

OBJECT

**Women not
Sex Objects**

Annual Report

2009-2010

Chair's Report

For the Year Ended Aug 31st 2010

Thank You

Once again OBJECT has had an extremely successful year making impact far beyond what might be expected of such a small organisation. This is due to the initiative, expertise and enormous commitment of all OBJECT's paid staff and volunteers and I would like to formally thank all of them for their hard work.

I would also like to applaud our activists for all their creative ideas and enthusiasm in regularly organising Feminist Fridays and other actions to challenge the creeping pornification of our society. I would also like to thank the members of our Management Committee who volunteer their time and skills to help to steer OBJECT along the difficult path of becoming a larger and more structured organisation.

Successes

Our key successes this year included: ensuring the passing of two new laws on the sex industry; an end to Job Centres advertising sex industry work; several awards; highly successful grass roots activism and ongoing coverage in leading media.

Goodbyes

This year we said "au revoir" with great regret to Sandrine Leveque, our superbe lobbyist for the last 2 years. At the beginning of this year we also said farewell to our membership co-ordinator, Bernadette Hayes – who achieved the mountainous task of developing our membership system from scratch. At the end of the year we bid farewell to Matt McCormak Evans, who took over from Bernadette, and has now headed off to study for a Masters, setting up the Anti-porn Man Project in the process! From the Management Committee we said goodbye to Ellie Cumbo and Anne Kazimirski..

Hellos

We were thrilled to welcome Polly Toynbee as our first patron and Rebecca Morden, of Scary Little Girls Productions, as our 'Ambassador'. We were joined by Clair Yates who took on fundraising, Claire Harries our new membership co-ordinator, and Suvi Ramo as our new fundraising assistant. Silvia Murray-Wakefield took on the role of virtual moderator, overseeing our buzzing facebook and yahoo groups. We co-opted Alison Dear onto the Management Committee, co-ordinator of Feminist Fridays, to act as the Committee's activist representative and Sareyah Hadian, a lawyer and keen activist who is now leading our Fundraising Working Party.

Outlook

The outlook is grim for the whole voluntary sector with the new coalition government's agenda of cuts. Research indicates that women are going to bear the brunt of the recession and cutbacks in many areas. Nevertheless, OBJECT is remaining positive in its commitment to continue campaigning against the objectification of women. We established ourselves as a company limited by

guarantee in July, and our Articles define our key objectives as:-

- To work for public benefit and the advancement and extension of human rights by combating the type of depiction of women by elements of the media and popular culture that perpetrates, propagates and reinforces oppression, discrimination and exploitation.
- To work for the advancement of equality by promoting good practice in gender relations that will ensure a safe, just and inclusive environment for all.
- To advance education by promoting awareness and understanding of the harmful impact of media stereotyping on social belief systems and the resulting damaging consequences to individuals and society in general.

Despite the difficult funding climate OBJECT managed to secure over £38,000 in funds - £17,000 from grants and over £20,000 from membership and donations. At the end of the financial year we also received grants totaling £75,000 for the next 2 years. This together with the support of our members, generous donations from supporters and money generated through fundraising events, means we are confident that we can continue to work towards our goals.

Wendy Davis, Chair OBJECT

Campaigns

Stripping the Illusion

After a 2 year campaign by OBJECT and the Fawcett Society, the law on how lap dancing clubs are licensed was changed. Local Councils are now no longer forced to license them in the same way as cafes but can instead choose to license them as part of the sex industry.

**STRIPPING
THE ILLUSION**

Lap Dancing Campaign

Campaign Highlights

JAN 2010. House of Lords passes the new laws on lap dance club licensing.

FEB 2010. Government announces that *existing* clubs will also come under new licensing law – an issue that had been heavily challenged by the industry.

March 2010. London Mayor's strategy to end violence against women and girls:

'We will support boroughs in ensuring that the proliferation of lap dancing clubs is controlled. We will also champion any police operations that target lap dancing clubs to investigate any misconduct or criminal activity.'

April 2010. Law comes into effect

From April 2010: Local Authorities start consulting with local residents and others as to whether to take up this licensing and how to implement it. We lobbied many councils directly, including responding to several consultations and helped individuals and groups across the UK lobby their authority for reform.

