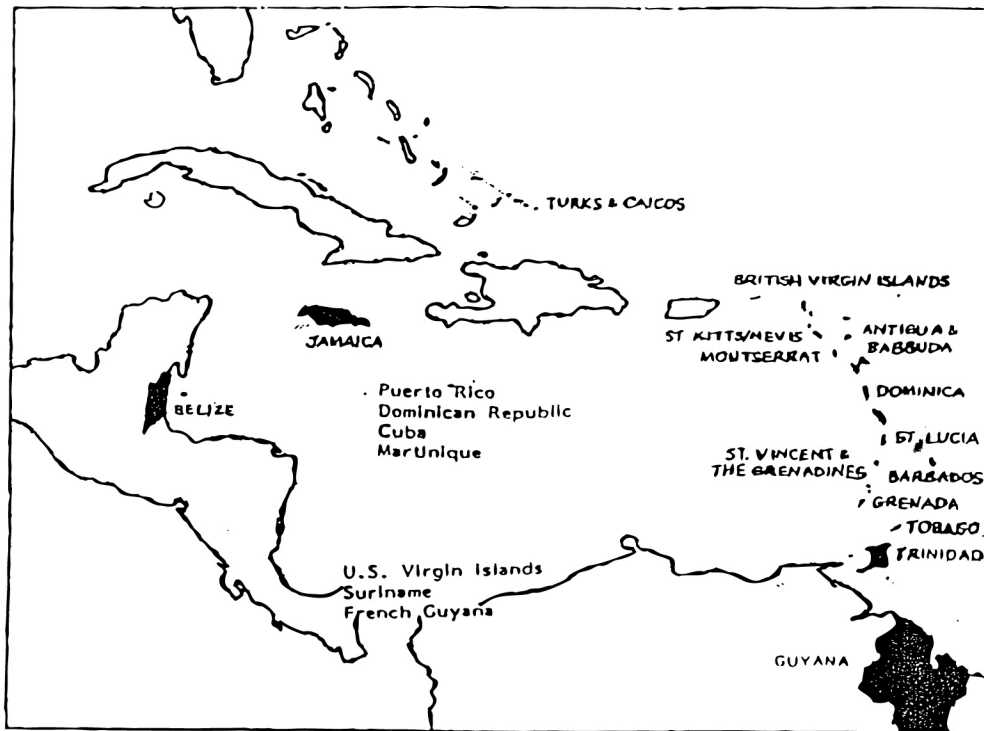


Carra News

NEWSLETTER of The Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

Vol. 1 No. 1
March 1987

CAFRA



STRUCTURE

1. The Secretariat
2. National Representatives
3. Regional Committees
 - Finance & Funding
 - Documentation
 - Research
 - Action/Internal Education
 - Public Information

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- 1(i) develop an approach to women's problems from the perspectives of race, class and sex, specifically to show how the exploitative relationship between men and women facilitates the continuation, maintenance and reproduction of exploitative capitalist relations, and how the capitalist system benefits from this situation.
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Institutional membership - US\$ 5.00 per annum

CAFRA NEWS

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editorial

Dear Readers,

At last the first issue of the CAFRA Newsletter is out. The Newsletter has had quite a turbulent history - last year another 'first issue' got as far as the printer and died painfully there. We however must pay tribute to Joan French of Jamaica who collected that material, edited it and did the final mock-up. We now have a promising Newsletter Committee within the Secretariat, and hope to produce 4 issues annually.

We invite CAFRA members to send feature articles, letters and CARIFEM updates. Please also enter our 'Name the Newsletter' and logo contests.

Second anniversary greetings (April 2nd) to all CAFRA members! And long live the spirit of Caribbean sisterhood.
++

Newsletter Committee/Production

Rawwida Baksh-Sooden
Tina Johnson
Cathy Shepherd
Stephanie Pile

CONTENTS

- 1 Editorial
- 2 Letters
- 3 CAFRA Projects / Women in Caribbean Agriculture
Anthology of Caribbean OO's Poetry
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- 6 Conference Reports
- 7 Visits to Secretariat 1987
- 8 Meetings - Courses - Fellowships
Contests
- 9 Publications Received
- 10 CARIFEM Update / Regional Events
CAFRA Skills Bank

Letters

I am a Jamaican living in the U.S. Do you accept membership from those of us living abroad? If so, I would like very much to join. I was most excited by your statement of aims and objectives. Your organisation is a truly vital one. All the best.

