



OUR BODIES OURSELVES

FALL 2007 NEWSLETTER



INSPIRING A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

◆ The Global Impact of a Grassroots Nonprofit The Global Translation and Adaptation Program Continues to Grow

The past year has seen exciting growth for the Global Translation and Adaptation Program, which assists women's groups in translating and culturally adapting *Our Bodies, Ourselves* worldwide. In September 2007, Women's Health in St. Petersburg published an electronic Russian adaptation,



Lidia Simbirtseva,
coordinator of the
recently published
Russian adaptation

making the latest health and medical information available to girls, women, and men living in Russia and Russian-speakers around the world. The coordinators are working with OBOS and the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights to increase international visibility. Check out www.womenhealth-spb.org to view this edition and help expand its reach and impact.

The Tanzania Home Economics Association, which is developing a Kiswahili adaptation for East Africa,

also launched its project in 2007 and continues to draw on local resources; women from surrounding communities and policy makers from different levels of local and central government are increasing the book's cultural relevance. Of special importance, elders and traditional healers are also bringing their long-accrued wisdom and understanding of complementary health practices. Once the material is published in 2009, coordinators hope to expand distribution in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique, and are building networks in these countries.

Adapting *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is an ambitious undertaking for many of our overseas partners, and challenges can range from shoestring budgets to censorship and pro-natalist government policies, war conditions to restrictive beliefs and practices. In Nepal, for example, despite ongoing political turmoil and persecution from community officials, the Women's Rehabilitation Center is resolutely adapting the book into booklets for grassroots educational outreach. Partners in India, Israel, Nigeria, and Turkey also surmounted challenges

to significantly increase access to women's health information and advocate for policy reform in their communities. We eagerly anticipate the publication of Nepali and Turkish editions in 2008.

On behalf of our global partners, the Program's Boston-based staff leverages OBOS's 35-year experience in women's health publishing, and provides technical assistance on how to plan, produce, and distribute their adapted materials, implement community outreach, and organize for change. While our sub-granting initiative, supported by the World Bank, Ipas, and the Schocken Foundation, continues to bring most of the necessary funds to partners overseas, the Program's Boston-based work still needs your support. **This year our goal is to raise at least \$20,000 in individual contributions for the Global Translation/Adaptation Program. Your support will enable us to sustain our technical assistance and ensure that girls and women worldwide have access to evidence-based and culturally appropriate information on their health and sexuality.**

For information on how you can support the global editions, please contact Sally Whelan, Program Manager, at sally@bwhbc.org. For general information on the Global T/A Program please contact Sally Whelan or Ayesha Chatterjee, Program Associate at ayasha@bwhbc.org.



A public health nurse-midwife facilitates a discussion about the Kiswahili adaptation to involve community women in the project.



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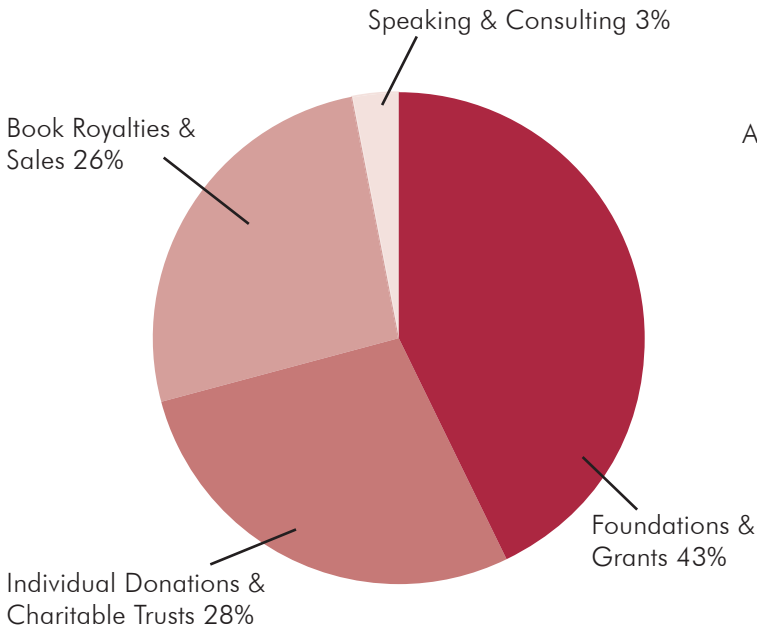
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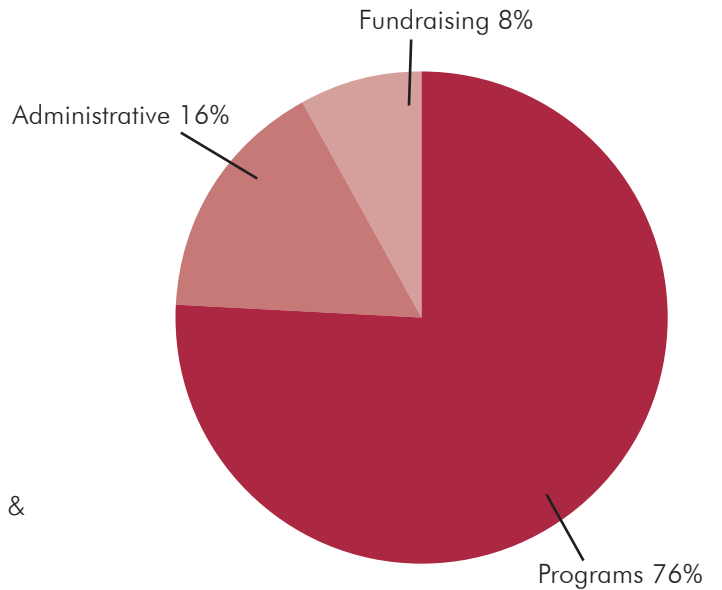
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◆ OBOS Funding Sources and Expenses for Fiscal Year 2007



