



# Women in Industry and Community Health in Australia

by Sevgi Kilic

Women in Industry and Community Health (WICH) originally named Action for Family Planning (AFP), is a Melbourne based organization working with immigrant women in the industrial setting. It has records of experiences immigrant women workers have in the area of access, equity and social justice regarding aspects of their life related to health, social, welfare and industrial rights. It is a feminist organization established and run by and for immigrant women to meet their expressed needs in these areas and to encourage participation at all levels of the organization towards the empowerment of immigrant women.

In 1977, when AFP started, it began a pilot factory education programme on health matters and family planning, and a lay educators training course. Immigrant women were recruited as lay educators through formal and informal networks in the various communities. Pilot factory visits were conducted in 1978-1979.

In 1980-1992, AFP had become an accepted, respected and extensively sought after innovative programme. It got the support of relevant community organisations, professional bodies and unions. It had two purposes:

- develop a close working relationship; and
- lobby and take delegations to politicians and bureaucrats for continued funds.

Through lobbying and enlisting support from a wide range of networks, the issues of concern

to immigrant women workers were brought to the community.

When AFP changed its name to Women in Industry and Community Health (WICH), it changed its direction from a specific focus on family planning and contraception to general women's health and industrially related information.

Today, WICH is committed to be responsive to the expressed needs of immigrant women and to practice first and foremost this commitment in their organization.

For more information, please contact:

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