Yours in sisterhood,

Michelle Cliff, Santa Cruz, C.A., U.S.A.

*

A few weeks ago, I came across a notice in one of our Feminist magazines which said that your organisation is dealing with women in the West Indies. In the Netherlands, I am involved in an organisation which stands for economic independence for women. In this organisation, we have a variety of women's groups, both with the political (left and right wing) and idealist backgrounds. We also work together on a European level.

Sisterly greetings,

Marion Volk, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

*

I am a member of a women's association in the Bahamas called DAWN - Developing Alternatives for Women Now. Our Association has taken up the issue of incest and sexual abuse of children. We are working on both public education and changes in the current legislation. We would appreciate receiving any material you may have on the subject. I am also interested in linking up with writers and poets in the Caribbean.

Yours sincerely,

Marion Bethel, Nassau, Bahamas.

*

CAFRA appears to be amazingly dynamic despite the constraints - it must be the direct result of the energy and commitment of its co-ordinator.

The Collective has been moving ahead by leaps and bounds, and now has its own construction company and will be moving into its own premises at the end of this week.

I've been thinking a lot about the need

to document the role of women in the provision of shelter in the Caribbean, particularly with the International Year of the Homeless in 1987, and I wonder if anyone in the E. Caribbean would be interested in collaborating on something like that.

All best wishes,

Ruth McLeod, Kingston, Jamaica.

*

The two projects, Agriculture and Violence Against Women are both of great interest to me. I do a little agriculture - fruit trees mainly - but my latest venture has been bees. Beekeeping and the products - honey, wax and pollen - could be something that CAFRA agriculture investigates. Who knows, in a few years, CAFRA honey may be a large seller and substantial fund producer. As for the violence against women project - well, St. Croix has been very involved in that subject for several years. I have enclosed our latest newsletter which will bring you up to date with our activities.

In sisterhood, success and struggle,

Gloria Joseph, St. Croix.

*

I have been living in Barbados for several months on a Volunteer (Canadian) program and recently doing some work with the 'Women and Development' here.

I have been involved with the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women for several years, and would be interested in hearing about CAFRA which I read about in 'Womanspeak'.

Audrey McLaughlin, Barbados.

*

Peace on Earth! May the Christ child and his mother bless all our efforts at peace building.

One such effort is the Campaign Against Military Prostitution (CAMP International) launched by the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women.

May we count on your support and collaboration?

In solidarity,

Sister M. Soledad Perpnan, Phillipines.

CAFRA PROJECTS

women in agriculture

The present situation in the Caribbean is one where recent pillars of the economy, i.e. tourism, export-oriented industry and even energy-based industries have proven to be unstable bases on which to programme serious long-term development. There is emerging a slow reappreciation of the importance of large-scale rural development programmes

In recent years, much has been written about the role of women in development. There seems to be a greater awareness of rural women's work and the multiplicity of tasks they perform, as they expend up to fifteen hours a day functioning as farmer, trader, banker, food-processor and household manager.

In St. Vincent and Dominica, women in agriculture and rural industry continue to perform all these functions without social support services like appropriate technology, male-income support, and necessary skills. Women play active roles in the preparation of land for construction, in weeding, planting, pre-harvest care and harvesting. As traders, or hucksters, their impact has been significant in marketing in the region; they dominate trade in vegetables, fruits and root-crops.

Yet their contribution to agriculture in general goes unrecorded, and lack of documentation in this area is serious. Their contribution to agriculture's share in the G.N.P. and G.D.P. is rarely reflected in national statistical data.

A research project is therefore being carried out for researching and documenting the experiences and contribution of women in agriculture, with the aim of filling the gaps in information on women in this vital sector, as well as raising of policy, e.g. land settlement, privatization, historical relationships to land, agricultural food production goals, decision-making in production relationships and their implications for male/female relationships, women's economic independence and national productivity in agriculture.

project update

Participating Countries

St. Vincent and the Grenadines
The Commonwealth of Dominica

Executing Agencies

Committee for the Development of Women (CDW) of St. Vincent
Small Projects Assistance Team (SPAT) of Dominica

Project Period

January 1987-December 1988

Activities carried out so far:-

(a) The inaugural meeting of the project took place in St. Vincent from January 14-16, 1987. Participants included Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen (CAFRA Co-ordinator), Joan French (Project Co-ordinator), Elsie Done and Belkis Mones (2 trainers in theory and methodology from CIPAF, Dominican Republic), and 8 members of the combined Research teams (Nelcia Robinson, Beverly Warren, Anselma Morgan and Bonny Millington of St. Vincent, and Noreen John, Alice Clarke, Cecelia Babb and Josephine Dublin of Dominica). Also invited were members of the St. Vincent back-up team of the project.

