

WOMEN AND WORK IN THE 90's

- Pay For All Work
- Protect Workers
- Sexual Harassment

SISTREN OUT DEH!

SISTREN'S 18th Anniversary was on the **17th of May 1995**. Keep up the good work Sistren and continue to help grassroots women worldwide. I wish you 18 more strong years.

Sistren collaborated with the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** in hosting a one day **Gender Workshop** at the **Women's Centre** on the **12th of May 1995**. The representatives from Sistren were:-

Afolashade
Myrtle Thompson-Rose
Jerline Todd
Dawnette Hinds

The facilitator for the session was **Mrs. Linnette Vassel**.

Sistren Theatre Collective collaborated with the **Bureau of Women's Affairs** in a series of workshops in the rural areas. The skit presentations were based on "**Improving Nutritional Status for healthy lives and Gender**". These workshops were held in the following parishes:-

- St. Mary
- St. Catherine
- St. James
- May Pen
- Mandeville

The **Caribbean Policy Development Centre** held a conference in **Trinidad** which dealt with "**The Forum of Alternatives — Building on the Culture Creativity and identity of Caribbean People**". This was held from **3rd July - 6th July 1995**. The Sistren representatives were: **Jerline Todd, Dawnette Hinds, Afolashade**.

The annual **Schoolers Workshop** commenced **August 14-25, 1995**. This was held on the grounds of Sistren, where we decided to pitch a tent to accommodate the 25 participants in attendance. **Myrtle Thompson-Rose** who has been the Co-ordinator for this project for the past two years, was very pleased with the kind of support that she/Sistren has been getting. Mrs. Rose would like to commend the support of the sponsors, parents, children's homes, and the kids who gave their full participation.

Sistren would like to take this opportunity to thank **The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, for funding the workshop.

An infomercial on Sistren's work and their involvement with the Inner City communities was filmed by the **Phase Three Production** crew. This was done as part of a project organized by a film group in London, for participants attending the **Women's Conference** in

Beijing to view aspects of life and work at Sistren.

	
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Sistren is produced three times a year by the Sistren Theatre Collective as part of its ongoing efforts to highlight issues of concern to women in the society. Sistren is a non-profit collective of women. Other activities include theatre, workshops using Drama-in-Education methodology, and research. Sistren has also experimented with film and video and produced a book of members' life stories. Lionheart Gal. Sistren Textiles is the group's income-earning project. Contact: 20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston 5, Jamaica, West Indies. Tel: (809) 92-9247 / 92-96171	

ACQUAINTED



Lana Finikin

SISTREN PROFILE

After a two year leave of absence, Lana Finikin — one of Sistren's founding members and someone who has been described as "a person who makes things happen" — returned to Sistren in the position of Coordinator in November 1995.

The time she spent away from Sistren

helped her both to enhance her skills as a leader as well as to become more aware and accepting of her leadership weakness.

Working with other organisations including GROOTS International and the URBAN HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT has provided her with experience and perspective that she

hopes will strengthen her role as a leader in Sistren and in turn strengthen Sistren as an organisation. While working with GROOTS, she helped organize all of the activities of a tent for grassroots women's delegation at the Beijing Women's Conference. During the two year period she did several short courses in English, Management and Communication and hopes to pursue further studies in Management skills.

When asked why she decided to return to Sistren, Lana said that she thought Sistren had an important role to play in the Women's movement, not just in Jamaica but also in the region and in the world. She also noted that it is something to which she has devoted 18 years of her life and feels a strong commitment and connection to the members as well as the organisation itself, but she also return to Sistren with skills to offer and goals to achieve "with whatever skills I have gained and knowledge I have gained . . . I want to see what it is I can use from that 2 year experience . . . to bring back the organisation to what it use to be once," She stated, "I want to pass on some of the skills I have learned."

In order for Sistren to continue to be effective and 'the message' reach their target audience, she believes the organisation will need to explore different methods of working including more action-oriented networking activities with other women's organisations. Just as the political and social situation in Jamaica has changed since the 1970's when Sistren first began, so too, she

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN IN 1995

Issues of gender equality are moving to the top of the global agenda but better understanding of women's and men's contributions to society is essential to speed the shift from agenda to policy to practice. Too often, women and men live in different worlds — worlds that differ in access to education and work opportunities, and in health, personal security and leisure time. The World's Women 1995, one of the main documents of the Fourth World Conference on Women, provides information and analyses to highlight the economic, political and social differences that still separate women's and men's lives and how these differences are changing.



How different are these worlds? Anecdote and misperception abound, in large part because good information has been lacking. As a result, policy has been ill-informed, strategy unfounded and practice unquestioned. Fortunately, this is beginning to change. It is changing because advocates of women's interests have done much in the past 20 years to sharpen people's awareness of the importance of gender concerns. It is changing because this growing awareness has, by raising new questions and rephrasing old, greatly increased the demand for better statistics to inform and focus the debate. And it is changing because women's contributions — and women's rights — have moved to the centre of social and economic change, as it became apparent in the series of international conferences held by the UN in recent years, including the UNC Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (CAIRO, 1994) and the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen 1995).

To promote action on the new consensus to empower women, this second edition of The World's Women builds on the first one which was issued in 1991, presenting statistical summaries of health, schooling, family life, work and public life. It presents few global figures, focusing instead on country data and regional averages. There are myriad differences among countries in every field and The World's Women tries to find a meaningful balance between detailed country statements and broad generalization.

EDUCATION FOR EMPOWERMENT

In the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, education is considered one of the most important means to empower women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in development processes. Educated women marry later, want fewer children, are more likely to use effective methods of contraception and have greater means to improve their economic livelihood.