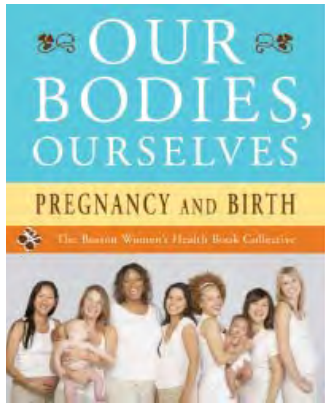
Funding Sources



Expenses

New Pregnancy and Birth Book

In March 2008, with the help of colleagues around the country, we will launch a major effort to alter the public discourse on childbirth with the publication of *Our Bodies, Ourselves: Pregnancy and Birth*. Publicity for the book, along with community-based events featuring local caregivers, will provide ample opportunity to debunk many of the myths that now pervade mainstream media portrayals of childbirth.



Here's just one example of the misleading messages that now appear regularly in magazines and elsewhere: "Maintain the vaginal tone of a teenager - have a c-section." We are

also confronting a growing trend to deny women the option of a vaginal birth after a previous cesarean section, even as the maternal mortality rate has risen in the United States for the first time in decades.

The book provides practical, evidence-based information that will foster better decisions by pregnant women. It also draws attention to the ongoing crises in maternity care and advocates for more midwifery services and other measures critical to best meeting women's needs.

Interested in promoting the book in your area? Contact Wendy Brovold at wendy@bwhbc.org.

OBOS Executive Director Receives Honorary Doctorate



Our Bodies Ourselves Executive Director, Judy Norsigian with Boston University President Robert Brown (L) and Alan Leventhal, chairman of the Boston University Board of Trustees (R) at Boston University's May commencement where Judy was conferred an honorary doctorate. Other honorees were Steven Chu, 1997 Nobel laureate, director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and professor of Physics and Molecular and Cellular Biology at the University of California, Berkeley; Bill Kovach, former New York Times Washington Bureau Chief; renowned artist Brice Marden; Samuel O. Thier, M.D., former chief executive officer of Partners HealthCare System and president of Massachusetts General Hospital; and former Alliance Capital CEO, Citicorp Chief Investment Officer, and current Boston University Trustee Peter H. Vermilye.

OBOS Recognized by the American College of Nurse-Midwives

At a gala celebrating 30 years of legalized nurse-midwifery in Massachusetts, Judy Norsigian and Gene Declercq (from the faculty of the Boston University School of Public Health) received awards from the American College of Nurse-Midwives. Judy received an award on behalf of Norma Swenson (another co-founder of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective), herself, and the whole Our Bodies Ourselves organization.

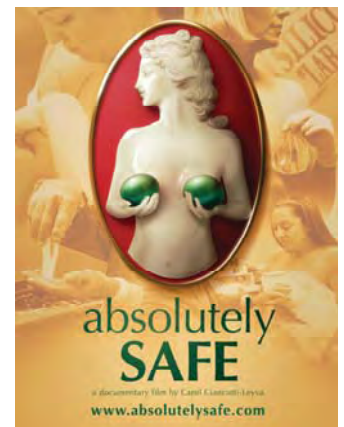


Flanking Judy and Gene are Jo-Anna Rorie (left) and Mary Barger (right), also faculty members at the Boston University School of Public Health.

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A Voice for Women's Perspectives

Our Bodies Ourselves continues to provide speakers to several dozen campuses a year and for diverse audiences in other settings as well. Op eds, letters, and articles co-authored by OBOS staff have appeared in such newspapers as the *Boston Globe*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, and the *Washington Post*. Currently, we are working with other women's organizations to ensure that debates about health care reform include women's perspectives and needs. More recently, we collaborated with *Absolutely Safe* director Carol Ciancutti-Leyva and helped to arrange a screening of this powerful new film at the Museum of Fine Arts in early 2008.