July 2010: Toolkit. OBJECT launches its first toolkit to help local people ensure their council to take up the new licensing regime.

The Future? Over the next few years the campaign will be very much at the local level as we help local people lobby their local council.

Demand Change!

Demand Change! was set up by OBJECT and specialist provider, EAVES, to challenge the myths around the sex industry and to call for policies to end the exploitation of the sex industry.



Our most pressing priority was to ensure new legislation to criminalise the users of people pimped or trafficked or otherwise forced or coerced into prostitution. This controversial Bill had been debated in Parliament over the course of 2009 and its very existence was on a knife's edge in the final debate in the House of Lords...

Campaign highlights

Jan 2010. Law Passed – House of Lords votes through new law. On the eve of the debate we premiered testimonies from women who had exited prostitution. This film was mentioned twice in the subsequent debate in the Lords. On the morning of the debate we protested outside Parliament with giant cardboard cut outs representing pimps and punters carrying the slogan 'vote for women not pimps and punters'.



March 2010. Mayor's Strategy on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls launched:

'The Mayor will consider developing a public awareness campaign aimed at deterring paying for sex

will work .. towards clamping down on paying for sex

will ensure that the Police get tougher with men who buy sexual services'

April 2010. Law Comes into Effect – We mark the introduction of the new law by organising campaigning organisations to join the Deputy Mayor, Kit Malthouse and hand out 'Court Summons' to passers by in Central London.



"I want to thank all the organisations including Eaves Housing and OBJECT which came together to support the government."

Alan Campbell, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Crime Reduction

July 2010. Bradford Murders. Yet another tragic sluce of murders of women in prostitution, by 'an ordinary John', highlighted the extraordinary dangers of the sex industry. Countering misguided calls to 'protect women by legalising the industry' we organised the sending of hundreds of letters to the Prime minister, Deputy PM and other leading political figures. These outlined the need to support women to exit prostitution whilst focussing on criminalising the demand

Joining Up The Dots

Joining Up The Dots is our most overarching campaign. It seeks to make the links between sex object culture and the sexist attitudes which underpin inequality and violence; between lobbying and grass roots activism. Armed with £5,000 grant money from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust we set out to do just that. Our election Charter calling on MPs to address media objectification culminated in the Government removing ads for the sex industry for Job Centre Plus.

Campaign Highlights

Feb 2010. Sexualisation Review – Input into the Government's *Sexualisation Review of Young People*. This contains nearly a dozen pages of recommendations on improving media responsibility.

March 2010. The Mayor's Strategy. OBJECT input into the *London Mayor's Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls*. Alongside commitments relating to lap dancing and the sex industry, the strategy also addresses other key OBJECT areas.

'The Mayor will galvanise grass roots and community debate on the culture of sexualisation, and how it reinforces attitudes and behaviours that support violence against women.'

May 2010 Election Charter - Launch of OBJECT's Election Charter on Women and the Media. This calls on MPs to take steps to ensure a more socially responsible media. Over a dozen MP candidates sign, including leading figures such as Diane Abbott (later candidate for the Labour party leader) and Lynne Featherstone (now the Equalities Minister).

OBJECT CHARTER ON WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

OBJECT CALLS ON ALL MPs TO:

1. RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR A **SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MEDIA** WITH RESPECT TO THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN
2. SUPPORT A MECHANISM TO REVIEW THE CURRENT MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND RECOMMEND A PROCESS FOR CHANGE
3. ENSURE LADS' MAGS AND THE DAILY SPORT ARE COVERED, PLACED ON THE TOP SHELF, WITH CONTENTS EITHER **APPROPRIATELY REGULATED OR AGE RESTRICTED**
4. END THE ADVERTISING OF **SEXUAL SERVICES** IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA, SUCH AS NEWSPAPERS, AND SEX INDUSTRY JOBS IN JOB CENTRE PLUS

www.object.org.uk info@object.org.uk PO Box 50373 London W4 3ZP

**Pimp
Centre
plus**

August 2010. Job Centre Success. After ongoing lobbying by OBJECT alongside Eaves, the new coalition Government announces that Government Job Centres would no longer carry ads for work in the sex industry. So adverts for webcam work, stripping, massage parlours or escort agencies will soon be a thing of the past.

