Reproductive Rights Oral History Project

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID)
Geneva, Switzerland

Jane Cottingham

Interviewed by
Nicole Bourbonnais

September May 22 and June 3, 2025
Geneva, Switzerland

Background:

This project consists of oral histories with advocates prominent in the late 20th century transnational reproductive rights/women's health movement. It explores how their broader trajectory and experiences shaped their role in this movement, as well as their lives, careers and activism more broadly. The interviews thus provide material of broad relevance to those interested in histories of reproductive rights, feminism, global health, development, population control, and international activism.

Narrator:

Jane Cottingham worked at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1994 to 2009 as a technical officer and team coordinator for Gender, Reproductive Rights, Sexual Health and Adolescence in the Department of Reproductive Health and Research. Her mandate included working with women's health advocacy groups, policy-makers and scientists to ensure women's rights and gender perspectives were integrated into sexual and reproductive health research, policies and programs at international, regional and national levels.

In 1976 she co-founded ISIS, Women's International Information and Communication Service, and served as the organization's director in Geneva for 11 years. Jane is currently the Chair of the Board of Trustees of *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters* (http://www.srhm.org/about-us/). She also writes poetry and fiction. She received a Bachelor's in English and Philosophy from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom in 1969 and a Master's in Population Sciences from the Harvard School of Public Health in 1991.

Interviewer:
Nicole Bourbonnais is an Associate Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Her research explores the history of

reproduction, motherhood and the family in transnational historical perspective. She is author of *Birth Control in the Decolonizing Caribbean: Reproductive Politics and Practice on Four Islands, 1930-1970* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) and *The Gospel of Family Planning: An Intimate Global History* (Chicago University Press, 2025).

Format
2 .mp3 audio files: (1) May 3, 2025, 1:29:24, (2) June 3, 2025, 1:24:23.

Transcript:
Initial transcription produced by Otter.ai; edited and reviewed by Nicole Bourbonnais and Jane Cottingham. Any insertions made after the interview are marked by square brackets [].

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Audio recording
Bibliography: Cottingham, Jane. Interview by Nicole Bourbonnais. Audio recording, May 22 and June 3, 2025. Reproductive Rights Oral History Project, IHEID.
Footnote: Jane Cottingham, interview by Nicole Bourbonnais, audio recording, May 22 and June 3, 2022, Reproductive Rights Oral History Project, IHEID, interview 2.

Transcript
Bibliography: Cottingham, Jane. Interview by Nicole Bourbonnais. Transcript, May 22 and June 3, 2025. Reproductive Rights Oral History Project, IHEID.
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Jane Cottingham Interview 1/2, 22 May 2025

[00:00-00:27 – collection of informed consent]

Nicole Bourbonnais 00:27
So this is the first interview on May 22 2025 in Geneva with Jane Cottingham. I wanted to start by asking you to tell me a bit about your childhood, where you grew up, your parents, your family.

Jane Cottingham 00:50
I grew up northwest of London. There was a milestone marked 16 miles to Marble Arch, but we were on the edge of the countryside, which was important for me as I grew up. I spent a lot of time in the woods, and then later I had a pony of my own, which was, I felt, very lucky. It was a way of creating who I was. My father was an insurance broker, he went every day by train – we lived near the station – by train to the city of London. My mother was a housewife, she gave up her job when she got married, as women did then.

I was born in 1947 so it was just after the war. I have a brother who is nearly four years older than me, so he was born during the war. My early childhood is filled with anecdotes from my mother about having to hide in the cupboard under the stairs with the baby. They would hear the buzz bombs coming over and over. She described how you would hear the engine and if you then stopped hearing the engine, you had to count to 10, and then it would drop. They would pray that the buzz would keep going. Bombs did drop and one of them was at a golf course near us, but I don't think any fell on the houses nearby. My father, during the war, was a fire watcher. He had to actually go to the city of London and be on a roof. He had a blanket, which subsequently was in the car. We had this whole story about this blanket that he used when he was fire watching on a roof of one of the buildings in London. That was the context of my childhood. Things like sugar were rationed. In fact, sugar was the last to come off rationing. My mother had these ration books, which she showed me.

Otherwise, it was fairly peaceful. I went to a single sex school, as did my brother, as one did in England at the time, even now, I think. As I got into the teenage years, I felt it was ridiculous, I thought boys and girls should be mixed. Later I realized – when I came to feminism – that it was actually perhaps a really good thing, because it meant that whoever was in front of us, the ones who were the models, were all girls. They were strong people. We had girls teams, I was on the basketball team and swimming team, and that was really good. I think it wouldn't have been the same at all if it had been a mixed school. So I revised my opinion about that later.

Nicole Bourbonnais 04:02
And the teachers, I guess, too [were women].

Jane Cottingham 04:04
The teachers were all women at my school. I imagine they were all men at my brother's school. We were lucky, because they were private schools. My father paid a lot of money for private education, which was maybe good – who knows? I'm grateful to him, but there was something called the 11+ exam, that if you passed it, you had the possibility of going to a grammar school. At the time, there were two levels of

schools: a grammar school, which was generally (depending on where you lived) a good level of state education, or there was the secondary modern, which was less good. I passed the 11+ , and I really wanted to go to the grammar school (it wasn't far away), but my father absolutely wouldn't hear of it.

However, there was a friend in my class who decided to leave after O levels. At the time, there was something called the GCSEs and at 16, you did 10 subjects, and you had to pass, and then you went on to A levels if you wanted to do advanced level, which would allow you to go to university. After O level, this friend said, "Oh, I'm going to go to Harrow Technical College. It's a bilingual secretarial course." I thought, "Oh, this is really good. Maybe I'll do that as well." The whole idea of getting out of this rather rarefied atmosphere of all girls in this school – I thought it was a great idea, and my parents agreed. My father said "if you get a secretarial qualification, the world will be your oyster."

I think already, at about that time, I was looking at my parents' marriage, and it wasn't ideal. My mother was clearly frustrated because she was a very intelligent woman and was basically stuck at home. But that's what women did and she was dependent on my father financially. I think quite early on, about 15 or 16, I thought – and my father said something like this as well – you know, if you have a way of earning your money, you can be independent financially. That seemed so important to me. I absolutely need to be independent financially. So I did this two year secretarial course, bilingual French and English, and I had to learn Spanish as well, as another language. The headmistress of my school called my father and told him he was a wicked man for taking his clever daughter who was able to do A levels out of school. He wasn't fazed. I did this, and it was really interesting. I was very glad I did it. It meant that I was able to actually earn my living doing secretarial work. I thought I would just become a secretary.

When I got to the end of the two years, I decided, "Oh, well, maybe I would like to go to university." I should say that my brother, who was older, was "brilliant" (this is my mother's language). He got a scholarship to Oxford, and he did brilliantly, and was always nearly first in class, etc. This was a difficult thing to live up to. I think I was constantly trying. I was sort of in his shadow and so it wasn't until I got to the end of this [secretarial course], and he was already at university, I decided I actually would like to go to university.

It happened that I had two A levels, because I did French at this bilingual thing. Normally one would have one A level, but our Spanish teacher was so brilliant, and she put us all in for Spanish A level. I got that as well. I needed one other subject as you needed three A levels at the time to get to university. I worked as a secretary for a year, and I went to night school to do English, which was the obvious subject. I applied to universities, and many wouldn't take me because they were looking for high grades. But I was accepted at Reading University on the condition that I got a B in my English, which I did. In the meantime, I had been working, and managed to save money. When I went to university, because I'd done shorthanded and typing, obviously I was able to take notes very easily. It really stood me in good stead. It was interesting to be in the world of work before going to university. I still think that would behoove many people to work before going to university. It gives you a whole different view of the world.

Nicole Bourbonnais 09:28
Do you remember some of the places that you worked for as a secretary?

Jane Cottingham 09:31
I worked for the Amalgamated Dental Company. It was in Soho so I ended up being like my father, going on the train into London, and then walking, discovering Soho and discovering Carnaby Street before it became well-known. I loved going to London, it was really exciting and I was earning money and discovering that. It was a nice time, and I learned about all kinds of dental equipment. That was great. Then I went to Reading University and had a wonderful time. My father had retired by then (he was nearly 20 years older than my mother) so I was able to get a grant (a Council Grant) to go, plus I had my own savings a bit.

At university I met up with a guy who – I don't know why I teamed up with him. But anyway, when we left university, he did Fine Arts and we both got jobs in London. He was a Fine Arts student, and he happened to get a job in a motor magazine as an editor, and I got a job in a London secretarial college teaching shorthand and typing – of all things – and English literature. I did English and Philosophy. He earned twice as much as me. It really wasn't a good relationship. I wasn't happy at all, and I decided I had to change my life.

I went to do a one month training to teach English as a foreign language, because I thought I would like to go abroad. But for the jobs you had to have done a year's course – to get a good job with the British Council, for instance. Otherwise you were paid a pittance. I thought, no, this doesn't work. I applied for a job that I saw in the Sunday Times: for a social-oriented organization in Geneva looking for bilingual secretaries. I thought, I know I've got a degree, but I'll go for this anyway. I was asked for interview, and I went to see this person in the Charing Cross Hotel. They were actually looking for bilingual English and German, and I had two years of German, but anyway. In fact, the job was given to somebody else, but she turned it down, and I was next on the list. Weird sort of serendipity. I was offered the job, and in December 1971 I took a plane and came to Geneva. I had a suitcase and a guitar, and that was 54 years ago. You never leave saying: "I'll be there forever." I just thought: "Oh well, I'll do the three month trial period and then come home."

At the time (in the early '70s, 1971) I came across – and I don't know how, it might have been a good friend of mine who told me – some of the early feminist literature. There was British writer Sheila Rowbotham, who wrote *Hidden from History*. There was Juliet Mitchell, who taught English at Reading University so I knew her. She wrote the [book] *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. There was Betty Friedan, and then I came across Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, and I read these and I thought: this is me. It's not just that I'm weird and I don't fit in and I feel unhappy, but there are actually structural things going on. As I explained to you, I had this older brother, and he obviously – the world was more than his oyster. He had all these brilliant career paths, whereas I was supposed to get married and have children. I knew I didn't want to do that. So the real sense of the "second class citizen," which just completely reverberated with me. There were journals, like *Off Our Backs*, which came from the States. How did I get hold of that? I don't even know. But when I arrived in December in Geneva, I knew that there were things called consciousness raising groups, so I thought, well, I have to see if there's one here.

I worked with the Lutheran World Federation, which is housed in the Ecumenical Center with the World Council of Churches just up the road from here. I lived in Eaux-Vives, and I used to cycle up the Ferney hill. I found that there was a consciousness raising group as part of the Ecumenical Center started by some women who worked there, but they said, "Oh, no, I'm so sorry, we decided to close. We're 12, and we think

that's the best number." So I talked to one of the other secretaries, and we said: "we'll start our own." So we started a consciousness raising group in early 1972. I remember putting up a notice saying "feeling frustrated and unhappy?" We said it was open to secretaries or wives, because most of the so-called executives were men, nearly all of them. We had this meeting on whatever day it was, in the evening. The woman I started it with was living in an apartment with a large living room, so we decided to do it there. Twenty-two women turned up the first session – it was amazing. I was terribly nervous: what are we going to do? It was actually quite difficult, because most of the women had some kind of issue. In other words, they had followed their husbands here, and they felt frustrated about being in Geneva with two kids and not having a job. But there was one woman who, when we got into discussing children, said: "Oh, God wants women to have children." One of the other women who subsequently stayed in the group – she was an English woman married to an Australian pastor – said: "what's God got to do with it?" Which I thought was brilliant.

That first meeting caused me some problems, because, quite quickly, I was asked to take on a job being a documentalist, which was considerably higher in the salary scale than being a secretary. It was a super opportunity for me but then there was something blocking the job going through. It was the Controller. He was the Accounts Manager. I went to see him, Herr Krugman. It was his wife, who had been the person who said: "Oh, you know, God, wants us to have children." So she was the "spy". I said to him: "what do you have against a secretary becoming a documentalist?" And he said: "oh, I'm not against that. I'm against Jane Cottingham becoming a documentalist."

Nicole Bourbonnais 17:30
Okay.