Absolutely Safe reveals that the conversation on breast implant safety is far more complex than simple pros and cons. This documentary is the story of everyday women who find themselves and their breasts in the tangled and confusing intersection of health, money, science, and beauty. Check our website for the film screen date and time.

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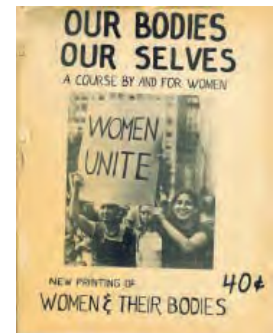
Mavi Kalem, coordinators of the *Our Bodies, Ourselves* adaptation project in Turkey, developed a badge and an accompanying flyer (see below) for an outreach campaign with young women and girls in Istanbul.

- I am the one who makes my own decisions
- I am entitled to climb a tree, ride a bicycle and do whatever sport I want
- I am the one who decides on what I wear
- I have the right to access to medical information and health services
- I am the one who decides on my weight
- I have right to live my own sexual identity
- I am the only one to have a say on my sexuality and fertility
- I am entitled to enjoy the public sphere



Online Information You Can Trust

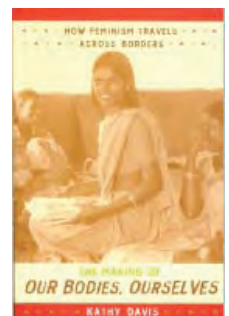
The *Our Bodies Ourselves* website (www.ourbodiesourselves.org) continues to provide trustworthy and up-to-date information on women's health to an ever-growing audience. The site, which receives more than 80,000 visitors a month, includes in-depth health materials and resources as well as information about our publications and the work of our organization. It was recently cited in a Washington Post article examining the increasing number of women seeking health information online. Newer additions to this site include information on how to understand and interpret research results, excerpts from Kathy Davis' new book (see below), and the entire first edition (1970) of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, titled *Women and Their Bodies*.



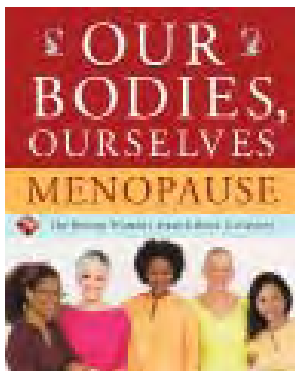
Our website's homepage features the fabulous *Our Bodies, Our Blog*. Written by journalist Christine Cupaiuolo and medical librarian Rachel Walden, the blog covers far-ranging topics from plastic surgery packages for new mothers ("Marketing the Mommy Makeover") to the continuing rise in cesarean sections ("Curtailing the Scalpel") to the health care positions of the presidential candidates ("Women's Voices and the Democratic Presidential Debate"). Interested in reading more? You can sign up for daily email delivery at www.ourbodiesourblog.org.

"The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves"

In the new book *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders*, author Kathy Davis explores the history of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and its unique international trajectory by describing how it has been adapted by women's groups across the globe. She draws from contemporary feminist theory on the body, epistemology and feminist critiques of science, and postcolonial theory to provide a grounded analysis of how feminist knowledge and political practice actually travel. In her book, Davis argues that *Our Bodies, Ourselves* could never have been so influential if it had just been a popular manual on women's health; rather, its distinctive epistemology - inviting women to use their experiences to produce situated critical knowledge about their bodies and health - has been integral to its global appeal and influence. Please visit www.ourbodiesourselves.org for ordering information.



Menopause Book Update



ISBN Touchstone • 0-7432-7487-3

Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause continues to migrate off bookstore shelves and into the hands of readers across the country. A year after its release, websites geared toward baby boomers (for example www.teebeedee.com) continue to review the book. The Reference Shelf, a display and promotional service company, now showcases *Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause* at library conferences across the country. They report considerable enthusiasm from reference librarians, who deal directly with library users and play a major role in deciding which reference titles libraries purchase.

Stay Informed

Interested in getting more frequent updates on OBOS? Sign up for our email newsletter! Just scroll to the bottom of our homepage, type in your email address, and hit "Go." It's that easy!

www.ourbodiesourselves.org

The Global Translation/Adaptation Program: Increasing global access to culturally appropriate women's health information



- Excerpts of different cultural adaptations and other publications inspired by *Our Bodies, Ourselves* are now available online to women and girls all over the world
- Topics include physiology and anatomy, sexuality, birth control, abortion, pregnancy and childbirth, sexually transmitted infections, infertility, menopause, and violence
- For excerpts in Albanian, Polish, and French (for French-speaking Africa), visit www.ourbodiesourselves.org and stay tuned for more in Russian and Nepali

◆ Thank you OBOS Donors: 10/1/06 - 9/30/07

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