SUPPORTING WOMEN in their Leadership Journeys
To access the Resource Guides go to www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/professional-pathways/leadership-continuum/women-in-leadership
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Foreword

It is with much pleasure that I introduce this Compendium and the accompanying Resource Guides for Supporting Women in their Leadership Journeys.

The CEOM’s vision for leadership in Catholic schools is expressed in the statement,

Our goal is to promote and develop shared, visionary and inspirational leadership, where leaders at all levels will inspire, encourage and support their colleagues to reflect on and improve their practice to improve student learning. We aim, too, to promote a culture of creativity and effective innovation, where leaders will empower each other and their colleagues to explore new and improved structures and approaches to teaching and learning. 2011–2015 Directions for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

The materials in the Compendium and in the Resource Guides are grounded in a series of professional learning programs offered by the CEOM in the period 2009–2013. They are further contexted in current research about the obstacles faced by women who aspire to leadership and they provide practical support and advice on how to overcome them. They serve as an encouragement to women in Catholic schools to step up to leadership and expand their leadership roles.

What is unique to the Resource Guides is their reliance on, and indeed valuing of, the wisdom of women leaders in Catholic schools – a wisdom that only women who have experienced the journey of leadership can provide. The CEOM extends its appreciation to the women leaders who have been involved in the research, dialogue and presentation of these materials.

School leaders – men and women – are encouraged to work together to think creatively about the ways the materials can be used to support women on their staff aspiring to leadership. I commend this publication to you and trust that it will continue Catholic education’s long and proud history of supporting women into and in leadership.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education
Catholic Education Office Melbourne
1 Introduction

... a more balanced representation of men and women in leadership and decision-making roles will mean that organisations are making better use of the full range of available talent and better meeting the needs of both men and women at work. Improving gender balance is both smart economics and good human rights. CENTRE FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, JULY 2010

This Compendium and the accompanying Resource Guides explore the research background and specific contexts shaping the opportunities for, and the experiences of, women taking up leadership responsibilities in the school sector. The materials invite existing school leaders, both men and women, to recognise their potential for identifying, encouraging and mentoring women colleagues to achieve their leadership aspirations and potential.

As the evidence presented in the materials herein attest, the number of women leaders in Catholic schools (principals and deputy principals), compared to the number of women teachers in schools, is quite disproportionate. There is a strong case to be made that dedicated and targeted support for women is essential to effectively achieve more representative and sustained high-quality leadership in schools.

1.1 THE COMPENDIUM
This Compendium presents summary information about key research programs and initiatives that have influenced and continue to influence initiatives of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) that are directed to empowering and supporting women in their leadership aspirations. The Compendium also offers:

- trend data about gender and leadership roles in Catholic education, 2007–2012
- information about some key obstacles to leadership progression for women that have been gleaned through research and a suite of CEOM professional learning activities between 2009 and 2013.

1.2 THE RESOURCE GUIDES
The Resource Guides, seven in total, offer information and resources to enable women to address the challenges they face on their leadership journey. The materials are strongly grounded in a series of professional learning programs offered by the CEOM in the period 2009–2013.

The first program, in 2009, was titled Women in Leadership. It was developed and implemented in partnership with Dr Barbara Watterston, the Deputy Executive Director of the Centre for Strategic Education (CSE) in Victoria, and Dr Trinidad Hunt and Lynne Truair, co-founders of Élan Enterprises LLC, based in Hawaii.

In 2011, building on the success of the Women in Leadership program, a unique leadership forum was offered to the participants, titled Inspiring Leadership for Women: Round Table Forum. It aimed to deepen previous learning, to investigate key issues faced by women in their leadership roles, and to provide practical advice and resources to address the issues.

The Resource Guides bring together the learning generated through these programs. They draw on the wisdom and leadership journeys of the participants and they incorporate many of the strategies, resources and advice offered by the program facilitators, particularly Trinidad Hunt, of Élan Enterprises LLC. The Resource Guides also present relevant research pertaining to each of the issues explored.
Since 2004, the CEOM has actively promoted strategic capacity building to support the diversity, development and growth of the leadership pool in Catholic education. Whereas previous leadership development strategies predominantly targeted those already in principalship, this recent era has encompassed a broader leadership development focus to support the generation of a distributed pool of leaders in Catholic schools.