Jane Cottingham 17:31
At least he was honest. Somehow or other, my boss was super and the thing went through, and so I was suddenly launched into this documentation project. This is way before computers, but we worked with a guy who had invented a system using the IBM computer card – the punch cards – and a series of needles. It sounds really like something out of the ark, [but] using keywords, if your document had such and such a keyword, it would get punched in hole number 25 or whatever it was. Theoretically, you could put two or three needles through and just pull up and the ones that you fished out were the documents that you needed. I mean, it sounds horrendous.

Nicole Bourbonnais 18:22
I was trying to explain a landline to my daughter, and she was like – what?

Jane Cottingham 18:30
It was really interesting, and I ended up writing a guide to the system that he called OASIS [for Open Access Information System]. We were involved in a project with different churches, and then a documentation center based in Rome called IDOC: the International Documentation on the Contemporary Church. It was set up at the time of the Vatican II Council in 1962 by various missionary priests who were working with liberation movements in countries like Brazil and in Namibia. [JC Note: IDOC was "a documentation service

supporting recognition for Church concern about social, economic and political movements throughout the world." https://www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/CX900.htm].

They decided to set up a documentation center to provide alternative information on liberation movements, of which there were many in the '60s and early '70s, so that the delegates to the Vatican II council had some kind of idea of what else was going on in their countries or the other regions of the world. My immediate boss was a Marxist, a Dutchman who had developed a Marxist analysis of information flow from the North to the South, so part of our documentation system was developing keywords that were appropriate to the church, to the liberation communities. We worked with IDOC, and we worked with a number of other groups. I suddenly was going to Rome all the time. It was really interesting.

Nicole Bourbonnais 20:16
What was the name of the organization you were working for?

Jane Cottingham 20:18
The Lutheran World Federation. So I'm still with LWF and in IDOC I met an American woman [Marilee Karl] who was working with IDOC. She'd been very involved in the civil rights movement in the States, and had also been in the Netherlands. She was thrown out of the Netherlands because she participated in some student demonstration – this is all the fallout from the '68 student revolutions in many parts of the Western world. We started talking about the documentation and [thought]: "wouldn't this be really interesting if we had a documentation center on women?" Because not only is there a North-South flow, but there's a sort of male-female flow [of information]. That's how the project that we co-founded, called ISIS, was born. In fact, Isis is the name of an Egyptian goddess, although later somebody wrote "International Sisterhood Information Service" – they tried to make it, you know, into an acronym. We founded this in 1974 and we launched it in 1976.

Nicole Bourbonnais 20:32
Can we go back a bit before?

Jane Cottingham 21:37
Of course of course.

[cross-talk]

Nicole Bourbonnais 21:46
Before we move on to the feminist stuff, one of the questions I had, partly because you mentioned the Lutheran World Federation, was about religion. Did you grow up with religion, or was that just the job you got?

Jane Cottingham 22:04
I didn't grow up in the Lutheran religion, but I was a part of the Anglican Church. My mother was a believer, and she took us to church every Sunday. It's a good question. because it's part of it. My father wasn't religious but my mother took us to church and my brother was confirmed, and then at school I started

confirmation classes. There was a point halfway through the year, when I just thought: this doesn't speak to me. I can't do this. There was a basic revolt in me about what it all really meant. I didn't get confirmed, and I thought that this was not for me. So it is surprising that I took this job with the Lutheran World Federation. You didn't have to be Lutheran. They used to get Lutheran secretaries, but the English-speaking secretaries came from the US. They realized that actually cost quite a lot of money, because Lutherans are basically German and Scandinavian. There is a big Lutheran community in the US. I don't know about Canada. It was interesting because I was in the Lutheran World Federation, but there were different departments, and I was in a new department – it was set up after the big assembly in Evian in 1970 – called the "Department of Studies."

I should have said this earlier, but within the Department of Studies, there were different sections. One of them was scholarships, but one of them was a Christian Marxist dialogue, which I thought was really interesting. This was a time when there was a lot of engagement with left wing and Marxist politics. And, of course, you know, the feminist movement at the time, I think, also grew partly out of the civil rights movement in the US, student movements, and then women saying we don't want to just do the photocopying. We have a place here. These were heady times, with a lot of social movements going on. This Department of Studies was one part of it, an offshoot. There was a section on Communication and Documentation, which the Dutch guy, Cees Hamelink, who was my boss ran, and so we were a team of four. I learned so much. I learned about the White Fathers of Namibia – I didn't even know it was a country before [laughs]. I felt I'd been so blinkered. It was a huge window on the world, coming here and working in that international context.

Nicole Bourbonnais 25:05
In school, did you learn about the British Empire and that Imperial narrative?

Jane Cottingham 25:10
Oh yes, Clive of India and all of these things, and it was never: "oh, wasn't it terrible the way we oppressed the Indians or the Africans." It was way before any of that. No, we just did history. I was talking about it with my partner [who's French] yesterday, because he said: "oh, we did history up to and beyond the Second World War." But I'm not even sure I did history of the two World Wars. I knew about them, especially from my mother, as my father didn't talk about it much. We did something called "modern history," which started in, I suppose, the 17th century: Oliver Cromwell and the beheading of Charles the First and indeed the British Empire. I grew up as a child of the Empire, even though it was actually long finished. It finished, really at the First World War, but it's so ingrained in the whole tissue of British society and the whole class society, which is something that I started to put into question.

The guy I mentioned who I met at university was from a working class family in Yorkshire, and it was almost as though I wanted to get out of this middle class straitjacket, even though the relationship was a disaster. I started reading DH Lawrence. I did my English thesis on DH Lawrence, which is very much Northern and very class aware. There was just something fundamentally that didn't sit okay with me about the whole middle class thing and the fact that there were obviously people who, you know, had a whole different reality. Why would we be supposedly so much better than the others? All of this was going on at the same time.

When I arrived in Switzerland, I was so relieved, because I just thought: I'm not going to open my mouth and somebody will know immediately that I'm from the south of England, middle class, because accents were really important. I mean, huge strides have been made now, especially if you listen to BBC Radio. You have all kinds of different accents. But at the time – if you listen to any of the newsreels – it's all very "Queen's English." It was a relief that nobody [in Switzerland] was going to ask me which class I came from. It just seemed like a classless society. Of course, it isn't, but it's nothing like the UK. That was a huge relief for me. Then, discovering this consciousness raising group, and the launching of ISIS as a Women's International Information and Communication Service.

Nicole Bourbonnais 28:26
It's interesting to me that it arose out of the secretarial work you were doing on documentation. We don't always think of secretarial work as the roots of the radical.

Jane Cottingham 28:41
But we had a whole thing. Last year, the Archives Contestataires, which also houses the archives of the Mouvement de Libération des Femmes, MLF, here in Geneva, contacted me and said: "we'd be really interested if you have documents from ISIS." I started digging out all my things, and I gave them all my documents, which felt really good, and I came across a newspaper that we had in the Ecumenical Center called *Voices*. It was beyond just our consciousness raising group. There was actually a whole group within the Ecumenical Center because there was the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, there were two or three other smaller organizations there, and women started moving. They started saying: "the secretaries are given a good deal? Is it really part of a secretary's job to go and get tea for their boss?" The secretarial was actually important, because the women were kind of servants to men.

Nicole Bourbonnais 30:04
You can see the very clear gender hierarchy.

Jane Cottingham 30:08
Yes, there were no male secretaries at the time. I'd forgotten this newsletter that we did, and I was reading it now. It's so interesting. There was quite a weight of women in the women's movement working at different points of the hierarchy and in different ways.

Nicole Bourbonnais 30:32
Can I also ask, for my own curiosity, if you have any memory about what you knew about your own reproductive health – of contraceptives and things like that – do you remember that at all?

Jane Cottingham 30:45
Yes of course I do. This was before I got – and there'll be time to talk about how I really got into sexual, reproductive health – but yes, of course.

Nicole Bourbonnais 30:55
Like adolescent relationships?

Jane Cottingham 30:58
Yes I had a relationship with a guy that was probably 17 or 18. No, I had a relationship with a guy in the technical college. We were co-ed, and he was in a band. He was a guitarist, so exciting. I was kind of a groupie. He was very sweet, an Irish guy. I actually looked him up the other day, and [learned that] he became quite well known. We hadn't really done much and there hadn't been penetration but my period was late and I was: "oh, God, this is terrible." I think I was 16 or nearly 17, I think, which is quite old these days. My mother saw that I was upset, and so I told her this whole thing. She said: "it's just like your aunt." So then I learned this story that her younger sister had been babysitting for her and got pregnant. She babysat with her boyfriend, got pregnant and had a baby and gave the baby up for adoption. It must have been in the late '40s, as she was babysitting for my brother and he was born in '43. People didn't tend to have abortions then, unless they were really desperate. So I wasn't pregnant but there was a woman down the road who came and did some kind of douching that I got then.

Then I had another boyfriend, he was a bit older than me. He was a solicitor, and he said: "oh, you must go on the pill." And so I did. At the time, of course, the pill was quite heavy on estrogen, but I took it for a few years and then stopped. Being exposed to the feminist literature, I started really putting that into question and then looking at alternative forms of contraception. I think it wasn't until when we really launched ISIS in 76 with the first bulletin. The first bulletin that we published – the idea was to publish four a year – was testimony from the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, which took place in 1976 in Brussels.

Nicole Bourbonnais 33:40
Oh, I have a grad student working on this.

Jane Cottingham 33:41
Have her get in touch with me, because she should see the ISIS bulletin number one.

Nicole Bourbonnais 33:50
She's writing a whole chapter of her PhD on this.

Jane Cottingham 33:54
Oh, fantastic.

Nicole Bourbonnais 33:55
You were there.

Jane Cottingham 33:56
Yeah. It was brilliant. It was a huge event which was planned deliberately to take place after the 1975 International Women's Conference of the UN, which was clearly the beginning of the whole series of international conferences, not only on women, but on other aspects of development. At the beginning, NGOs were not part of the scene at all. You'd be lucky if you managed to go and listen. So it's about women, and are they really listening to women's voices? This [the Brussels] tribunal was set up along the lines of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal. There were 2000 women from about 40 countries, and they were giving

testimony on crimes, but defined extremely broadly. Not only violent crimes, but things like forced sterilization, economic crimes, total inequality between women and men in terms of money for similar work, and political crimes, etc. It was absolutely mind boggling. We managed to – it was Marilee [Karl], my colleague in Rome who was working in IDOC, who managed to gather some people, and it was translated into Spanish, Italian and French and English. We published it and sent it to addresses of groups around the world we'd been gathering since '74. Se we sent it out, and ISIS was launched in '76.

Health emerged quite quickly as a major issue for women. It was often said that women in the rich world are not the same at all as women in poor countries. For sure. But at the same time, all women, wherever they are, are going to menstruate, many will need contraception, and many will have children and need maternal health services. Many will get sexually transmitted infections, all of these things. Okay, it might be more dramatic, and depending on what your context is –

Nicole Bourbonnais 36:43
But there's a point of connection.

Jane Cottingham 36:45
Yes there is a point of connection, and it was really important to put those points of connection together. Quite quickly, in '77, we met with two of the women from the Boston Women's Health Collective, which you probably know about, whose wonderful book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was just printed and we did a joint project with them. We did a whole resource guide on women and health internationally, an inventory of groups and literature on women in health. Of course, there was a lot about sexual, reproductive health. The two women were Judy Norsigian, who was the youngest member of the group – there were 12 women or 16 women at the time – and Norma Swenson was the oldest. Norma just passed away at age 92 – she had a great life.

Nicole Bourbonnais 37:50
Just to go back then to the formation of ISIS - so it was three women at the beginning?

Jane Cottingham 37:55
Yes there were three women, There was Marilee Karl in Rome, who also sadly passed away last year in August. There was me, in Geneva, and then there was another woman [Judy Sidden] in Geneva who was working at the World Council of Churches. She was involved in the early discussions, she wanted to go back to the States, and she offered to do fundraising. She was very outgoing and exciting, and it took her quite a while, but she raised – it sounds ridiculous now – she raised something like $3,000 and then she said, I just can't do this anymore. I'm gonna quit the project. But with the $3,000 we launched ISIS. That's what we used for doing this publication.