More Lobbying – Party Conference Season

It was also a busy year for us during party conference season:

Greens. Green Party Conference Fringe: Vote in favour of changing party policy to criminalise demand. *DEMAND CHANGE!* fringe meeting with Party leader Caroline Lucas saw majority vote for Greens to tackle demand for prostitution.

Lib Dems. Lib Dem Party Conference Fringe: Support for *DEMAND CHANGE!* saw considerable support to outlaw the buying and selling of women for sex.

Conservatives. *DEMAND CHANGE!* held fringe meeting at Conservative Party Conference, while protestors leafleted outside.

And more ...

We presented at numerous debates, seminars and educational workshops throughout the year. Highlights included:



March 2010 Ruskin college - 'The Women's Liberation Movement at 40'
A 2 day discussion event, with Key Note speakers Sheile Rowbotham, Beatrix Campbell and Kristin Aune. OBJECT was thrilled to be part of the young feminist panel.

March 2010. Book launch - 'The Equality Illusion'. OBJECT spoke at the launch of this new feminist book by Kat Banyard, former policy officer with the Fawcett Society, with whom we worked closely during the *Stripping the Illusion* Campaign.

March 2010. Launch - UK Feminista - We were proud to speak at the launch of UK Feminista, established by Kat Banyard to promote grass roots feminist action UK-wide.

ACTIVISM

On Line Activism

Our yahoo and facebook groups and Twitter went from strength to strength – challenging numerous sexist ads, articles and more.

Feminist Fridays

Feminist Fridays were conceived as a simple way for groups across the UK to take action against Lads' Mags. And this year's theme was handed to us on a platter by Tesco's. This lads' mag-selling supermarket chain announced that it was going to ban shoppers from wearing pyjamas in its stores 'as offensive'.

Taking Action!



Tesco - porn is more harmful than pyjamas!

The stage was set for teddy bear-brandishing, pyjama-clad activist to conga down the aisles of Tescos across the country asking 'what's more offensive - pyjamas or porn?'

So successful were these actions that the video of this protest has been screened at film festivals, received over 10,000 hits on YouTube and held up as a model of positive activism by OXFAM.

Other Grass Roots Action

We ran, or were present at, numerous grass roots actions and events throughout the year, including:

Christmas 2009. Christmas Carols - Launch subversive Christmas Carol, appropriately, at our protest outside the Spearmint Rhino Christmas Party.



Sept 2009. Feminism in London - Ran a workshop on feminist activism training.

March 2010. Million Women Rise - Take part and speak at Million Women Rise - an annual event to mark International Women's Day.

Nov 2009. Reclaim the Night. Presence at Reclaim the Night, a rally to raise awareness of violence against women. This year's event was particularly dear to OBJECT as it was here that we were awarded the Emma Humphrey's Memorial Prize.



University Beauty Pageants. Collaborated with universities and NUS Women across the country to protest against the reintroductions of beauty pageants on university campuses. Spoke on various panels and to the media and helped organise dynamic protests outside events.

Union Support

UNISON Women's Committee continued to be one of our most prodigious supporters, including providing £2,000 to fund educational materials.



UNISON Women and UNISON National Delegates Conference passed motions supporting both the *Demand Change!* and *Stripping the Illusion* campaigns.

In the Media

We were featured in a dazzling array of leading media – including the front page of the Observer. Coverage ranged from More 4 News and Women's Hour covering 'Pimp Centre Plus'; through BBC News debates with lads' mags editors; to the Guardian and Times coverage of Feminist Fridays and OBJECT featured in debates with BBC Radio 4 and The Moral Maze on prostitution.



More Here:

BBC News: Lads' mags - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgqr6GQDci4>

Channel 4 news::Anti-porn activism on death of Penthouse founder - <http://www.channel4.com/news/the-controversial-legacy-of-penthouse-founder-bob-guccione>

The Times: Feminist Fridays - http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/article6739270.ece

The Observer: 'The New Feminists' <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/15/meet-the-new-feminists>

Woman's Hour: Prostitution and Job centres - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00t6ft0> and http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/01/2010_12_thu.shtml?rss

BBC Radio 4 The Moral Maze: Prostitution - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nywwg>

Funding



The Allen Lane Foundation

We received a total of just over £17,000 in grant income. This represented only 1/3 of last year's grant income, when grants made up the vast majority of our total income. Fortunately the work of our fundraising team went a long way towards compensating for this shortfall. Over £20,000 was raised from membership and donations – more than half our income for the year.