CEOM strategies for leadership capacity building have featured three key dimensions:

- research (commissions, scans, reviews)
- resource development and support
- professional learning.

### 2.1 RESEARCH

#### Local contexts

In 2003, research published by the Australia Catholic University (ACU) on leadership succession in Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian Catholic primary schools affirmed the under-representation of women in the ranks of principalship and found that many women were unwilling to apply for principalship (Carlin et al. 2003).

This research, often referred to as the ‘VSAT Study’, was a key reference informing the development of the CEOM 2005–2008 Leadership Action Plan. The Plan highlighted ‘women and leadership’ as one of ten priority areas for development and recommended three key strategic interventions – the provision of face-to-face and online networking opportunities; the establishment of a mentoring strategy specifically to support women aspiring to principalship; and the investigation of other educational organisations’ programs and structures to support women. In the ensuing years, aspects of these recommended interventions were actioned. The belief that these recommendations continued to be relevant was an impetus for the work undertaken to create this resource.

The CEOM subsequently commissioned a further study and worked in partnership with the ACU to investigate the needs of women aspirants in becoming competent and confident applicants for principalship. Data was gathered through a questionnaire and follow-up interviews of 70 women from across Victoria, with 80 per cent of respondents from the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The report was titled ‘Strategies to encourage women in Catholic schools to apply for principalship’ (Neidhart & Carlin 2008). It identified an additional series of recommended actions to encourage women to apply for principalship, targeting three levels of ‘potentially active participants’:

- System level (system authorities)
- School level (principals)
- Individual level (women aspiring to leadership).

A direct outcome of these recommendations was the inclusion of the original 2009 Women in Leadership professional learning program in an increasing array of CEOM leadership development initiatives.

#### National and international contexts


With the evidence pointing to an expected shortage of school principals and leaders in the wake of ‘baby-boomer’ retirement, the imperative for encouraging and supporting women to take up leadership was well informed by the findings of research by Blackmore, Thomson and Sachs (2006). Another researcher, Riley, estimated that up to 70% of Australia’s 10,000 principals will reach retirement age within the next five years (Riley 2012).

A research report sponsored by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), titled, *Staff in Australia’s Schools 2010: Main Report on the Survey* (McKenzie et al. 2011), provided a detailed picture of the 2010 Australian teacher workforce, comprising comparative and updated data following a previous survey conducted in 2006–07. Some important statistics regarding the 2010 workforce in Catholic schools nationally were:

- female teachers made up 82 per cent of the teaching force in all Australian Catholic primary schools and 57 per cent in Catholic secondary schools
- 82 per cent of Catholic primary school teachers were female but only 58 per cent of Catholic primary school leaders were female
- 57 per cent Catholic secondary teachers were female but only 41 per cent were in leadership roles
- between 2007 and 2010, there was a 2 per cent decrease in the number of female leaders in Catholic primary schools and a 4 per cent increase in the number of female leaders in Catholic secondary schools
• fewer women than men were aspiring to leadership, with much higher proportions of male teachers indicating they intended to apply for a leadership position in the next three years
• overall, leadership positions continued to be unattractive to both male and female teachers: only 11 per cent of primary teachers and 9 per cent of secondary teachers intended to apply for either a principal or deputy principal position in the next three years
• women tended to stay at the deputy principal level, although more female deputies were considering principalship than their male counterparts
• the three most important factors expressed for all primary and secondary teachers that deterred them from applying for a leadership position were: ‘I want to remain working mainly in the classroom’; ‘the time demands of the job are too high’ and ‘I would have difficulty maintaining a satisfactory work/life balance’.

In an article titled, ‘Re-positioning women in educational leadership’, Blackmore (2009) states that:

... research in Australia as elsewhere indicates that there is a ‘disengagement’ with leadership, seen in the diminished numbers of applicants for formal leadership positions in schools and in universities, and that women in particular are tending toward refusal (Blackmore & Sachs 2007, Gronn & Rawlings-Sanjaei 2003). Two issues emerge. One is the extent and nature of the workload involved with the principalship and middle management in universities and the physical, emotional as well as ethical cost that it often brings... The second is rejection of the implicit and explicit value systems promoted in management and the politicisation of education (Blackmore 2009).