I left the LWF. It was extraordinary. I'd been working there four and a half years, and of course, you pay into a pension scheme. I hadn't realized it, but when I left, they gave me what I paid into the pension, plus their part of it as well. So I had this sum of money, which I, ridiculously, very naively, lived on for two or three years until we got enough money to actually pay ourselves, though always a pittance. I had to explain myself to the Swiss authorities. I told them I'm working part time with ISIS. It wasn't true, but I only

claimed I was getting 900 francs a month. They said: “if you're doing that part time, what are you doing with the rest of your time?” I was absolutely flabbergasted. I thought of inventing something really flippant like “it’s none of your business”. Encounters with the Swiss authorities are a bit better now. After a while, I managed to get my C permit [residents’ permit]. It wasn't so complicated. After five years, I could get a C permit to live here.

Nicole Bourbonnais 38:09
That's a big move to quit the job and go full into another avenue.

Jane Cottingham 38:57
Yes but I was young. We were in our 20s. I was 24 when I came here, and I was 28 when I launched ISIS. Maybe it depends who one is. I don't know, but you don't necessarily think: “oh, isn't it scary?” I just launched into it somehow. That's my story, from this distance. Maybe I was more stressed about it at the time.

Nicole Bourbonnais 40:37
Do you remember what the daily work then was, for ISIS, in those early years?

Jane Cottingham 40:43
Yes, it was putting together project proposals. In fact, when Judy Sidden, the American woman, decided not to do it, Marilee said she didn't want to fundraise. Marilee was a super good editor, and she loved putting together the bulletin. And I said, okay, well, I'll do fundraising. I don't mind doing that and project proposals, etc. In ‘76-‘77 I went off to the US and Canada. I should just say that at the time there was the context that I was talking about before: they weren’t turbulent times, but there was a lot of movement, and a lot of NGOs were growing up and developing and putting into question the whole development aid approach, already. It was groups like War on Want and all these groups, which I'll come back to in a minute, if you like. But there were a number of groups that then clubbed together as ICDA: International Coalition for Development Action. ISIS was part of that – I just thought we needed contact with other groups who were not trying to be exclusively feminist. It was super important, because all of these groups had a good analysis of what was going on.

One of the members of ICDA was this group in Canada working on food and the politics of international food. They had a conference in Regina, Saskatchewan, and I was invited. I thought, right, I'll go as there may be funders and I decided to go to New York and then Toronto and do fundraising. One of the people who I met through ICDA was a lovely American man who said: “oh yeah, you can come and stay with me” He was working at the newly-formed UN Center on Transnational Corporations. We'd slog into New York, and I would go off and have these meetings with quite a lot of church women's groups in a building on the Upper West Side, which everybody called “the God Box,” but they were super supportive, actually, the Methodist Women. I can't remember who all the groups were, and they did actually give us small amounts of money. I also tried foundations. There was the Rockefeller Foundation, among others, but it was hard work. I said to somebody: “it's a bit like prostituting yourself. You have to lay out your guts.” The person said: “the difficulty is that you don't get paid immediately.” It is true. Sometimes you'd find out weeks later that they would give you a grant, or, no, they wouldn't. It was very cliff hanging – it was completely ridiculous.

I went to Toronto as well on my way to Regina, Saskatchewan – I don't remember anything about the conference – but in Toronto, but there was this movement called "Take Back the Night" that was going on, it's about making the night safer for women. I remember going on a march. This was the first time that women had come together to march. You probably know of a woman called Charlotte Bunch – who's a very prominent feminist – she was speaking at this "Take Back the Night" event. I was blown away. Some people are really good at writing, and Charlotte is really good at speaking. She was just absolutely mind boggling. I really felt part of this. It really felt like this was an international women's movement. So those kinds of things were very encouraging.

Back to your question: what did I do? What was my day like? It would be navigating between fundraising, writing project proposals, answering mail, because we had a post box. And especially after the first two or three bulletins came out, we got more and more people. We were still two offices – one organization with an office in Geneva and an office in Rome – so we alternated the production of the bulletin. Marilee did the first one, we did the second one, which was about women in the media, and the third one was on women and socialism. The fourth one was on battered women and refuges. It was all about violence. When it was our turn to do the bulletin, I was collecting stuff, going through all kinds of the literature, because we would not only get mail from around the world, but people would send us their publications. That's what was the guts of the documentation centre.

Nicole Bourbonnais 46:24
How would you get people to send stuff for you? Just hard to imagine.

Jane Cottingham 46:29
I know. It certainly boggles my mind. I don't know. They just did. They just sent us stuff. I guess you start sending out the bulletin, and then we ask people to send things, and they did. Picking up the mail became a sort of major thing, and it was so exciting. I got fed up with it, gradually, but there was a team of about six of us all working, well, I was living off my savings, but everybody was a volunteer. There was one woman in particular who just loved going to the post box, I thought "it's great you can do it." I didn't mind picking up the mail, it was when we had to send things out and we had to buy the stamps and put them on. She loved doing that. She even got a stamp book.

In the very beginning, I was living with a woman who had nothing directly to do with ISIS, but she shared the apartment where we had the first consciousness raising group. She was a cellist, studying cello at the conservatoire here, and we became very close friends. We shared an apartment and she'd be practicing cello, and I'd be typing away on my IBM golfball typewriter, you know, doing the bulletin, or whatever it was, and so still, today, Bach's cello suites or Dvorák's "Cello Concerto" are still accompanying me.

Nicole Bourbonnais 48:02
She was your background music to the revolution.

Jane Cottingham 48:07
Exactly. That was very important. Finally, I just thought: "I can't keep doing this." Vicki [Vivian King, my roommate] decided that too, as she failed her exam at the Conservatoire, and she had a complete blank out.

She said: “I have to leave.” By then she was in love with a guy who lived in Amsterdam, so she went and managed to get a job with the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, which was great. I needed to do something else, and I found an office – again, it was a church-related office. It was on Route des Acacias. There was something called the Urban Industrial Mission of the Protestant Church. I don't remember how I met this guy – he was running it, and he said: “we have a room in our offices that we're not using, if you'd like to rent.” It was 200 francs a month, or maybe it was only 100. That's where we all [the ISIS team] met. By then, I had my son, who I used to take to the office and let him sort out documents we didn’t need. He’d be there on the floor ripping things up.

Nicole Bourbonnais 49:26
Were there things going on in the Geneva feminist movement [at the time]?

Jane Cottingham 49:29
Yes, there was definitely stuff going on in the Geneva feminist movement, and I was linked, and part of that. They had consciousness-raising groups – they had a group called Vanille Fraise, which was, I think, partly a lesbian group. I'm thinking back – I went to a couple of the meetings, and I just thought, to myself, it was very different from an Anglophone context – whether it's American or British – where I felt people were more welcoming. They were all, I felt, a bit hostile. But I met women who were in the movement.

When it came to organizing, there had been two International Women in Health meetings in Europe, one in Hamburg and one in Rome, in 1976 and 1977. Rina Nissim, who is a key figure in the women's movement here, came to me and said: “look, would you be interested in organizing jointly the next International Women in Health meeting? I think we could do it jointly.” They had just started the Dispensaire des Femmes. I knew her. The Dispensaire des Femmes must have been set up in 1978, because I was one of the first “usagères” [users] when I was pregnant with my son, and he was born in September ‘78. It was wonderful. It was a women's health center, entirely run by women, for women. They had a non-hierarchical setup. So I was already in with them, and it seemed to make a lot of sense for the Dispensaire and ISIS to jointly do this Women in Health meeting, which we did in the Ecumenical Center – back to the church! I know, there is this incredible link to church all the time, whether we like it or not.

We did it over a three day weekend. We were six women organizing. It was me from ISIS, and then various people in the local women's movement, three or four from the Dispensaire des Femmes, and there was a woman who was an interpreter, and she organized a group of people to do free interpreting for the whole thing. We had interpretation into four or five languages. That was extraordinary, and we managed to raise money to bring people from many different parts of the world. It was the first really international – in the sense of intercontinental – event.

Nicole Bourbonnais 50:22
Right, because the first two were more European?

Jane Cottingham 52:14
They were more European. You know the history. And that's where I met Sundari [Ravindran]. Sundari was one of the people who was supported by the – I want to say Unitarian Church. It was something

church-related. The woman – who she's still in touch with, whose name I'm blanking on again – said: "I'm going to support three women from India", and one of them was Sundari. I was pregnant with my daughter then, and this was '81, and Sundari was pregnant with her son. So we connected.

Nicole Bourbonnais 52:55
Maybe we should talk a bit about that: your family, you know, having children.

Jane Cottingham 53:00
Children, yes.

Nicole Bourbonnais 53:03
How did that happen? I mean, I know the basics -

Jane Cottingham 53:07
I'm not going to tell you about the sort of string of disastrous relationships [I had]. One of the women in the group that was supporting ISIS, was married to a man who was a journalist – no, he was working with the one of the international trade union organizations here. Again, I'm blanking on the acronym, but they were connected with the ILO, International Labor Office. Their marriage was kind of on the rocks, and she was so frustrated with being in Geneva, which is partly why she came to the ISIS group because it was at least something. She went back to the States. He stayed on here, and their marriage fizzled out. I met him at a party and got involved with him, and he was actually very helpful at the beginning. He's a historian, and he helped quite a lot with things like the layout of the ISIS bulletin. [I really wanted a child] so I kind of swept under the carpet the things that didn't really work between us. So we had a son in '78. And three years later we had a daughter born in August '81. Then, when she was two-and-a-half years old, he announced he was leaving. I was in a rage, because he was leaving.

It was complicated, I don't have to go into the details, but it was kind of a relief, and I felt I could manage. It was hard, it was really hard, but I had a lot of friends and support, and knew people from the creche or the school, and we did child exchanges. I'm probably glossing over how hard it was, because I was struggling in terms of the money. I was earning almost nothing. Later, we [in ISIS] managed to get people who were paid through scholarships from the Swiss Confederation or various other entities. Gradually, I got a little bit more money. I was paid then, but I was still paid a pittance and then at some point, somebody suggested that – we were doing this collectively and everybody had to earn the same – but one of the women said: "look, you invested all that money in the beginning, and I think you need to have more money." That was really nice. But we were completely in the thinking of: we have to work as a collective, and there must be no hierarchies. Which was okay at the time, but looking back again, the fact is that Marilee and I were the people responsible for the organization. We were the directors, but we couldn't give ourselves that title. Did I send you my chapter that I wrote for the ISIS book?

Nicole Bourbonnais 56:55
Actually, yes, I forgot about it, to be honest.

Jane Cottingham 56:58
We talk about some of that.

Nicole Bourbonnais 57:04
I'll look it up before the next session.

Jane Cottingham 57:09
I was a single parent from when he left [in '84] until '88 when I got married to a Swiss man who I'd known for a long time. He was very keen to link up with somebody who already had children. Interestingly, he didn't want to have children himself, which was good, because it turns out he had something called Marfan Syndrome.

Nicole Bourbonnais 57:44
I have family friends with that.

Jane Cottingham 57:48
He died of an aortic dissection 10 years after we got married. He died in '98 but in the meantime, he was an amazing parent for my kids, and I feel eternally grateful. He shared the burden and all the rest of it.

Nicole Bourbonnais 58:13
Let's go back to the health meeting where you're pregnant. You're pregnant, Sundari is pregnant, a little intersection of life and activism.

Jane Cottingham 58:26
There was Rina [Nissim], there was Hélène Bregani, there was Rosangela Gramoni, all of whom remain friends, and there was Patricia Schultz and me, and then Dina [Levias], who was in the interpreter's booth, but the five of us were up on the stage, and they laughed afterwards, because they said – actually they're all lesbians, and there was me pregnant. Anyway, yes, they've all remained good friends.

Nicole Bourbonnais 59:05
Did you feel that in Geneva – I think these kind of came out more in later health meetings from what I've heard from others – any kind of tensions between the women around the North-South divide, class race?

Jane Cottingham 59:25
Not that I remember, but it clearly came out in subsequent meetings and became stronger and stronger. I think at that time, certainly in the '70s – this was just the beginning of the '80s – we were still just discovering, thinking isn't it amazing this connection of women, wherever they are, and it was only probably during the 80s, actually and the 90s, that there's class and there's color and race, whatever it's called these days? What is it?

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:00:01
Intersectionality?

Jane Cottingham 1:00:04
That's right.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:00:06
You were in that initial glow.

Jane Cottingham 1:00:08
We were in that initial glow. And then you realize it's a bit more complicated than that.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:00:11
What about sexuality? Because you mentioned that there were lesbians.

