which aides work, there must be a diversity of roles, and these can only be effectively worked out in the school. When these roles are defined there will be varying needs for further training. This training could involve a period of some weeks to gain the necessary skills, and would be conducted away from the school. Other training would be best carried out in the school and a plan will be needed to ensure this is able to be done effectively.

It is hoped to consider these areas of definition and training in the immediate future. The Seminar was effective in allowing aides to share their experiences and in bringing many relevant topics to them for consideration. The real effectiveness will, of course, be in the work of the aides after their role definition and training is completed, and a report will be made on this in the future.

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The project has clearly shown that, with appropriate training, supervision and support by professionals and sufficient motivation by the mothers, they can develop considerable skill and competence in providing play/learning situations for children who would otherwise have little opportunity of benefitting from any kind of pre-school provision.

In addition, the training in this sphere provides the starting point for a general development of confidence and self-esteem in women who benefited little from their own experiences in the formal education system. The more diffuse effects of this development on families and on the community should not be underestimated.

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