(b) The Training Course for the Researchers followed immediately, from January 19-30, 1987.

(c) The Research Teams have since begun working in St. Vincent and Dominica.



anthology of ♀♀'s poetry

Recent research throughout the Caribbean Region reveals that there are many more struggling literary females than the printed output would lead us to believe. And invariably, the product is poetry. It is not difficult to understand why. It is easier, after all, to write a poem if one has a few minutes between cooking, looking after children and coping with housework than a novel or a play. But much of this poetry is 'silent' in that it remains private, unobtrusive, closeted. The practitioners of this art are not led to take themselves or their poems seriously and as a result the writing is sporadic, lacking in development, and eventually goes nowhere.

It is important to note though, that if women do not articulate and explore their own experience, their development cannot help but be stultified. Allowing one's insights to pass into the common pool of literary endeavour is part of the process of exchange in which human beings are engaged. It is in the interest of redressing this perceived deficiency in the publication of women's poetry in the Caribbean that CAFRA has initiated the project of compiling an anthology of contemporary poetry. The problem of writing and publishing is compounded by our history of slavery and indentureship, colonialism and its attendant disabling mechanisms. This applies of course to all writers, but more so to the women among them and especially to those women who have neither the means nor the circumstances to engage in creative activity for prolonged periods of time.

I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman.

- Virginia Woolf.

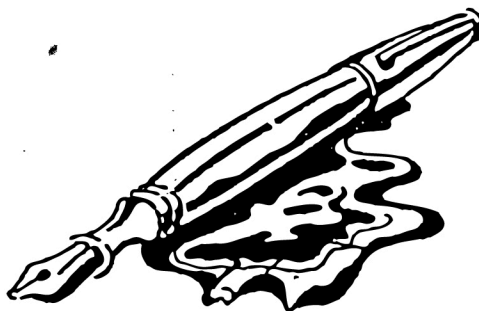
Woolf wrote this in the early years of the twentieth century. More women the world over have become recognised as poets since then. But only within the last decade or so have the Caribbean women poets begun to emerge. The anthology Jamaica Woman compiled in the late seventies by Mervyn Morris brought together many of these new Jamaican female poets under one cover - poets such as Lorna Goodison, Christine Craig, Pam Mordecai and Heather Royes. Lorna Goodison has since published two volumes of poetry, Tamarind Season (1983) and I Am Becoming My Mother (1986). Dionne Brand, living and working in Toronto, has published four volumes of poetry to date. But critical commentary, which is a crucial aspect of the development process, has been scarce. The poet needs this feedback from her audience and the need for more dialogue is evident. The publication of this anthology holds out distinct possibilities for the beginning of a real discourse on feminist poetics for the Caribbean.

Women have as rich and varied a history here as in every other part of the world. But the passing of experience from woman to woman has been largely through the means of the oral tradition - within the inner circle of the family, the tribe, the village. Much less has been written about the rites of passage to womanhood than the corresponding rites of manhood. Perhaps with the new bonds of sisterhood, and freedom from competition for securing males, which women are forging daily, ways can be found to share experience more widely.

At any rate, this anthology will offer Caribbean women the opportunity to present themselves, for the first time, in a common medium which intends to cross all of the boundaries of class, race, language and country. Such a fertile accumulation of poetic experience cannot but reproduce itself. The emergence of new woman poets, engaged in sustained acts of writing,

is one of the positive future projections of such an anthology.

Ramabai Espinet



PRESS RELEASE

CAFRA invites Women living in the Caribbean and Caribbean Women living abroad to contribute to an anthology of poems.

Publication of the anthology is intended to challenge the male-centred bias which has dominated West Indian Literature and to provide an opportunity for Women Writers to have their work published.

Poems may be on any topic and should be unpublished. Since the anthology will be multilingual, contributions in any Caribbean language will be welcomed.

The deadline for submission has been extended to August 31, 1987. Poems should be typed (double-spaced) if possible and sent with a self-addressed envelope to CAFRA's postal address.