Jane Cottingham 1:00:18
That was definitely one of the key issues on the table. I'd have to go back and look at the report, but I'm sure that we had a whole slew of workshops on a whole lot of different things – on things like contraception and pregnancy, and then there was a lesbian workshop, and probably violence against women. I'll go back and have a look at the report just to see. But there were a whole assortment of workshops, which brought the recommendations or statements to the final plenary. [JC Note: The workshops were on: health, poverty and racism; the role of paramedics; abortion; imperialism and population control; sexuality; contraception; pregnancy and childbirth; breastfeeding and nutrition; women and madness; women's research into natural medicine; dental self-help; international information, documentation and networks; yoga as a method of contraception and abortion; and women and violence (Isis Bulletin N°20, 1981)].

I do remember one thing. One of the Indian women – and it could have been one who was supported by the same donor that Sundari got money from – started immediately saying: "oh, I think we have to change the whole agenda." When you're young and relatively inexperienced – we were really thrown by this. Then somebody said: "well, no, we're not going to change the agenda now." There are people like that, I learnt subsequently, there are people who will try to sabotage somebody's process. They might be right that it could be done differently or better but if you're involved in organizing something, you say: "well, actually, this is the way we're going to do it. Maybe another time you can do it." So one learns things like that as one goes along.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:01:50
I think we've been going for an hour, so, do you want to keep going, or --

Jane Cottingham 1:01:57
I'm okay if you're okay.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:01:59
I'm good. I was going to ask you about these feminist spaces like within ISIS, within these women's health meetings. What is it like to be a feminist and have feminist views in general, in society, at the time? Are you really mostly just hanging out with other feminists? Are your ideas coming up, clashing against your peers in other spaces, like your family?

Jane Cottingham 1:02:32
You're talking about then or now? Then? I have to go back, because I feel that I've changed a lot. As with many terminologies, many terms that we tend to use, I feel as though the word feminist has been overused. It's been used by many different people to mean many different things. At the time, it seemed very clear: there's a problem with discrimination against women, and if you were fighting against that discrimination in whatever way, you could be called feminist. In my family, I have a feeling that the father of my children, Bruce, agreed, but he also felt – he probably lacked confidence in himself somewhere, and so felt probably threatened by this. I suppose I'm a strong woman, but I don't think of myself as being this sort of super dominant person. But maybe I am. So that wasn't easy. But with the friends that I had who I did child exchanges with, they were just ordinary people, and then with the women's movement I did quite a lot with. I don't know, really, in terms of the rest.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:04:04
I guess it was like your work.

Jane Cottingham 1:04:11
Yes, it was my whole life in a way. And because I was so much in the health area, reading about and influenced by the Boston Women's Health Collective, amongst others, home birth and natural contraception, I was doing all of this. I wanted to give birth at home both times. I was talking about that with my son and his girlfriend just two days ago. Would you give birth at home? Nobody does anymore, but at the time, there was a lot, and there were midwives that were willing to accompany women.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:04:58
I think there's been a bit of a resurgence of that. I had a couple of friends who gave birth in a bathtub.

Jane Cottingham 1:05:01
Could be yeah, I think there was kind of a pendulum swing. I was very naive as well. I don't know whether you had the same thing, but they say you should see what your mother did – there are things in families, from mother to daughter – what was her labor like? And my mother's, I know, was very, very long with my brother and his head was very big. With my son, I was in labor for 36 hours. I was really at the end of my tether. There was a certain point when Rina, who was there, who's actually a nurse, said: "I think you should go to the maternité." Because I'd been already in labor for 24 hours, and I was – I just can't bear, so I did, and they did an epidural, and provoqué – induced – the labor. It was so wonderful when I had this injection – I didn't have to feel this pain anymore.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:05:53
I always say I felt like there was actually a halo around the epidural man. I swear I looked over and the sun was glowing around him.

Jane Cottingham 1:06:20
That's exactly how it felt. But not to be put off, I did give birth to my daughter at home. I lived 300 meters from the maternité, in fact, in the street just behind it. I think if I'd been in the middle of, Chancy or

somewhere, I might not have done that. With a second child, it's a bit different. I had a midwife, and it all was fine.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:07:08
I see – you had both of the experiences.

Jane Cottingham 1:07:11
It's so bizarre to revisit it all and think: "oh God, did I do the right thing?" One did what one did, and that's how it was.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:07:29
Coming back to ISIS – so you're working on these different issues. You do the health meeting. Do you remember other kinds of big things that ISIS did?

Jane Cottingham 1:07:38
Well, a big thing that we did, which was in '83 so we'd been going eight years or so – or maybe more like six years. It was getting harder and harder to coordinate between the Rome and the Geneva offices, because we had a team in each place, along with Marilee and I who knew each other, and we tried to meet, but it was kind of difficult to organize a meeting. Once all of us went to Rome, and they all came here, and we met in the French mountains, but it was clear that we were going to need more money. One of the people who was working with me in Geneva, who had come on a scholarship from the Swiss Federation – she was Indian – she said: "I've just learned so much. I wonder if we can – it would be so interesting to have something like an exchange, because women who have skills in one part of the world, could bring those skills to another, and we could learn what the reality is," and we thought, brilliant idea.

So we elaborated this idea of a women's cross cultural exchange program, and we discussed this with the Rome group at one of the meetings, and we had budgeted it. It meant we needed a budget of $300,000 and we'd been basically going on 30,000 till then. They were kind of aghast and thought we would never be able to find that. I said: "no, I think we could." It's one of those things where you have to think big. Instead of asking for dribs and drabs – this is a whole new program. I felt confident that we would get the money, partly because I'd been doing the fundraising and I had contacts. At the same time, we felt it would be really difficult to do it with the Rome group that hadn't been involved in the whole elaboration of the project. So we decided to separate the two organizations.

That was quite painful. From '84 on we became two different organizations – I talk about this in the paper I mentioned – Isis WICCE, Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange, in Geneva., and they took the word International and became ISIS International in Rome. They did a lot of work more closely with certain groups in the Third World, which is what we called developing countries, to produce a particular issue of the bulletin which they called Women in Action. We did the exchange program. The first one we did was a general one. I think we did it in '83, it was a prototype. Then in '84 we focused on communication and we put out a call for this and again – this is before the internet. We put out a call for groups who were interested either to send somebody or to receive somebody. We had sending groups and receiving groups, and we went through them all, and we matched them. You'd have somebody from Peru going to Sri Lanka.

In the first program, Rina, the famous Rina, went from the Dispensaire to Costa Rica and helped Cefemina, a group there, set up a women's health center. There was a woman working with a rape crisis center in Hong Kong who went to Israel. Two women from Tanzania ended up going to India. That was quite difficult, because, they discovered – and we discovered as well – there's actually huge racism in India, where they were. Maybe not across the board, but [in that area].

It went on until '91 – I had left by then – when ISIS in Geneva moved to Uganda. They decided there was a point where it became clear that trying to raise money for an organization sitting in the rich world was getting more and more difficult, and that it would be easier if it was based in a developing country, in a Southern country. We felt it was a little bit unjust, because nobody ever made much money. We had to feel guilty if we went out for dinner once a year. The exchange program ran from '83 to '91 on different themes each time: the first one had a main theme of communication, and the second one was on health. Then there were other themes, like technology, and others. That was really exciting. Having the testimony of the women – again, I dug some of it out, you'll see it in the paper, if you get to read it – was very exciting. I think just about everybody was amazed at how important it was to have this kind of contact. Sometimes, it would be that the person who was traveling to another group would be more skilled than the group, and they were bringing something. Sometimes. it would be that the group receiving were able to teach the person who went there, who was able to get ideas and bring them back to her group.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:13:49
It was like a women's group.

Jane Cottingham 1:13:52
Yes – one could really say a feminist group. But not just health. It could be anything - communications. There were people who were learning video for instance. Again, this is before the internet.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:14:11
Did you travel at all with that work?

Jane Cottingham 1:14:14
I did at one point, as we decided to bring everybody, or all people who were going to go somewhere anyway, to Geneva for an orientation session for a month. That was quite interesting, because it was done with the local women's groups as well. And in fact, for the first three years, the women who came were actually housed by local women, which was great, because it meant that they felt that they were being integrated into the community. But after a while, we decided maybe it was good to have the orientation course somewhere else. It was two weeks and was then extended to one month – or was it the other way around? I don't remember. Anyway, we changed the timing, and then one year it was in Bangladesh, helped by a woman who had been on the first exchange program. That was kind of exciting as well. One of the reasons it was easy in Geneva was because we could then do all of the visas and the travel arrangements, etc. If it's in another country, unless you have somebody who's really into organizing, that wasn't necessarily so easy. I think there was one that was done in Africa as well. I went to the Bangladesh one.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:15:39
This was in the '80s? And what were your impressions from Bangladesh?

Jane Cottingham 1:15:46
I said Bangladesh. Sorry, I meant Bangalore. I'd been to India a number of times. Bangalore, I went to when I was still working with the Lutherans. I traveled quite a bit with the Lutherans, but there was a conference in Sri Lanka, and I had friends in Bangalore, and so I decided to go there. I flew to Madras, took a train to Bangalore – that must have been '76 ('75 maybe) - it was probably the same year as the beginning [of ISIS]. I remember feeling very safe in India. Goodness knows whether that would be the same today. I traveled to Rome all the time, and because Marilee and I would meet a lot, I used to take the night train to Rome and go and work. It was really fun. Italy is Italy, and you'd get wolf whistled even sort of pawed sometimes, but in India I just felt so safe, and I was quite surprised to feel so in a country so far away. I don't know whether it's the same now. There have been other conferences there as well. I've been back and I've been to Sundari's [house] in Trivandrum.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:17:20
So Sundari you met at the Geneva conference, and then did you keep in touch after that? Were there key relationships?

Jane Cottingham 1:17:26
Very much so. In the early '90s, we were both involved in the setting up – well, not the setting up, because the woman who founded Reproductive Health Matters was Marge Berer – but Sundari was involved in it [from the beginning] and I was involved from the beginning in the editorial board. So Sundari and I would meet through that. Also Ravi [her husband] had a job with the ICJ [International Commission of Jurists] here. She came here for five years, and she was reminding me when she was here the other day that we did some child care together. She came here when Sandeep [her son] was one or two or three, for a few years, while Ravi was there, I got to know them more.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:18:37
Were there other key relationships or people that you've connected with in those years?

Jane Cottingham 1:18:43
Yes, I did a lot of traveling. Some of it was with the Lutherans, and then some of it was ISIS. I don't remember where this was, but I was somewhere with a Senegalese woman called Marie-Angélique Savane. She was the editor of something called *Famille et développement*. She was really interesting, because she tells the whole story of female genital mutilation that was also being floated at the time in the '70s. There was an American woman called Fran Hoskin who made this long report about how African girls were undergoing clitoridectomy or female genital mutilation, etc. Marie-Angélique Savane took it up, but she said: "it's not okay for an American woman do that." She took up the issue and started gathering African témoinage [testimonies]. There was her, and there was Kamla Bhasin, who you may have heard of. She was a very active feminist and actually working for the part of FAO called the Freedom from Hunger Campaign at the time, that probably doesn't exist anymore. She was in Delhi, and we were – the three of us were in some kind of meeting, and it was Marie-Angélique, I think she said: "you're both pregnant, aren't you?" I

remember. We were all pregnant at the same time. I've completely lost touch with Marie-Angélique but I worked quite a lot with Kamla, who also sadly, passed away, two or three [four] years ago.
There are probably countless others who I have to think about. Inevitably, there are links that are made, and people you work with and people you get on well with, like the Boston women whom I've remained very close to over the years. In fact at a certain point when I left ISIS at the end of '87, it was partly because I felt I needed to do more in the area of health, and I felt that I'd kind of done my time with ISIS, and we'd achieved quite a lot, and there were people who were ready to take over. To me, health was so critical. I started reading, I started going to the WHO library, and reading about contraception. I came across "odds ratios" and "relative risks" and thought: "I'd really like to go and understand that." I talked to Norma Swenson of the Boston women, and said: "I'd really like to study more." She said: "well, apply to Harvard School of Public Health." I said: "but don't you need to be a doctor?" She said: "no, they like people who do interesting things." So I did, and amazingly, I was accepted to the master's program in Population Sciences.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:22:10
Oh, how did I not see that?