Grants

At a time when it was particularly difficult time to secure grants, we were very pleased to receive funding totalling £15,000 from the Allen Lane Foundation (for the *Demand Change!* Campaign) and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (for *Joining up the Dots*). We also received £1,000 from the Garden Court Chambers Social Fund and were thrilled to receive £2,000 in support from Unison.

At the very end of the year we received the welcome news that we would gain a total of £75,000 in grant money for the following 2 years. This was from Trust for London, to continue our lap dancing-related work and from The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, towards core costs.

Membership

We gained over £6,000 in memberships, with our membership increasing to just over 250.

Fundraising

We raised just over £14,000 from donations, appeals and fundraising events.

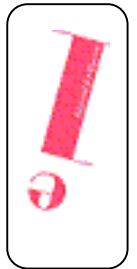


Nov 2009 – Hallowe'en Fundraiser. *Scary Little Girls Productions* run by our 'Ambassador', Becca Morden, put on a spooky fundraiser. Floating down an eerily silent River Thames on a barge, supporters were entertained by performers reading ghost stories while sipping brandy and hot chocolate. Over £500 was raised.

May 2010. Stand Up For Women. Comedian Kate Smurthwaite along with the Comedy Store hosted a fabulous 'Stand Up For Women' – an all-female stand up comedy fundraiser. Talented emerging comic names raised nearly £2,000 for OBJECT. Later in the year, we were thrilled to later be chosen as the beneficiary of the Funny Women Awards, the leading award ceremony for female comedians, to be held in Sept 2010.



Winter 2009/10. £4K Appeal - A highly successful appeal saw supporters generously funding the £4K shortfall from the loss of a Capacity Builders grant – funding which was withdrawn from all grant holders. This appeal was spearheaded by the generous support of Julia Hobsbawm of Editorial Intelligence which included hosting a discussion evening on feminism and pornography with speakers Diane Abbott, MP; Caitlin Moran of the Times and writer/pshychoanalyst, Susie Orbach.



Spring/Summer 2010. Run for OBJECT.

Numerous supporters raised nearly £2,000 in various sporting events across the UK, including the Ironman, 10K and Women's 5K Hyde Park run.



Yogathon. We were also honoured that the British Wheel of Yoga supported us with a sponsored 'yogathon', raising nearly £500.

Awards

An incredibly successful year was capped off through being awarded the Emma Humphrey's Memorial Prize for our work on violence against women; a Government-backed, Capacity Builders Award and 'highly commended' in the Third Sector Charity Awards.



The Management Committee

Thank you to everyone who served on OBJECT's Management Committee between Sep 1st 2009 and Aug 31st 2010:

Jeremy Coutinho

Jeremy has served on the Management Committee since OBJECT's inception. A manager in a mental health hospital, he has extensive experience of change and performance management.

Ellie Cumbo

Ellie currently works in the GLA and is a trainee barrister and former campaigns officer for the Lib Dem's Gender Equality Task Force.

Wendy Davis, Chair

Wendy is the former Director of the Women's Design Service, with a wealth of experiences from school governor to trusteeship of numerous organisations.

Alison Dear, Activist Rep

Alison is a staunch activist, taking the lead in co-ordinating Feminist Fridays. She serves as 'Activist Representative' on the Management Committee.

Sareyeh Hadian, Secretary

A lawyer, long term Object supporter and activist and talented violinist, now runs OBJECT's Fundraising Working Group.

Anne Kazimirski

Anne is a Research Director at the National Centre for Social Research and a member of various human rights groups such as local Amnesty groups where she co-ordinates fundraising and events.

Janice Williams, Vice Chair

With a background in HR Management, Jan is now an independent parenting consultant and coach. She is a committed activist and runs OBJECT's Educational Working Group.