Conference Reports

CO'S N-S DIALOGUE IN HALIFAX

I attended a workshop which was organised by Gloria Nikoi of the Lester Pearson Institute of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, April 3-8 1986, on behalf of CAFRA. It was called 'Women in Development: Research and Linkages - A North-South Dialogue'. Participation was a mix of UN officials, women from third world countries, and Canadians.



The keynote address was given by Dunja Pastizzi, a director of INSTRAW, and the topic was "Women in International Economy: Existing Economic and Social Research and Future Priorities".

At the conference, I participated in the workshop "Health Issues Relating to Women in Development", where I introduced the issue of Violence Against Women. As part of a colourful and well received Caribbean presentation, I outlined the aims, objectives and work of CAFRA. The other Caribbean representatives were Magda Pollard of the CARICOM Secretariat, Norma Shorey-Bryan from WAND and Bernice Fraser from the Women's Study Group, University of Guyana.

The main theme of the Workshop was to attempt to explore new ways of doing research on women, which included various methods of participatory research.

S. Pile

MICROTECH. CONSULTATION

'Micro-chip Technology and its Impact on the Lives of Women Workers' was the title of the consultation which drew 40 women to Manila, Phillipines between October 5 and 15, 1986. The women included feminist activists and researchers, trade union organisers, women workers and educators. They came from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Phillipines, Netherlands, Canada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico and the U.S.A.

A five-day exposure to the Phillipines included two days in flooded, typhoon-struck MetroManila. Participants then separated into 3 teams which travelled to Baguio City, site of the Baguio City Export Processing Zone (BCEPZ), the Bataan Peninsula, site of the BEPZ and an American naval base, and Negros, a semi-feudal sugar-growing island.

The consultation was based on a conception of a global assembly line which links women workers around the world. It begins in North America, Europe and Japan where the research and design for the micro-chips are carried out and where assembly workers, often immigrant women, fabricate large sheets of micro-chips. These are sent to factories in Third World countries, particularly South-East Asia, where women factory workers, working for poverty wages in dangerous working conditions, cut, bond and test the micro-chips for re-export

to industrialised countries where they are assembled into a multitude of products including office equipment.

The introduction of this new office equipment into offices in industrialised countries is creating new and serious health hazards for women workers, as well as increasingly routinized work, new forms of management control, and massive unemployment.

At the group strategy session which closed the meeting, participants agreed to a number of actions: to establish an on-going exchange of research, information and publications; to include

an international perspective in all our work; to strengthen our workers' education programmes and efforts to organise women workers; to plan further exchanges of workers and organisers from different regions; and to translate relevant materials and learn new languages - an essential part of international solidarity. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the consultation is the network that was developed - based on already existing networks represented at the conference. These included CAFRA; SOBE (Research Institute Branch Electronics), Netherlands; CAW (Committee for Asian Women), Hong Kong; and ISIS International, Rome.

R. Baksh-Soodeen

Visits to Secretariat (1987)

JANUARY

Vasantha Chase, Agroeconomist of CARDI, St. Lucia.
Discussed (a) CAFRA's 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' Project;
(b) CARDI/FAO's Upcoming Roundtable on Rural Women.

Nan Peacocke, Editor of WOMANSPEAK, and CAFRA member, Barbados.
Discussed the possibility of a WAND/CAFRA Oral History Project.
Nan also interviewed Rawwida on the Philippines Microchip Consultation; to be published in the upcoming issue of WOMANSPEAK.

FEBRUARY

Nadia Ravelas, CAFRA member, Suriname.
Nadia visited Trinidad & Tobago on her way from the launching of the Women for Caribbean Liberation (WCL) in St. Vincent & The Grenadines.
Discussed the research recently initiated by a team of seven in Suriname on 'Violence against Women'.

MARCH

Ismael Davila Borges, Proyecto Caribeno de Justicia y Paz, Puerto Rico.
Discussed the Proyecto's ongoing work on militarization in the region, as well as the possibility of sending a CAFRA member to the Proyecto for intensive training in graphics.

Linda Cartey, Associate CAFRA member, Toronto, Canada.
Spent 3 months in the region doing research for her Ph.D thesis.

Meetings · Courses · Fellowships · Etc.

Workshops in the Use of Microcomputers for Social Development

8 four-week workshops will be held in 1987 by the Social Development Centre, Chicago, U.S.A. The workshops are preceded by 2-week intensive preparatory courses for those who lack experience with microcomputers. 5 of the workshops are in Spanish, 2 in English and 1 in French. A limited number of scholarships are available to pay the instruction fees, but the rest of the expenses are payable by the applicant. Write directly to the Office of Training, Social Development Center, 1313 East 60th Street, Room 476, Chicago, Illinois, 60637, U.S.A.