Jane Cottingham 1:22:12
Well, I don't know, but that's a key part of it – probably because I haven't told you about it before. I was given the place in '88 but I put it off to '89 because I just thought I wasn't ready to go. In January '89, Vincent, my Swiss husband, suffered his first aortic dissection, and he nearly died. I thought we were all set to go to the States in August, and we did, in fact, go, and I did this two year masters, but it was really, really challenging because of his health situation. Actually it turned out to be amazing, because in Boston was the number one specialist in Marfan Syndrome. We were able to see him. The problem with Switzerland is the population is small, and this was still at the beginning of the internet. These days, you're just connected to all the databases. But again, I'm blanking on the guy's name, but we were able to see him, and he was able to immediately change the medication that my husband was taking, which was apparently the worst thing he could have taken. They were giving him Digoxin, which stimulates the heart, and in fact, he should have been getting beta blockers. That was all good, but it was tough, because then he also had to cope with being in a completely different culture. He really didn't speak English very well. He was French-speaking Swiss from the Canton of Jura.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:23:51
Were your children there and how old were they?

Jane Cottingham 1:23:53
My son was 11, and my daughter was eight, and they went to live with their father in North Carolina for the first year, which was kind of a relief at a certain level, because then I was able to deal with my studies and Vincent. We were staying with Judy [Norsigian, of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective], you know, so that was great. But it was tough being away from them because they were so far away, and my son got septic appendicitis. He also nearly died the same year in that Autumn. I had to go by plane, and I stayed in North Carolina for three weeks while he was in hospital. So that was really, really, really tough. I felt like I was being punished by God or somebody.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:24:47
Geneva to Boston, in general, must be hard.

Jane Cottingham 1:24:52
It was okay as I'd been to the States a number of times, and you know Boston is east coast, and it was fine. We have friends there, so that was okay. I was assuming the kids would be okay because they were with Bruce and his wife, and they had two more kids. And I thought, well, maybe it's good for them to be able to spend that time with their dad. Maybe it was, and they went to an American school for a year, like an exchange. Then they came back to Boston for the second year and lived with us. Then we came back early because Vincent felt he couldn't quite cope. He went into a depression, so we came back.

I was able to do a thesis for the last semester, which I did on the basis of something I'd done at the WHO, where I was asked to go and be the rapporteur of a meeting. They were just beginning these meetings between women's health advocates and the research community of HRP, the Human Reproduction Program. I met somebody in Boston who was at a conference, Peter Hall – he was the one who was behind these meetings. I said: "that's really interesting. Do you think I could be involved?" And he said: "well, yes, we need a rapporteur." You know, that's how it happens, total serendipity. So I did that. I came back. I was still actually enrolled in Harvard, but I was able to do that and my supervisor agreed.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:26:30
Who were the people at Population Sciences at that time? Do you remember any of the names or generally, what was the vibe at that time, because I guess it's transitioning from being a demographic, "numbers" kind of population school, to incorporating more gender and women issues?

Jane Cottingham 1:26:50
They were really at the very early stages. At one of the things we did, on community health or something, there was this old-school English guy who talked about his time in India, and then he put up a photo, and there's him and his colleague who he talked about, and then there's this Indian person in the background bringing tea.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:27:13
Colonial art.

Jane Cottingham 1:27:16
That was there. It was really only in the early stages then, of saying, actually maybe we need to do something different. I was quite shocked at how colonial it was. At the same time, there were some great people, and I learned epidemiology. You had to do epidemiology and statistics, and we all had to do a maths exam at the beginning. Of course, I failed because I was very bad at maths but with a wonderful woman we did remedial maths. I wasn't the only one, there were quite a few of us. I thought, if only I'd had a math teacher like that when I'd been at school, it wouldn't have been so painful. It was high flying. The thing about Harvard is you could take courses in other schools. I took one at the Governance School on world food politics, which was really interesting. Then another one in the School of Education because I was told that the best teachers on sociological techniques were there and it was great having all of those resources.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:28:34
I guess at that point you had been out of university for a decade or so?

Jane Cottingham 1:28:38
Yes, I finished back at university at age 21, and I was 40. I was quite scared that my brain wasn't going to function. It was interesting that because of everything that I'd done, I found that it was easy, I was actually more agile, should we say, than certain of the younger people in just making, you know, syntheses, being able to write quickly and fairly coherently. I had to labor over the statistical analyses, which they were probably much faster with, but at least I wasn't completely at sea. I used to work every evening. It was quite challenging, but good.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:29:34
I think we should stop there.

Jane Cottingham 1:29:37
Yes, it leads into the WHO after that.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:29:39
Yes I'm gonna turn this off. Okay.

Jane Cottingham Interview 2/2, 3 June 2025

Nicole Bourbonnais 00:09
This is the second interview with Jane Cottingham on June 3, 2025 in Geneva. Jane, before we move on, I wanted ask you a bit more about ISIS and the organization of ISIS. You talked a bit about how you attempted to organize it non-hierarchically, according to feminist principles, but that it was also very difficult to do this in practice. I was wondering if you could tell a little bit more about how you tried to organize it that way, how it worked, and maybe some of the challenges.

Jane Cottingham 00:40
I can certainly try to see if my memory goes back that far. When we began ISIS, as I think I mentioned last time, there were three of us, but Julie Sidden, the third woman, left quite soon to go on a fundraising trip, and then never came back. She went to the States. But she did raise $3,000 which was amazing at the time, which allowed us to publish our first bulletin. At the beginning, it was basically two of us. It was Marilee and me, but quite quickly, we tried to gather a group of women, because that was our engagement at the time, who would be volunteers in each office. Quite quickly, there were a number of women who came in Geneva, and I think in Rome too. I can't remember how I found them. There were a number of women's groups, people spoke to other people and said: "we need volunteers." We were all volunteers at that point.

The idea was that the group would work together, because our analysis at the time was that women tended to be in classic, traditional jobs: they tended to have the lower hierarchy jobs, they were low down the ladder. They were very often secretaries, as I was when I came to Geneva. There were very few, if any – we're talking about the early '70s – women directors of companies or directors of academic departments. At the time, doctors were overwhelmingly men. Things have changed hugely from that point of view in the last 50 years. As part of our feminism, we asked: "is this normal that women should be lower down the ladder?" We felt that we needed to just organize our work as everybody has equal value, and therefore there's no hierarchy. This seemed to work well for a while, I think, in both Rome and Geneva.

Marilee also gathered around her a number of people, especially Chilean women, who were political refugees. It was just after the time that Allende was overthrown and Pinochet took over, and there was incredible repression. There were a number of Chileans that came to Rome, almost immediately – because we're talking about '72-'73 when Allende was overthrown, and we were starting up in '74. So Marilee managed to gather a number of women. The Chilean women were wonderful, because they helped us to produce a Spanish version of the ISIS bulletin.

Nicole Bourbonnais 04:06
Amparo?

Jane Cottingham 04:07
No, Amparo Claro was not one of the people who was in Rome. No, she was in Chile. You interviewed her, right?

Nicole Bourbonnais 04:15
Yes.

Jane Cottingham 04:18
It was Teresa, and Ximena and Gabi Charnes – I think that was their surname. When they came off the list of "persona non grata," they went back to Chile. That's when they decided, and it was agreed, that they would set up their own Chilean version of ISIS and Amparo was involved. Because health then was emerging as a major, major issue, she ended up running the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network. It became a separate organization. Because I also went into the health field – leaving ISIS to focus on sexual and reproductive health – I worked quite a lot with Amparo in the following years.

Nicole Bourbonnais 05:25
So you were working with the women in Rome, a lot of Chilean refugees, and thinking about how to organize it?

Jane Cottingham 05:34
In Geneva, we had people from different walks of life, and different language skills as well: there was an Italian woman, there was a German woman, and this was really helpful because some of our documentation, quite a lot of it, was in different languages. Then we had, as I mentioned, Valsa Verghese, who came on a Swiss government grant from India, and a British woman – each person had their particular interest. Some of the people really wanted to work on the documentation, which was great, because there's a lot of work reading, putting keywords on them, and classifying them. Other people wanted to deal with the mail that came in, and gradually we would go to the post box and have huge amounts of mail. It's amazing, thinking from now, because everything was done either by telephone or just ordinary mail, things in envelopes sent across [the world]. I started collecting stamps and I think I counted the different countries at one point, 80 or 100 different countries. It was amazing.

It seemed to work okay, but after a while... In any case Marilee and I were clearly the ones responsible for the organization, and we used to talk on the phone regularly. Some of the others did as well, but we had very little money, so we didn't have much opportunity for the two groups in the two places to really meet. That was a bit of a challenge. At a certain point we had enough money so everybody got the same pay. and was it was done pro rata? It's awful because I can't remember. Because obviously people who were doing more hours should have got more, but there was a minimum pay which was below the actual minimum that people get. We must have somehow worked it so that people were paid according to the hours that they did. Everybody had the same rate of pay per hour, and that felt good for our political consciousnesses.

After a while, it became clear that there was some kind of grumpiness, including on my part. First of all, the investment – the mental and emotional investment in creating an NGO, going and doing the fundraising – was basically my responsibility. I quite liked doing it, it felt like a challenge, and I didn't mind going to talk

to people, but that was really pretty time consuming. Then there was the fact that some people were more qualified than others. I don't remember if we had any really fundamental discussions about that over the years, but I remember myself feeling at a certain point – probably just before I left – feeling that I'm more qualified than some people. I've been investing more. It doesn't seem quite right that I should be just on the same rate as everybody else. At the same time I was thinking that this was a betrayal of the narrative.

I should say that after I left, the office in Geneva became more hierarchical. It was very clear. Valsa took over. She was there more hours than other people, and she made it into a hierarchical structure, which perhaps worked. It could have worked but there were personality problems as well, and I remember hearing quite a few complaints. I went to the States to study, as I mentioned, and then when I came back I was still there on the board, and I got a lot of people approaching and saying, it doesn't work. We used to all work together. Now there's no opportunity to talk to each other, etc. What to say about that?

I said more in the article that you've read, but it was for myself: I started this reflection that, despite the fact that there are negative aspects of hierarchical structures, I actually think you need a hierarchical structure. You need a captain of the ship. After that, it depends on communication and how things are in the organization's environment. Is it one that favors people? Encourages people to gain more qualifications or to talk if there are conflicts, as there inevitably are when people work together? Is there some mechanism for solving that, etc.? I really feel that one needs a hierarchy. The difficulty with hierarchy is if people who are at the top of the hierarchy abuse their power.

In my recollection, we'd never really had that kind of a debate. Or perhaps it did happen, and I left before that happened. In the ISIS book that's coming out, where my chapter will be published, there is quite a lot of reflection in the other chapters – something like seven or eight chapters. The different authors talk a lot about that. I was specifically asked to talk about that. One of them, Susanna George, became the executive director in the Philippines. When they moved [from Rome to Manila], they also decided that they would have more of a hierarchical structure, and they wanted an Executive Director. It was partly for fundraising, as funders wanted to know: who's responsible for this organization? We need to see a profile. Just those practical things that we in the early years didn't quite come to grips with at all. We were very idealistic, dreamers. That was nice to do. But it was also a way of finding out, what my mother used to call “the harsh realities of life” - things aren't quite as brilliant.

Then Susanna George sadly also died. A number of people who I've talked about in these recordings, have died, but she was quite young, and she died of cancer in August 2023. In her chapter, she had written – reading between the lines, there were clearly people who didn't like her style. She was pretty frank about the fact that: maybe I was too strict, or too this, that and the other. Interestingly, I think once ISIS moved away from Geneva and Rome – I'm not sure about the Chilean group – there was a reversion to the hierarchical structure.

Nicole Bourbonnais 13:42
There's a narrative in the literature of “NGO-ization,” or professionalization, of a lot of women's movements. You can kind of see how there's tension between the ideal and sometimes I think the ‘70s are a

bit romanticized, you know, “oh, we moved away from these principles” – so it is interesting to hear it as it was lived.

Jane Cottingham 14:11
It was definitely an idealistic kind of period. I'll make sure you get a copy of the book when it comes out, because Marilee's chapter talks about these heady years, because she came out of the civil rights movement in the US. Then the feminist movement grafted on the top of that.

Nicole Bourbonnais 14:33
Can I ask: within Geneva, within Europe, is the feminist movement – what would you say were the main other movements that it was in conversation with? You've already talked about the liberation theology movement. Did you find there was a lot of influence from Marxist socialists? Was there a discussion of race here in Europe, or was that not something that was forefront on your mind at the time?