Blackmore goes on to suggest that women tend to employ collective and relational leadership practices and are not attracted to positional leadership, which is often reduced to management.

Factors relevant to the continuing gender disparity in school leadership are not just confined to Australia; they are present in research internationally. Despite apparent shifts in attitude and law, it is evident that diversity and equality in leadership has not yet been achieved. The role of women in having and raising children and maintaining the relationships that underpin family life are cited in the research as a barrier to their career progress. In presenting her research at an international conference ‘Women leading education across the continents: Sharing the spirit, fanning the flame’, Coleman (2009, p. 19) concluded that ‘... gender is an important factor that continues to differentially determine and affect the ways in which individuals operate and work and perceive each other.’

Barbara Watterston (2010) contends that gender stereotyping is still seen as the silent barrier to equality in the modern workforce. Sobehart (2009), Bassett (2009) and Coleman (2009) suggest that this is due in part to the way contemporary culture carries and reinforces history and traditions, and is also partly caused by the fact that, in general, the public tend to believe that gender equality is no longer an issue. Similarly, after attaining principalship and reflecting on the assumptions and perspectives related to the position of women in the teaching service, Culton asserts that ‘amendments to legislation do not automatically relate to perceptions of the heart and mind’ (Culton, in Watterston et al. 2010, pp. 51–52).

Bassett (2009) also argues that overt discrimination may be much less common due to legislation, however, there is a clear indication of continuing issues. She writes:

Despite broadly recognised laws and policies that support equal opportunity in the workplace, deeply held stereotypes and beliefs continue to hinder the ready progress of women ... the true challenge lies in uprooting the strongly held beliefs about the appropriateness of women in leadership roles and about their ability to carry out leadership responsibilities (Bassett, in Sobehart 2009, p. 9).

Such evidence has been a significant influence in shaping successive CEO priorities to encourage and prepare women in Catholic education to respond confidently to the possibilities and the realities of leadership.
2.2 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

An early response by the Victorian Catholic education sector to leadership capacity building – men and women – was the publication in 2005 of a Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) resource, Leadership in Catholic Schools. Development Framework and Standards of Practice – now commonly referred to as the Leadership Standards Framework (LSF). The Framework aimed to address the “growing recognition that new kinds of school leadership centred on successful student learning were required” (CECV 2005 p. 1). In the same period, the CEOM established the earlier mentioned 2005–2008 CEOM Leadership Action Plan in which “women and leadership” was identified as one of ten key areas for further work and development.

The 2007 launch of the CEOM Leadership Continuum also created significant momentum for wider engagement in school leadership. The Continuum presented possible developmental pathways via six phases of leadership – Emerging Leader, Established Leader, Aspirant Principal, Initial Principal, Experienced Principal and Mentor Principal.

The Leadership Continuum continues to provide a frame of reference for all Catholic school educators to identify their place in a distributed model of leadership. It assists existing and aspiring leaders to see opportunities and pathways to various and higher levels of leadership. Importantly, it has provided the CEOM with a defined structure for shaping and promoting targeted leadership professional learning activities.

In 2014, the commitment of the CEOM to leadership capacity building continues to be underpinned and well served by both the Leadership Standards Framework and the Leadership Continuum.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Over successive years, the CEOM has offered a range of programs and initiatives for leaders who wish to develop their leadership capabilities. These include the re:th!nk Aspirant Principal Program, the Middle Leaders Program, the Emerging Leaders Program, the Inspiring Leadership for Women program and Sponsored Study Leave. Participant registrations and feedback indicate that each of these leadership learning programs has been significant in influencing the leadership aspirations and journeys of women educators in Catholic schools.