1987 Fellowship Program for Latin America and the Caribbean

This program will be held at the International Centre for Research on Women, Washington D.C. over a three month period. For young professionals and graduate students with the objective of training promising professionals in the use of social science research for the development of effective policies and programs to increase the economic participation of poor women in developing countries. Fellows will receive transportation to and from Washington D.C. and a basic stipend to cover living expenses. Proficiency in the English language is required. Write to: Director, Fellows Program, International Center for Research on Women, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 501, Washington D.C., 20036, U.S.A.

Research Program on Women's Status and Fertility

A competitive research program under which the Rockefeller Foundation expects to support 12-15 projects annually, most in the US\$15,000-35,000 range, on the interrelation between fertility and women's status and roles in developing countries. Inquiries should be sent to Population Sciences (SWAF), the Rockefeller Foundation, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036, U.S.A. The formal deadline for proposals is September 15, 1987.

Contests

CONTEST # 1

The name, "CAFRA News" is descriptive, but somewhat lacking in imagination. A book prize is therefore offered to the person who can come up with a more stimulating name for the newsletter. Ideally, it should be something that can be understood in all the languages of the region.

CONTEST # 2

Calling all members of CAFRA with artistic talent! A logo is needed to be used on stationery, leaflets, the newsletter etc. It will be expected to symbolise the feminist and regional aspects of the organisation. There will be a book prize for the winner. N.B. Artwork becomes the property of CAFRA and cannot be returned.

P ublications Received

- CIPAF. Cuando trabajar es un infierno: las mujeres y la nueva division interacional del trabajo. Santo Domingo: CIPAF, 1986. (Ediciones Populares Feministas, vol. 1).
- COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN. Women in Agriculture: Carriers of a heavy load. Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines: CDW, 1984.
- GARCIA MUNIZ, Humberto. Boots, Boots, Boots: Intervention, Regional Security and Militarization in the Caribbean, 1979-1986. Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace, 1986.
- HELLINGER, Steve. 'Failings of the CBI: Reflections from the Caribbean: A Report on a Visit to the Commonwealth Caribbean, 5-19 January, 1986'. Washington, D.C.: The Development Group for Alternative Policies, 1986.
- INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S TRIBUNE CENTRE. Images of Nairobi: Reflections and Follow-up. New York: IWTC, 1986. (Decade for Women Information Resources, no. 5).
- NOVIB. Cuestionario para presentacion de proyectos. Den Haag, Holland: Nederlands Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, n.d.
- PHILLIPS, Daphne. 'Women Traders in Trinidad & Tobago'. Port-of-Spain: Economic Commission for Latin America, Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 1985 (LC/CAR/G.151).
- ROBINSON, Nelcia. Poetry is Feelings. (Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines): Printed by Alternatives Ltd., n.d.
- SAHELI WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE. Saheli: The First Four Years. New Delhi: The Centre 1983?
- UNESCO. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Education Sector Survey: An Analysis of th Education and Training System and Recommendations for its Development. Paris: UNESCO, 1982.

PERIODICALS

Asian Women Worker's Newsletter 5 (December 1986).

CRC-CDAS Newsletter 3 (Fall 1983).

Koudmen...Issues in Dominican Development 1 (June 1985); 2 (September 1986); 3 (November 1986).

INSTRAW News 6 (Spring-Summer 1986).

ISIS Internacional Ediciones de la Mujer 6 (Diciembre 1986): 'Mujeres Campesinas: America Latina'.

CARIFEM update

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (I.W.D.)

1987 - Trinidad & Tobago.

This year in Trinidad the International Women's Day celebrations made a significant impact upon the population. Working Women, an organisation based in Tunapuna, convened a committee of interested groups and individuals, forming an I.W.D. Working Committee.

The celebrations began on March 7 with a Women's Solidarity March through the streets of Port-of-Spain. A Rally was held afterwards at the Port-of-Spain Town Hall on Knox Street. The feature speaker was Ms. Lynette Seebaran who focused upon some of the practical and immediate tasks facing the Women's Movement in Trinidad & Tobago in the coming year.