Jane Cottingham 15:07
There was a huge movement, it's probably fair to say – certainly in Europe, the student movements, of which the women's movement was really a part or grew out of, and other NGOs – were very much grounded in Marxist theory. There's no question about that. Certainly, as I mentioned, at the LWF, the Lutheran World Federation, where I was working, the two people I worked closest with were clearly Marxists. They had written, and continued to write, all kinds of books, and the analysis of the information flow that I also mentioned last time was very much based and grounded on Marxist theory. I think that, at the time, there was also an idealization of Mao and Lenin and then the little red book from Mao would be something that people would get and read. It's like the hierarchy debate, because now you revisit several decades later, and then you find out what really happened in the [Cultural] Revolution in China and indeed in Russia. But yeah, I mean, I think it was our third – yes, our third ISIS bulletin was on feminism and socialism [JC note: In fact there were two bulletins, N°5 and N°6, on feminism and socialism]. That grew out of a conference which took place in Amsterdam in ’77, where there was real engagement on: it's not enough to say feminism, and women need to have more prominence and be given more value in terms of the roles they play in society. There is an analysis here. It's very close to a social Marxist analysis.

In terms of race – it's hard to tell, because we bathe in that stuff now, it’s hard to try to separate out what's now and what was then. I need to go back and look at the bulletins. I think we spoke less about “race” than about “First World,” “Third World,” and the fact that people in the “Third World” were second or third class citizens. I have a very good friend [Miranda Davies| who I met because she was based in London, and she approached us at one point and said: “I just discovered those bulletins. It's wonderful. Would you like me to distribute it within the UK?” She edited a book for Zed Books called *Third World, Second Sex*. It was that kind of analysis, I think. Clearly, we were talking about racism, but I think the terminology was not used in the way it is today. Quite quickly, especially women from the Third World – the Global South, as we call it now – were definitely raising the question, saying: “Well, wait a minute, there are all of these things, and women are second class citizens. In our countries, think of India – there's colonialism, and somehow that has to be woven into the feminist analysis.” It was only two, three decades later that we started talking about intersectionality. One loves terms, but it does capture something.

Nicole Bourbonnais 19:33
Let's go back to when you were in the US, and you had finished your degree, and then you move back to Geneva. What were you doing?

Jane Cottingham 19:48
It was a two year course that I did. It was extremely challenging. My Swiss husband had, in January 1989 (that's the year that I went to Harvard), an aortic dissection, and he nearly died. We did, nonetheless, set off to the US, where we spent a year, and then we came back in the summer. In the autumn term, I was there, but he became more and more depressed and had difficulty coping. We decided to move back to Geneva early. I should have come back in May of '91 but actually we came back in January '91 just as the first Iraq war started. The world was already beginning to change. I managed to negotiate with my supervisor to do a thesis instead of following courses that year and get the requisite number of credits.

Nicole Bourbonnais 21:06
Do you remember what you wrote it on?

Jane Cottingham 21:07
Yes, it was very easy. Back in Harvard, I had met somebody who was working for WHO, Peter Hall, who was working with HRP, the Human Reproduction Program. He was in charge of – there were several task forces on different things, on the IUD, on vaccines, on sociological research, – and his was on the introduction of contraceptive methods, which was really interesting in the sense that it was one of the later ones. Initially, they were basically doing clinical research based on the idea that if there were more contraceptive methods available, women would be more likely to use them, without realising that they could be available, but they could be thrust down one's throat. Or they could be not available, et cetera. This was a whole task force that looked at: how would you introduce new contraceptives, or even all contraceptives, into a country where they may or may not be available? There may or may not be all kinds of prejudices or misinformation. It was quite exciting to discover that, it made so much sense. Peter Hall was in charge of that.

He had engaged somebody called Joanne Spicehandler, an American woman, who was approached by a group called the International Women's Health Coalition, Adrienne Germain and Joan Dunlop. It wasn't Joanne who was approached. It was Adrienne Germain and Joan Dunlop who went to Mahmoud Fathalla, who was the then director of HRP, and said: "you really have to take into account women's perspectives." And he said: "absolutely." He was completely on board. "Could you look at our budget and decide, what looks good or bad?" Adrienne said: "absolutely not. What I propose is that we have a dialogue with women's health advocacy groups and researchers." Mahmoud said: "great, go ahead." Peter Hall and Joanne, who was working with him, were the people [to do it], as it made sense to have it done within the introductory Task Force, because that's where you would talk to women.

The first dialogue meeting was scheduled for February 1991. When I met Peter in November in Boston, I said: "this sounds really interesting. Really interesting. Do you need somebody to help with report writing?" And he says: "yes, that might be a good idea. I'll talk to Joanne." And they said: "it would be great if you could come." I was engaged as the report writer for this first dialogue meeting at the international level of

women's health advocacy groups and researchers on: what contraceptives do women want? It was organized with Adrienne, who was a great visionary. I did the report, which was heavily edited by Adrienne. I was furious because I thought it was quite good but she was known as a red pen wielder. But there were a number of recommendations that came out, and one of them was that such dialogue meetings should be undertaken in each of the WHO regions, and that there should be a specific dialogue meeting on the [anti-pregnancy] vaccine research.

Nicole Bourbonnais 25:27
Before we talk about the results, do you remember the vibe of this meeting? It seems like such a totally new idea to bring researchers and women's groups together? Were they able to talk to each other?

Jane Cottingham 25:40
It was tricky, but Adrienne was a master – a mistress of orchestrating and getting the right people to the table. There was considerable resistance on the part of the researchers, all of whom were men. Some of them even said: "ugh, we have to listen to women." There was quite a lot of disrespect at the time.

Nicole Bourbonnais 26:13
And these were WHO researchers or other researchers?

Jane Cottingham 26:22
Yes, these are WHO researchers, [either working in headquarters or with HRP collaborating centers in different parts of the world]. The health advocates that Adrienne selected among people that she knew, and she hand-picked from different parts of the world – this was really important for the subsequent dialogues – were people who were ready to enter into dialogue, and who believed that talking would bring us further forward. (It reminds me, as an aside, of the debate that's going on now, that the Europeans won't talk to the Russians. Diplomacy always used to be about people talking to each other, even if it's your enemy.) It was like diplomacy, these dialogue meetings. She was a past master at doing this well and selecting the right people. I was asked to stay on and implement some of the recommendations, which I did. It worked really well.

But I go back to the original question that you asked: what topic did I have for my thesis, to finish off my master's degree? It was writing up about the dialogue between women's health advocacy groups and researchers. I don't even remember what I wrote, but I'd already written in the report, so I cast it in a different way, and it was really helpful because we were coming back, and my husband was not in good shape at all, and I had to get my kids back into school. What I didn't realize was, leaving at that point – I was Swiss, but they were not. They were still British, and the fact that we'd gone away meant that I had to re-register them in Switzerland. I thought they'd just come back and go to school again, but they were not allowed to at the beginning, because I had to do some other thing. It was quite a stressful time. But my thesis was accepted. They were super, and I graduated.

Then I went on for probably another year or so with these dialogue meetings. The next one we did was in Asia. I brought on Adrienne again as a consultant for this dialogue meeting. After that, I did them on my own, but she was super helpful. Asia, you know, it's huge. We chose four countries – Bangladesh, India,

Philippines and Indonesia – because these were countries where there were already coercive programs to introduce contraceptives. I mean, it wasn't easy. Making sure we had people who were ready to engage in dialogue wasn't easy. There was a group in Bangladesh, which was part of a network called FINRRAGE [Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering]. In order to prepare this meeting, I went to each of the four countries to talk to different NGOs and to their government people to prepare the groundwork. The meeting took place in Manila, because the WHO Western Pacific Office is based in Manila. It meant that we already had a venue, and we had to get the WHO on board. I went to talk to Farida [Akhter, of FINRRAGE] but she would not hear about any kind of contraceptive. She had this volley of negative stuff about hormonal contraceptives, and even, I think, about the diaphragm. I said: "what do you propose to women who don't want to have another child or not a child now?" She didn't have an answer. Maybe she would have said abstinence. She was pretty negative about men altogether. That kind of person would have been impossible to have in the dialogues, obviously.

But we managed to bring together again a really interesting bunch of people. We brought together researchers, but also policy people, because it was super important – this was Adrienne's input – to get people from the Ministries of Health in countries like Indonesia, where it was well documented that they had coercive "safaris" that would force women to have Norplant. In the Philippines, which is a highly Catholic country, the ministry was pretty low key and not wanting to promote any kind of contraception. These contexts were difficult to deal with, but it was really important that the decision-makers at the time were there. We managed to have recommendations that – there were actually country workshops during the meeting, and they'd report back – were specific recommendations at the country level, but also some overall recommendations for the meeting. What happened? It worked better in some countries than others, but in Indonesia it was really good because the groups were very strong, the NGOs. That was where I saw that WHO had a super role to play. This was a WHO report, and the NGOs could take it and go to the ministry and say: "we made these recommendations. How far are you going?" They were able to engage in dialogue at the national level.

This was so long ago. It's all changed since, but at the time, it seemed very important, and it was. Other dialogue meetings we had in Latin America, another one in Francophone Africa and Anglophone Africa, and one at the international level on vaccine research. At a certain point, the question was raised, because I was still working as a consultant: shouldn't we have an actual post on women's perspectives in HRP? And again, Adrienne was key in that, not only getting the hierarchy to create the post, but then pleading in my favor. It was posted, and lots of people applied, etc, as I did, and I got the job.

Nicole Bourbonnais 33:47
This is in the early '90s?

Jane Cottingham 33:49
This is in the '90s. The first meeting was in February '91 and I think I got the contract in '94.

Nicole Bourbonnais 33:58
This must be around the same time as Claudia García Moreno?

Jane Cottingham 34:05
She came in briefly after that. '94 was the year of the ICPD in Cairo, and I think Claudia was just coming in.

Nicole Bourbonnais 34:22
Can I ask about the dialogue meetings? You talked about how at the beginning, some of the researchers were a bit hesitant. Did you notice a change over time? Was it the same researchers going to every region?

Jane Cottingham 34:36
No, the ones who were there in the very first meeting were the people who were in charge of research here, at [WHO] headquarters. Some of them were pretty encrusted in their approach. "We know best" kind of thing. It was interesting. But in each region we got people who were researchers in the region. Usually there were people – because HRP works with the whole network of research institutes in different parts of the world – we tried to have people who were part of the HRP network, and in a funny kind of way, they were less encrusted than the Geneva group, in my recollection. After the ICPD in Cairo in '94, there was a kind of move within WHO to say: "maybe it doesn't make sense to just focus on contraception. Maybe we should be talking about sexual and reproductive health more broadly." There was, at the time, the Department of Family Health, which was dealing with maternal health. There was a huge move – and I don't remember which year – when the two were fused together. The problem was, HRP had to remain. It's a special co-sponsored program. It's co-sponsored by WHO, UNFPA, World Bank, and UNDP, so it couldn't ever be completely absorbed into another department. There was an attempt to integrate it as far as possible, into something which was reproductive health-focused, and it was called the Department of Reproductive Health and Research. That really was a result of the Cairo agenda.

Nicole Bourbonnais 34:36
Do you remember being involved in the build up to Cairo? For example, the women that I interviewed for the book were drafters of this Women's Declaration on Population Policies. Then there was this conference in Rio in 1994, I'm trying to remember if I saw you on the list of participants or not.

Jane Cottingham 37:14
No, I was not there. Again, it was probably Adrienne who was involved and a lot of DAWN people, Ros Petchesky and Gita Sen and people like that. They were doing that. I was also struggling with my husband's health situation, trying to keep afloat, and trying to get a job. I was less involved with that, but it was super important in terms of the input to the Program of Action of ICPD, which talked about reproductive health officially for the first time. We actually then took on the definition of reproductive health that was given there – also the whole paragraph about abortion – and took that work forward. That felt to me, particularly, that we did two things. By then, I was in the job called, what, "Technical Officer for Gender Issues and Human Rights" or something. I think I was originally called "Technical Officer for Women's Perspectives," but that changed over the time, because we couldn't mention the word rights: women's rights were a bit scary. This was a strategy to downplay it.

But from the Cairo thing, there were two things. By then. Paul Van Look was the director of HRP. I got on very well with him. He was super supportive. He felt we should have a strategy on reproductive health that would give a framework to all of our work, whether it was research or whether it was programmatic stuff.