In this mix of programs, the Inspiring Leadership for Women program emerges as a program of high impact. The participant feedback gathered from the total of 116 participants who have attended the three-day programs in the period 2009 to 2012 evaluates all aspects of the program and consistently affirms it as being of significant quality and value. In summative comments, the experience of the course has been described as “inspirational” and as an “affirming and life-changing experience.” Participant feedback via the survey questionnaire shows that, on a five-point scale where five equals excellent, 81.5 per cent rated “Content Relevance” as excellent. Furthermore, 91.67 per cent of participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt “confident and ready to utilise the understanding, knowledge and skills gained”, while 84.38 per cent strongly agreed that the program was a worthwhile investment of their time.

Given that the intent of the Inspiring Leadership for Women program is to support women to further develop their leadership capabilities and plan their leadership pathways, it is encouraging to note that recent statistics collected in the Archdiocese of Melbourne for 2012 and 2013 indicate an upward trend in the proportion of female Catholic primary school leaders (principals). This provides a direct contrast to data in the ACER study previously discussed (McKenzie et al. 2011). It could be inferred that this counter trend is evidence of the positive impact of the CEOM strategic action in recent years to highlight women and leadership.

There is good reason to support a continued and strengthened strategic focus on supporting women in their leadership aspirations within Catholic education. The Resource Guides that grew out of the Inspiring Leadership for Women programs and that accompany this Compendium are designed to facilitate such support.
In broad terms, current obstacles identified in the research for women who aspire to leadership, both in education and in the corporate world, are summarised below.

Importantly, these obstacles are also reflected in the leadership journeys of the participants in the Inspiring Leadership for Women: Round Table Forum. The wisdom and lessons learned about overcoming these obstacles are shared in the Resource Guides.

### Not feeling ready

Women often feel they must be 100 per cent qualified and job-ready for top executive positions. They give little credence to the notion that learning on the job is an essential ingredient for leadership and they tend not to apply for principalship unless they can fulfil all job requirements (Watterston 2010).

### Work–life balance

Issues pertaining to work–life balance impact women more than men. Women usually bear more domestic responsibility than men and are more likely to be the home manager. Valerio (2009) claims that in a society where two incomes are required to pay the bills, there is still an inequitable division of labour at home. She also suggests that it is often women who maintain the relationships that keep families together and to create support systems that contribute to the psychological health and overall wellbeing of the family members.

Elizabeth Broderick, a Sex Discrimination Commissioner for the Australian Human Rights Commission since 2007, points out in a number of her media releases that the ‘female life cycle’, which is often shaped by child bearing and caring responsibilities, is another aspect that makes balancing home and work more difficult for women. Most workplaces assume a male career pathway, which does not cater for women who may need to move in and out of the workforce (Broderick 2009).

### Office versus classroom

One of three major disincentives to pursuing leadership nominated by primary and secondary women in the Leadership Succession for Catholic Schools in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania study (Carlin et al. 2003) was reduced contact with teachers and children. This is reiterated in the study, Women in School Leadership: Journeys to Success (Watterston et al. 2010), which reports that many women have expressed a reluctance to consider moving beyond their teaching role for this reason. In addition, Dougherty (2009) suggests that perhaps when women see the kind of leadership style required by contemporary educational institutions, they decide that they prefer the classroom and choose to exercise leadership in other contexts where a consensus-building style is more apparent and more successful.

### Lack of role models

The lack of role models for women aspiring to senior leadership or principalship is a double bind. There are fewer women in these roles, therefore fewer role models in schools for women to learn from. Valerio (2009) writes that ‘the scarcity of female role models for women in positions of senior leadership has made it difficult for women to imagine themselves in those roles and to emulate good leadership’ (pp. 81–82).

Traditional models of leadership in schools can be ‘off-putting’ for many women. These models may be hierarchical, perpetuate outmoded leadership styles and/or demonstrate a lack of balance in work and home life. Women need role models to whom they can relate and aspire. ‘It is incumbent upon current principals to provide a positive image and role model in order to motivate future school leaders to aspire to leadership’ (Watterston 2010, p. 3).

### Gender inequalities and differences

There are gender differences that make opportunities for leadership in education less attractive for women. As mentioned earlier, the pathway to leadership is often more suited to the life patterns of males when compared to females, who may take a break in their career or work part-time to have children or provide care for their ageing parents. Broderick highlights this issue in one of her speeches:

> Perhaps the best way to illustrate the cumulative effect of gender equality over the lifecycle is to examine three points where, for many women, sex discrimination and inequality begin to “cluster” and amplify.