Throughout the month of March the celebrations continued with a series of weekly lunch-hour lectures held at the Town Hall. The lectures were as follows:

- March 10 - Women and the Law
(Lynette Seebaran)
- March 17 - Sexual Discrimination in the Workplace (Grace Talma)
- March 24 - Women's Health
(Sonia Roach)
- March 31 - Agression or Assertiveness:
Women in Public Life
(Rhona Baptiste)

On March 25 the Rape Crisis Centre presented the feature film Extremities at the Holy Name Convent Auditorium. A panel discussion was held afterwards. Panellists included a lawyer, a medical social worker and a police officer.

The Women and Development Studies Group of the St. Augustine Campus, University of the West Indies, is organising a Women's Art & Craft exhibition to be held in the foyer of the Central Bank from May 4 - 15. Artists include Vera Baney, Valerie Brathwaite, Valerie Belgrave, Gillian Bishop, Barbie Jardine-Otway, Greer Jones-Woodham, Althea Bastien, Wendy Nanan, Meiling and the late

Sybil Atteck. Guest artists include Jamaicans Tansley Samere, Judy Macmillan and the late Edna Manley.

Working Women will host the final event of this year's celebrations - for Mother's Day. A panel discussion on the topic, 'The Changing Role of Mother' will be held at the Public Library on the evening of May 13.

The theme of the celebrations this year was Woman Power. The committee feels that many issues were raised and discussion of them has begun.

I.W.D. Working Committee.

WOMEN FOR CARIBBEAN LIBERATION

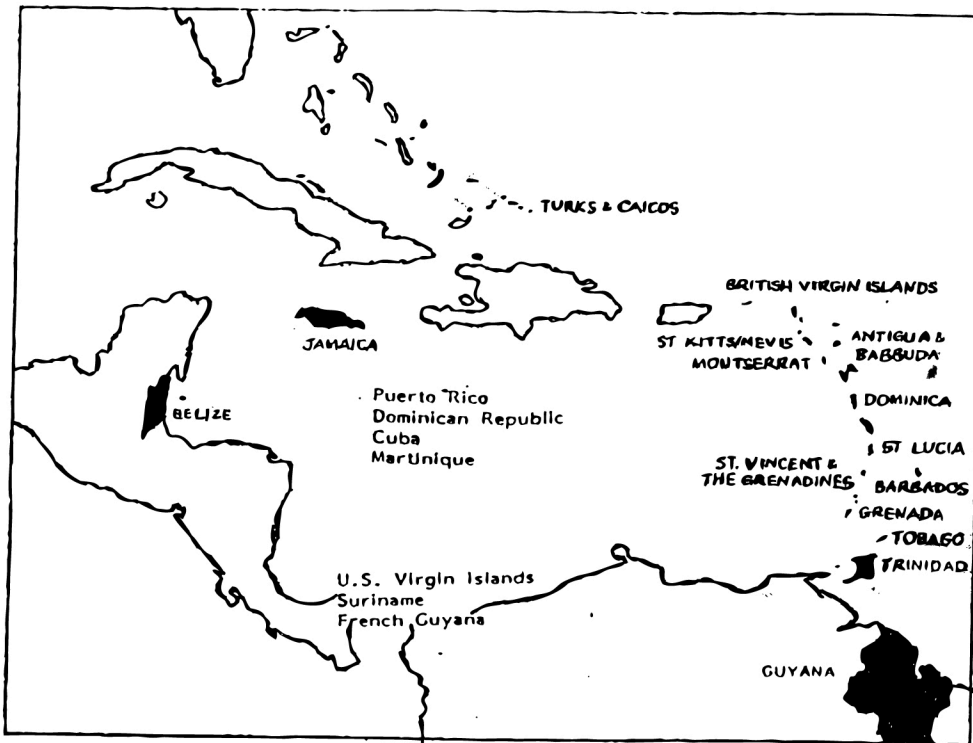
The Women for Caribbean Liberation was officially launched in February 1987 at a meeting in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As part of their programme, they propose to embark on a campaign in support of women petty traders. The Co-ordinator is Arah Hector and the organisation can be contacted at: P.O. Box 847, St. John's, Antigua
Tel (809) 462-4453

CAFRA Skills Bank

All members of CAFRA are urged to send in comprehensive curriculum vitae that can be used to form the basis of a regional Women's Skills Bank. This can then be drawn on by CAFRA members who need information and/or resource persons.

Please send to The Secretariat, 19 Maraj Street, Tunapuna, Trinidad.

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