It fell to me to organize that, and I worked with Ruth Dixon Mueller, who was a very, very close friend of Adrienne's, and she was just super. We had three regional meetings to get regional input into this strategy, which was then finally adopted at the World Health Assembly. I don't remember which year – the end of the '90s, or second half of the '90s [actually in 2004]. The other thing was – and again, Adrienne was a key player in this – taking that paragraph 8.2 from the ICPD Program of Action which talks about abortion. It says [amongst many things] that where abortion is not against the law, it should be safe and available. It was that paragraph that we used in order to elaborate guidelines on the provision of safe abortion. This was, again, the second half of the '90s and until the outcome of this which was the safe abortion guidance document, WHO had only two things on abortion, one was dealing with the complications of unsafe abortion. I don't know what the other was, but unsafe abortion was the thing that was focused on. That's because of the sensitivities of many of the member states, etc., but the Cairo program was just perfect for taking it forward. I have to say it was Adrienne's vision to say: "alright, now WHO has to elaborate something." Paul Van Look was totally on board. Again we had an international consultation, where we brought together different people, service providers and lawyers, because we wanted to totally ground it in international human rights law, and researchers. In fact, Paul Van Look, who you seem to know, I don't know if you've met him –

Nicole Bourbonnais 41:36
No, I've just heard his name come up in other interviews.

Jane Cottingham 41:40
He was in charge, before he became director, of the task force – I didn't name all the task forces – there was a task force about medical abortion [Task Force on Post-ovulatory Methods].

Nicole Bourbonnais 42:02
The pill version?

Jane Cottingham 42:03
Yes, RU-486, mifepristone [and misoprostol]. He was in charge of the research on that. He's an OB-GYN, who worked for years in Scotland. He's Belgian originally, he was an abortion provider, and he felt very strongly about the importance of women having access to safe abortion. He was totally on board with that, which was great. We managed to elaborate this safe abortion guidance document. I don't know if you've seen it, I don't know if it's relevant to your research, but it was really revolutionary, I think, because once you get an official WHO document, then it's translated into the six official languages. We then carried out workshops in each region to introduce this. As you can imagine it was not plain sailing. You have a technical document, but because of the issue even getting it through the seventh floor [the top management]– [was difficult]. There was the Director [General] – at that point they had different structures – and they were called associate directors, or associate directors general. The one who was in charge of our department was Tomris Türmen, a Turkish woman who, in theory, should have been totally behind it, but she was quite afraid of upsetting member states. She basically sat on it. We had all kinds of people to put pressure, etc. and I actually went with Paul and other people to her saying: "we need this." She finally signed off on it. Then the regional office in what's called the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which is

basically the Middle East, dragged their heels in terms of the translation, the Arabic translation. They didn't want to do anything about it so that was tough.

The fact is that it existed. And I feel that, despite many criticisms that are made – some of them totally justified – of international organizations – for the WHO, the kind of job it is well placed to do is to convene experts from around the world on a particular topic, and then issue guidance documents, or guidelines, which then can be used in country as the state of the art, this is what WHO proposes. It was the case for the abortion document. It was incredibly important. Many, many people told us this, that they had something in their hand, they could go to ministries, etc. I felt very good about that. It grew specifically out of ICPD, but also the dialogue meetings where abortion had been talked about as well.

Nicole Bourbonnais 45:54
The abortion thing is kind of crazy to me. At least in the early records I'm reading right now about the WHO, it's like a ghost, because you know that it's one of the leading causes of maternal mortality, and there's a lot of discussion of maternal mortality, but it's just not named. It's interesting to see how quickly it becomes this main project of the WHO, at least HRP. But did you feel that maybe HRP was the radical department of the WHO? Is this really a little cohort within the larger WHO? Or did you feel that it was a good fit with the rest of the organization?

Jane Cottingham 46:44
It's an interesting question and I think it's probably true that we were seen – and were able – to be more radical because of our co-sponsored status. It wasn't like WHO could suddenly decide we were too radical and they could cut us off. There was a sister, co-sponsored program called TDR. It was the research program on tropical diseases [research]. And interestingly, in kind of parallel developments, I became the gender person and our PCC, Policy and Coordination Committee, which is essentially the Governing Board of HRP, said we think we should set up a Women's Advisory Panel for the program, or maybe it should be called the Gender Advisory Panel. Please come back to us next year with a proposal for one or the other. I don't remember exactly whether TDR had the same mechanism, but they had a person in charge of gender work in TDR, Carol Vlassoff, a Canadian, and our work went along parallel.

I would say that those two programs were clearly the most radical, if that's the right word, in terms of introducing gender. For instance, the gender panel was set up, and I was the coordinator for that after the first meeting, and as a footnote by the way – but it's not a footnote – Marge Berer was the first chair of the gender panel for six years. People thought there was going to be blood on the floor. Some of these entrenched researchers were saying "oh they want us to be gender-trained. It sounds like dog training", but in fact, it was. We chose the 12 people, and they were just wonderful people, so engaged in the process and very respectful. Everybody was so pleased. They thought it was going to be blood on the floor at the end of it, but everybody seemed to be on a high, to the point that the upper echelons at WHO said: "could we ask your gender panel to look at the whole of WHO?"

Nicole Bourbonnais 49:11
Ha, how many years do you have?

Jane Cottingham 49:19
How many departments are there? It's interesting, because I don't think there was any other department that really took on or had a unit specifically on gender in the way that we did. Rather, they installed – and you've probably come across that – some kind of a thing within the Director General's Office, somebody who's supposed to do gender mainstreaming, whatever that is. There are different ways of defining that. There's probably a study to be done about why it was that the special programs were able to do this. As I said, the fact of being co-sponsored must have made a huge difference, and the fact of having their own individual governing boards, because anything else in the WHO has to go through the World Health Assembly, which is a big political machine.

Nicole Bourbonnais 50:18
Probably also the presence of all these feminists within the organization?

Jane Cottingham 50:26
Yes, but that happened gradually. It was a very fascinating period, and I think we were able to move the agenda considerably.

Nicole Bourbonnais 50:39
After you did the researcher-women's group meetings, then worked on the abortion guidance, and then did you move on to another project from there? What were you?

Jane Cottingham 50:50
Yes. I still had gender panel meetings every year, and there was work to implement a number of different recommendations that had come out of the dialogue meetings. There were two key ones. One was the issue that came up in many of the dialogue meetings, which was informed consent, and the fact that, if you're going to have an implant or an IUD, there has to be a proper informed consent process, but particularly informed consent relating to research. Research was being conducted, I think of India in particular, because it had its own big research machine in terms of contraception. We learned – and it was documented that – women had no idea that they were actually being sterilized or having some kind of contraceptive method that they didn't have any control over. That was the main issue. We conducted research on informed consent in three different countries, and came up with recommendations on how to ensure informed consent. I think that was in – I can't remember which countries except Chile.

The other one was that the question of barrier methods of contraception came up quite a lot, especially at the first meeting and the Asia meeting. They said: "why are you not doing any research into barrier methods?" At that point the female condom was just becoming available. There was some research conducted, but also we decided it needed a whole lot of information packets put out there. I was involved with that. Then we did this three country study on the diaphragm, because the researchers were just saying: "these are useless, they don't really protect women properly. They'll just come needing an abortion." We said: "actually, there's no research that's been done on the diaphragm." That was an interagency project. There was FHI (Family Health International) in the States, and Population Council and us, and we each oversaw a study which had a common protocol in three different countries. We did the one in Turkey, FHI did the one in the Philippines, and Population Council in Colombia. That was really, really

interesting. We came up with good results looking at, particularly, how comfortable the women feel about using the diaphragm. You know, what information is needed to provide that?

The problem is that – although I'm not sure how much of a problem it was – of getting hold of diaphragms. Now that PATH – that's based in Seattle – actually makes silicon diaphragms, it may be that it's easier. There was a super design with a little loop that you could pull, but better, and it doesn't discolor like the rubber diaphragms. I don't know where we're at with that or whether anybody still uses them. If you don't want to have, or you can't stand hormonal contraception, it's a possibility. You have to use it with the spermicide, and you have to use it correctly. But why not? Women are not stupid. We did that research and it was published, and the results were pooled and published.

Nicole Bourbonnais 51:14
Was there discussion on the condom as well?

Jane Cottingham 55:21
The dialogue meetings were focusing on: what do women want? The condom was already out there, has been there for ages.

Nicole Bourbonnais 55:29
It's one of the oldest methods, but seems to always be second rate. I get the impression that during the AIDS crisis, obviously there was a bit more attention?

Jane Cottingham 55:43
We did less on that, because I think we were talking about women-controlled methods, although obviously something like female condom use, it's not something you could use without your partner knowing and noticing.

To come back to your question: so what else was there? Later, I had a team of four people. Claudia was on my team for a while as well. One of them was Eszter Kismödi, who was taken on as a human rights advisor, because we, as the gender panel, said that we really need to make sure we're integrating human rights aspects into all of the work that's being done. I need somebody who can really work who is grounded in human rights, so she's great. We had a number of projects, one of which was that we elaborated a human rights tool for assessing effort to be used at the country level to see if their laws – there's the international level agreements – but the law of a country, did it coincide with their policies and what was happening on the ground? It was quite a complex thing. It took us a while, and we tested it in Indonesia, and maybe in Kenya. There were two or three countries that we tested it in. Is it still used? I don't know. Then there was a project on sexual health, human rights and the law, which Eszter basically led. It was looking at the intersection of public health with human rights law, so things like criminalizing homosexuality and what effect that has on health.

Nicole Bourbonnais 57:49
Is this still in the '90s?

Jane Cottingham 57:54
No, this is in the 2000s, 2001. In the 2000s, it happens that I still have a lot of documents I want to distribute to the world in general. I was going to ask you if you're interested in having what we produced.

Nicole Bourbonnais 58:13
Happy to.

Jane Cottingham 58:16
I can bring more. I have more. Otherwise, I can also leave these down in the library. And maybe you could look at them.

Nicole Bourbonnais 58:21
I will look at them first.

Jane Cottingham 58:22
There's a "help yourself" pile that Yves told me about [at the Graduate Institute library]. Next time we meet, I can bring more. That was our production, but it took quite a long time to do, and I thought it was super important because the articulation of human rights and public health is quite difficult sometimes. The more I went on with gender, the more I felt that – maybe I was the one who raised it in that discussion the other day. It's a bit fluffy, and what does it depend on? Whereas, if you say there is international human rights law, the right to health comprises this, this and this, you can actually use it as a better tool. The problem is how to then fit that into service provision or research even. That really became the focus of my work, I would say, in the 2000s, until I retired in 2009. When I retired, this [the Sexual Health, Human Rights and the Law document] had not been produced. Eszter asked me to be the consultant who would pull all the pieces together, which I did. It took another two years to work on it. That was really interesting.

Nicole Bourbonnais 59:46
Maybe can you talk a bit more about that? Because, obviously, we've talked about it in other contexts, but this shift from women to gender, as you were saying when you were talking, it's kind of happening as you're there, and it's a little bit fluffy. Maybe you could say a bit more about it.

Jane Cottingham 1:00:02
Yes. The dialogue meetings I would have to report on, first of all, to STAG which is the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group, and then to the governing board, PCC. I would make these – terrified at first – but I would make these presentations of what came out and there would be comments from people, you know. Some people were supportive, but some would say: "it's all very well these women's perspectives, but who are these women and where are the real women?", as opposed to the fake women? This kind of language made us realize maybe we need dialogue with different women. These women are people who are all engaged with women's groups at the country level, and who are working in the area of health. As part of the reflection we asked, do we want a Women's Advisory Group, or do we want a Gender Advisory Group? We're talking about '95 because the Gender Advisory Panel started in '96. We had a discussion in the department, and said: "yes, but if we say gender, we can include men's roles as well." We thought that was

really important. As you say, we didn't do much on condoms, but the department had a whole task force on male methods of male hormonal contraception.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:00:07
Because they worked on the male pill?