- First, women’s experiences of education and entering the workforce
- Second, women’s experiences of having children or other caring responsibilities
- Third, experiences around retirement (Broderick 2009).

In a survey by Coleman (2009), half of the women who responded stated that they had experienced some form of sexism or discrimination related to their career progress and appointment. Coleman also found that some women continue to face gender-related challenges once they are in a leadership position, with such challenges identified as sexism, discrimination and perceptions about their suitability for the job.
One of the key aims of the Inspiring Leadership for Women: Round Table Forum was to investigate the key issues faced by women in their leadership roles, and to provide practical advice and resources to address such issues. The Resource Guides bring together the learning generated through this program. Further information on the World Café model and Powerful Questions used at the Round Table Forum is provided as an Appendix.

4.1 THEMED ISSUES
The Resource Guides focus on seven themed issues that pertain to the leadership obstacles described above and they draw on the wisdom and leadership journeys of the participants about managing and/or overcoming these obstacles. They present relevant research pertaining to each of the issues explored and they also incorporate many of the strategies, resources and advice offered by the program facilitators, particularly those of Trinidad Hunt, Élan Enterprises LLC. The themes of the seven Resource Guides are as follows:

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4.2 STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDES
Each resource guide follows a similar format in presenting information and materials, namely:

- Exploring the issue – aspects of research and literature that highlight key contentions and possibilities
- The women say – insights, reflections and advice of women who participated in the CEOM Inspiring Women for Leadership programs, in particular the Round Table Forums, over the period 2011–2013
- Sharing the learning – some reflections and suggestions for proven strategies and resources that will assist you to respond to the issue in focus.

Users of the guides are also presented with some astute quotes, or ‘wisdom words’ from the facilitators and participants in the CEOM Inspiring Women for Leadership programs.

4.3 USING THE GUIDES
The Guides are intentionally non-prescriptive in how they could or should be used. Users are encouraged to think creatively about the ways the material can be used to direct and support themselves and other women on their respective leadership journeys.

A suggested starting point is to scan the issues and topics in each Resource Guide, choose the issues/topics of most interest and start reviewing the materials, using the hyperlink for each guide to access the material.

4.4 AN ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: A READING LIST
The Reading List will be of interest to those who value professional reading and who are seeking more knowledge and understanding of current research and data on women in leadership. Many of the references compiled in the Reading List are also cited in one or more of the Resource Guides.

The Reading List is organised according to the following categories:

- Leadership Frameworks (national, systemic and sector-based)
- Leadership Capabilities
- Women in Leadership
- Educational Leadership – Demographics and Trends.
5 References


Blackmore, J., Thomson, P. & Sachs, J 2006, The declining supply of principal applicants, Deakin University, Faculty of Education, Geelong, South Australia.


Neidhart, H & Carlin, P 2008, ‘Strategies to encourage women in Catholic schools to apply for principalship’, School of Educational Leadership, ACU and CEOM, East Melbourne.


Watterston, J., Redman, K & Watterston, B (eds.) 2010, Women in School Leadership: Journeys to Success, Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL), NSW.

The CEOM is grateful to the following people and organisations who have been highly valued and generous partners in the development of the CEOM’s professional learning programs for women in or aspiring to leadership. Their contribution to the development of this Compendium and the Resource Guides is also gratefully acknowledged.

**Trinidad Hunt, Élan Enterprises LLC**

Trinidad Hunt comes from three generations of educators. Trinidad began her professional life as an elementary school teacher. She taught for 10 years before joining a training company that she bought out 18 months later. In a career spanning 30 years, she has developed and delivered training programs for companies such as Pepsi Cola, Frito Lay, Sprint and the Royal Canadian Bank. Trinidad has taught across private, not-for-profit and educational sectors and is internationally known for her noted Leadership Dimensions Program. She has co-founded three companies with her long-time business partner Lynne Truair – Élan Enterprises LLC; Élan Asia-Pacific; and World Youth Network International (WYN), a not-for-profit organisation for students, educators, principals and parents.