Jane Cottingham 1:01:42
Yes. It was really challenging because they needed huge doses of the hormones to suppress sperm production, and then it wasn't clear how long it was going to take to come back. It was really a difficult area of research. I don't know but I think it's still going on. They used to come and present their work to the Gender Advisory Panel. We'd give feedback, etc. It seemed to make a lot more sense given that men and women are involved in sexual reproductive health on both sides. Everybody was happy with calling it a Gender Advisory Panel at that point and politically, it seemed to make sense. But the more we worked on it – what does that really mean for programs? How do you put a gender dimension into research when it's very fluffy, and you can make it mean a lot of different things. I felt the need for more rigor, and the rights dimension just made it for me, more comfortable, it meant that there was something very specific you could refer to.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:03:05
I remembered that there was something I wanted to ask you about. We're going to now go back two decades, because I just remembered. As you know, right now, I'm looking at breastfeeding files, and I found this group that you were involved in on the Status of Women and Breastfeeding from the 1980s. I don't know if it was a group of WHO, it was within WHO. They, briefly in the '80s, put together a little group to look at the question of women and breastfeeding. Up to that point, the conversation had really been about formula. Most of it was about the regulation of infant formula, which I know you had worked a bit on and then they were getting a lot of input from humanitarian organizations, War On Want, also La Leche. Then there was this kind of move to: maybe we should also ask some women's groups.

Jane Cottingham 1:04:16
Ha, totally revolutionary.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:04:17
There's a great memo from Vicki Hammer where she says: "maybe we should ask some people who breastfed about this." Maybe you don't remember this specific group, but maybe if you can talk a bit about the work that you did around breastfeeding back in the '80s? I think we talked very briefly about it.

Jane Cottingham 1:04:38
Yes. I wasn't specifically involved in groups on breastfeeding, other than through this work that we did on the Bottle Babies thing, which we published the same time as the first ISIS bulletin [JC Note: "Bottle Babies: a guide to the baby foods issue", published by Isis in three languages (English, French and German) in 1976]. Because ISIS was just starting, and this was clearly a woman's issue, even though the action that was being taken was at the level of the multinational corporations and their responsibility, still there were women in there somewhere. It seemed like a really important thing for us to be engaged and saying: "well,

you know what? It's not only a question of – can women afford to buy the baby milk? If they're in a situation where they don't have any money and they don't have access to clean water, what is this about?" "We need to bottle feed instead of breast feed," was the image of women in the West at the time anyway was: if you breastfeed, it won't be good for your figure, your breasts will sag, and all of these terrible things. In the '70s, and it may still be the case, you can tell me about your experience, but there wasn't any specific encouragement to breastfeeding.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:06:08
Oh it's the opposite now.

Jane Cottingham 1:06:11
I think that's because of this whole movement. When I breastfed my kids, and now we're talking more than 40 years ago, there wasn't what there is today, where somebody can come along to the maternity ward and see if you're breastfeeding. Although, I'm saying that, but now I am remembering something else, which was that the woman who was in the same ward as me, claimed she couldn't breastfeed, or didn't want to breastfeed. Somebody would come every day and try to persuade her, but she was convinced that it was going to be detrimental. It wasn't that somebody came along and helped me to breastfeed, but if you decided you didn't want to, then you've got somebody coming to say something. No, there's so much more support now than there was at the time. In the early '70s, there was so much about the image of women, you know, using the imagery of women in bikinis to sell a car with publicity basically objectifying women. The bottle feeding thing fitted into that as well.

I was in touch with the groups on breastfeeding, and maybe that's why I ended up going to this. And I certainly knew Vicki Hammer, she was great, but it wasn't something I was directly involved in. Although I always had connections with the Geneva infant feeding group, GIFA, and IBFAN, the International Baby Food Action Network, which still apparently works at the level of the World Health Assembly, because there's backsliding all the time on these things. It was really thanks to them that the whole Code for the Marketing of Breast milk Substitutes actually managed to get through and was agreed on by the WHA.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:08:26
So we had gotten to 2009 and then after you retire, you're still working on reports, right? Did you properly retire?

Jane Cottingham 1:08:41
Not for a number of years. I think I probably went on for six or seven years, actually doing stuff with Sundari, by the way, because we did a whole thing on family planning and human rights, on human rights and gender, and we did a chapter for a handbook. We really liked working together, so that was great. By then Eszter, who was the Human Rights Advisor, had actually left WHO, and Rajat Khosla had come on board, and he was the one who was ultimately responsible for actually getting these documents published. He would come back to me for doing different things. At one point, he came and said: "could you do this thing?" And you know what? Actually no. There's a point where I was just thinking, I've done that – I just don't think I want to. I thought when I retired – also because I bought the place where I'm living – I thought I would need the extra money, but by then, it was clear that actually I was okay. I didn't have to work to

make it up. So I stopped doing consultancies with WHO. For six years I was on the Board of Directors of the Guttmacher Institute, which meant going three times a year to New York, which was actually great, because then I would meet up with friends, and New York's always exciting.

Then gradually I decided that I wanted to write. I had started creative writing a numbers of years before, when I left ISIS, so that was the end of '87. In '88 I went to Rutgers University to work with Charlotte Bunch for four months, I had a visiting scholarship, and I thought it's great – I can work on the history of ISIS. So I started on that, and the way it came out I thought, I must try to capture some of the discussions we had, because we had long debates about different issues. It came out as a novel, because you don't want to specifically name the people, but you want to have the discussions. So I renamed them. At the time, The Women's Press existed. It doesn't anymore in the UK. I knew Ros de Lanerolle, who was the person who started it. I sent her a couple of chapters, and I said: "what do you think of this, a history of ISIS?" She said she wasn't enthusiastic because she didn't like the novel. She wanted some kind of: this happened then, and this happened then. That wasn't how I wanted to write it. I put that in abeyance.

But it's really fun writing a novel. When was it? When I was working in WHO? It must have been in [1998], I decided: I'll take a three month break, and I'll go and write, which I did. At the end of that period, a week after I'd started back again, my husband died, so that kind of put that into abeyance but I wrote a lot about grief, and about him and lots of things. I really kept on writing then, but also realizing my idea was to write a novel. It didn't really happen then, but after retirement, and I don't know why – I'm part of the Geneva Writers Group and I started going to workshops and I started writing poetry after my husband died – I decided I must tell my grandchildren about my famous grandfather. He was a very famous crime reporter in London born in 1885 died in 1965. I was 18 when he died. But I never knew him. I never met him, except I saw him on television when he was on "This is your life". I started to write about him, and it's ended up being a 110,000-word manuscript about different aspects of his life. I found things that he'd written, and did all of this research into stuff. That's been something I've been majorly working on, which is totally different from the health thing. I'm trying to find a publisher, but I haven't found one yet. It's difficult. The publishing world is almost inaccessible. You have to find a literary agent. You have to have your pitch, you have to have all kinds of things and somebody who believes in you.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:14:08
It's convoluted, especially for fiction. For academic, it's very different.

Jane Cottingham 1:14:15
Yes. This is historical fiction with bits of nonfiction, so it's a funny mixture as well.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:14:25
So that's your project at the moment?

Jane Cottingham 1:14:28
That's my project at the moment.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:14:31
Your children are grown up?

Jane Cottingham 1:14:33
Yes and I have four grandchildren. I was very engaged with my son's children, who are now age 26 and 21. He was having difficulties when they were young. So I was very, very engaged with them. My daughter has two daughters of nine and six. I look after them on Wednesdays every week.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:15:09
Can I ask you then, to come to some sort of conclusion, you can either think of these now, or you can think of them more, and we can come back. But I'm thinking: if you look at the kind of scope of your path, and if you think about now, maybe, what would be some of the things that you enjoyed most about that path and the things that you did, the things that you found the hardest? In the present, what makes you most excited about, say, feminism or the health world, and what makes you most concerned?

Jane Cottingham 1:15:49
All of those are all huge questions.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:15:52
We could leave them to sit and then we can come back with a few reflections.

Jane Cottingham 1:15:56
One of the things that I omitted to say, one of the things that I really appreciated, was the people that I worked with, particularly in the WHO, in the health field. One of the things that we did was elaborating a training course on "Gender and Rights in Reproductive Health," which was actually directed to health managers. The group that worked on it was Sundari, there's Sofia Gruskin, you're in touch with, as the human rights person. Our main partner in this was the Women's Health Project in South Africa, Barbara Klugman, Sharon Fonn and Khosi Xaba. It was a project we did over a number of years. In fact, Claudia was involved with it at the beginning, and then she took on the violence work, and so I took this over. And they were just wonderful women, it was a wonderful process. The South African women in particular, because of their whole political context and what they'd come through, had developed ways of working together which were very transparent. We met a number of times, and we produced this training thing, which – I don't know whether it's available online. I may be able to find a copy for you if you're interested. [JC Note: Transforming health systems. Gender and rights in reproductive health: a training manual for health managers. https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/67233].

Then we worked with partners again in all regions of the world to run this training course. By then there was an Italian woman who came onto my team, who was involved in helping me run the course. We did one, for instance, in China, which was amazing, really interesting, with a group in Yunnan province in the southwest, a research group, but they were very keen on doing gender and rights work. Then we did it in Kazakhstan, of all places. It was translated into Russian. We did it in Sudan with Ahfad University for Women, and they translated it into Arabic. We must have done one in Francophone Africa, - yes, Burkina Faso, and then there was one in Argentina. That was really exciting, really.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:16:19
Were you actually going to all of those places?

Jane Cottingham 1:18:59
Yes and this was parallel to this human rights tool that I mentioned. I remember being in Indonesia for the human rights tool, and then flying back and having to fly the next day to Burkina Faso for this training thing. Not surprisingly, after that, I got quite sick. It was crazy. There were points where I traveled so much – I remember getting a questionnaire from KLM, asking "what flights have you taken in the last six months, or the last year?" And I could not remember. There were too many, and I thought that this is not okay as a way of conducting one's life.

The friendships, the collegiality, I don't know what words to use, were just amazing. Amazing. That's one thing. And yes, all the people I worked with in WHO, in the end, were just great. Having started as a secretary in LWF, and then you end up sort of being in charge of a team, just felt, personally, very good.

I was asked by the Filipino women to write that chapter, which I did happily, because in the end, I never wrote the history of ISIS, and this was suddenly a way of at least recording some of the history the way I saw it. If I do that, I don't have to do the history anymore, because the longer you get from the actual events, the harder it is to pull it all together. It was painful, bizarrely, revisiting that in my memory. It's as though there are definitely two parts to my life, but they're totally interlinked, obviously, in the way that I've told you about, because I focused on health, because health emerged from the women's documentation that led me to focusing on sexual and reproductive health. It's like there were two totally different periods. And maybe that's true. Maybe from the '70s, and '80s and early '90s that was one whole period, and then it became different after that. Well, it did in my life anyway. A funny mixture of wonderful things. There were wonderful things in the ISIS thing too. I think I was probably looking for myself more then, as well as having all kinds of questions.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:21:29
I'm thinking maybe the timing of your husband's illness, and then there's this whole second life.

Jane Cottingham 1:21:42
That's true too. And having to deal with all of that.

In terms of the woman's movement today, I don't know what to say. I'm quite often struck by the fact that – I listen to French radio a lot, because I find it a little bit more informative than Swiss radio. I do listen to the BBC sometimes. But I'm struck by how some of the things that women are saying just sound like exactly the things we were saying back in the '70s. On the other hand, I feel like the situation of women, as we were saying earlier, is actually hugely improved, at least in this part of the world. I was listening to a BBC program the other day that talked about the fact that there are now more women doctors than there are male doctors. That's completely been the result of the 50 years. Maybe it takes 50 years or so. I think there's still stuff to be done in terms of equal pay for work of equal value, but there are huge strides that have been made there as well.

I can't quite engage in the same way that I did when I hear people talking about that. And the Women's March – there were a number of years when I did that. In Geneva, as you might have noticed, the 14th of June is the Women's Strike. I used to be involved in that, but I feel now – and I don't know whether it's just because of my age, but I just feel like, you know what? It doesn't feel like my struggle or my thing anymore. It's almost: been there, done that. But I know if, suddenly, say the right to abortion were withdrawn in Switzerland, I'd be out in the streets. So there are certain things that would engage me more ferociously.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:23:54
I think you get to have some rest.

Jane Cottingham 1:24:01
Ok, yes. But you know I have a friend who is always out there... But anyway, yeah. So, I don't know whether you need more.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:24:09
Is there anything else you want to add?

Jane Cottingham 1:24:12
Some of the questions you raised, I think I haven't answered.

Nicole Bourbonnais 1:24:18
We could stop there for today.

Jane Cottingham 1:24:20
We can totally stop there.