Trinidad is known particularly for her anti-bullying intervention program Breaking Out of the World Game, and her Quest 4 Values curriculum for pre-primary students through Year 12. Both have been successfully implemented in a number of Archdiocese of Melbourne schools, as well as internationally. She is also known for the Hawaii Student Transition Convention, a program that each year supports the transition of 30,000 young people from primary to secondary schooling.

**Dr Barbara Watterston**

Dr Barbara Watterston has over 25 years’ experience in education and has held a number of school leadership positions in rural and metropolitan areas in Western Australia. She has managed large teams of professional consultants involving public and not-for-profit community sectors at the local, national and international levels. Prior to her arrival in Melbourne, Barbara was the General Manager of the Leadership Centre in Western Australia. Barbara’s doctoral research focussed on the impact of gender on the teaching and learning process. In 2005, she was the inaugural recipient of the Western Australian Department of Education and Training’s Women of Achievement Award. Barbara was a contributor and co-editor of Women in School Leadership: Journeys to success.

**The Centre for Strategic Education**

The Centre for Strategic Education (CSE) is the business name adopted in 2006 for the Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria (IARTV). The constituent bodies of IARTV are the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (Vic.) and the Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania (IEU). The CSE’s vision is to support, inform, influence and promote the work of the education profession locally, nationally and internationally by leading educational thinking and practice. It operates across the dimensions of policy, research and practice.
The Catholic Education Office Melbourne is grateful for the contributions of the following people to the Supporting Women in their Leadership Journeys Compendium and Resource Guides.

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Inspiring Leadership for Women: Round Table Forum facilitators and organisers
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CEOM

Acknowledgments
Women in Leadership
Presented by D. Trinidad Hunt

Everything is changing. Today, as never before, a new kind of leadership is required. Women are stepping forward to facilitate positive change. If you have ever wondered how to motivate people, how to inspire them to action, how to help them achieve their highest potential and productivity, this program is for you.

3 Day Program

Day 1: Thursday 28 May
Day 2: Friday 29 May
Day 3: Thursday 13 August

Registration 8.30am, Program 9.00am - 4.00pm

Treacy Conference Centre
126 The Avenue, Parkville Vic. 3052
The Mind

The true leader walks the land with her head in Heaven and her feet on Earth.

In this way the mind of the true leader is inspired by the greatest wisdom. Their actions are guided by the highest principles, while their hearts are touched with tenderness for human beings and the human condition.

Therefore the true leader’s influence on Earth exceeds the ordinary.

At the Inspiring Leadership for Women: Round Table Forum a World Café model was used to gather data. The World Café* is a format for hosting group dialogue. The model is based on conversations that focus on Powerful Questions. These are questions that are constructed well, have broad scope and challenge existing assumptions. The World Café model creates a setting that is a modelled on a café with seats arranged around table settings with tea, coffee and refreshments provided.

The World Café model presented three themes at the Round Table Forum, each with a set of Powerful Questions:

**Theme 1:** Leadership Journey – Stepping Stones: What are the key factors (internal and external) that supported/encouraged you in your leadership journey? What are the key factors (internal and external) that were barriers for you in your leadership journey?

**Theme 2:** Building Leadership Capacity of Women: How do we build the leadership capacity of women in education? What knowledge, skills and capabilities are most important?

**Theme 3:** Supporting Other Women in Their Leadership Journeys: What would you put into a guide for women who are considering or commencing a leadership journey that would engage, support, and empower them? How can we encourage other women to take the next step?

The World Café consisted of the following steps:

- Three tables were set up in World Café style and one theme was placed on each table. A host was assigned to each table.
- The women were divided into three groups. Each group read the question at their table, participated in conversation about the question and contributed ideas. Responses were written or drawn onto a large white sheet of paper on the table using coloured pens and highlighters.
- After a set time, the group moved to the next question and added their ideas to those of the previous group.
- The host remained at the table to share the main ideas raised and to record responses from the group.
- The groups moved around the three tables discussing and responding to each question.

The responses were collated and have contributed to the seven themes presented in the Resource Guides.

*See <www.theworldcafe.com/index.html>