Through widespread promotion of universal primary education, literacy rates for women have increased over the past few decades—to at least 75 percent in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and eastern and south-eastern Asia. But high rates of illiteracy among women still prevail in much of Africa and in parts of Asia. And when illiteracy is high it almost always is accompanied by large differences in rates between women and men.

At intermediate levels of education, girls have made progress in their enrolment in school through the second level. The primary-secondary through the second level. The primary-secondary enrolment ratio is now about equal for girls and boys in the developed regions and Latin America and the Caribbean and is approaching near equality in eastern, south-eastern and western

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MARIA WILLIAMS-JONES

MARIA WILLIAMS-JONES:

PIONEER OF THE INNOVATION OF THE DECADE:- THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

BY DEIDRE TYNDALE

*A major achievement
for Maria came when
she graduated with an
upper-second class
honours degree in
Management Studies
and was awarded the
Aaron Matalon
Award for Excellence
from the Institute of
Management and
Production.*

The Business District Ltd. can easily be classified as the Jamaican Business Innovation of the decade. Launched just under three years ago, the Business District already operates from two locations in the Corporate Area - Oxford Terrace in uptown Kingston and Duke Street in downtown Kingston.

The concept, dubbed "The Office Alternative", allows one to set up a business without the usual hassle involved, the renting of space, the hiring of staff (secretarial), the purchasing of furniture, equipment, and the general overheads (utilities, etc.). The Business District provides all this and more. The attractively furnished offices are presented in an upmarket corporate environment and are designed to meet differing personal styles, budgets and space needs.

PIONEER IN THE MAKING

This unique concept was introduced to Jamaica by Mrs. Maria Williams-Jones in 1993. Coming from humble beginnings in Trench Town, Maria, the last of seven children, is the daughter of a port worker and a dressmaker. She attended Jones Town Primary School and went on to attend high school at Alpha Academy. In reflecting on her roots, she says proudly:

"My mother walked very proud in Trench Town. From very early we were told about our potentials and abilities to escape poverty through hard work and dedication. I believed that with all my heart - and have proven it".

The Business District targets just about anyone who is in the process of setting up a business - Local and Foreign Consultants on project assignments; local representatives and visiting executives of international firms and multilateral agencies; and visitors exploring business opportunities in Jamaica.

Rental of an office is very flexible. One can get an office for an hour, a week, a month or a year, as one's needs dictates, and these offices come backed up by the full range of support services and facilities: photocopying, facsimile transmissions, wordprocessing services, and even personal assistants, if one is desired.

Maria got her first job after leaving Alpha at the then Barclays Bank, as a clerk. There she spent one year then moved on to work with the national airline, Air Jamaica in 1969 starting as an accounting clerk. She quickly moved up through the ranks to eventually become Vice President of the Marketing Division of the National Airline. Throughout her successful climb, however, Maria made time to qualify herself by pursuing advanced studies.

"I believe that people in the corporate world have high levels of responsibility and should always seek to qualify themselves in order to effectively carry out their tasks. One can't just depend on experience. I firmly believe this."

She successfully pursued a one-year course in Industrial Psychology and

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Micro-Economics at the Extra-Mural Centre (now the UWI School of Continuing Studies) of the University of the West Indies in 1977, then went on to pursue the Certificate in Marketing course at the College of Arts, Science and Technology (now the University of Technology) in 1979. Shortly after that Maria was awarded the Aaron Matalon Award for Excellence from the Institute of Management and Production where she graduated with an upper-second class honours degree in Management Studies.

Despite her successes academically and in her career, Mrs. Williams-Jones still pursued further studies enrolling in Jamaica's first ever Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme at the University of the West Indies. This she completed in 1991. Maria admits upon reflection that it was this programme that gave her the courage to launch out on her own:

"Indeed I feel that I am a more able entrepreneur because the MBA programme provided in-depth exposure to a wider range of business principles and techniques than undergraduate studies and work experience had thus far provided. With the MBA training, I gained the confidence to undertake most of the tasks required for establishing and operating the Business District Ltd."

Maria boasts that as a result of this programme, she was equipped her to formulate and implement the operational systems and procedures of her business and is proud of the fact that she is her own accountant and financial manager. In addition, Mrs. Williams-Jones also develops and effects the marketing planning, the human resource development and on-the-job staff training programmes, as well as new prod-

uct development and implementation systems of the business. In addition to her expertise in these areas, she has also instilled a high level of professionalism in her all-female staff. One is greeted by this professionalism on entering either District.

The design and decor of each location, reflect the careful imagination and creativity that was put into the implementation of this new business concept. Every detail of the floorplan for each branch was designed by Mrs. Williams-Jones. This evidently contributed, quite significantly to the reduction of the cost of employing these professional services. She acknowledges:

"The start-up budget and operational cost of this fledgling company would have been much higher and the project would have been pushed into the realm of non-viability if we had to employ staff or consultants to undertake these various functions".

It seemed to have been fate and her forward thinking that lead her to qualify herself to the fullest, because it was not long after completing her undergraduate studies that "tragedy" struck for her at Air Jamaica. After twenty-one years with that company and one year into the MBA programme, Maria learned from a newspaper article that her job had been made redundant. She was devastated and felt betrayed because this was done without explanation. Thinking back she attributed it to the insecurities of the men she worked with. She recalls however, that she had the full support of her staff:

"There was never a day when I felt I did not have the support of my colleagues. I felt that I also betrayed them [when I was fired] as I passionately believed and taught them, just as my parents taught me, that if you

worked hard you would be rewarded... and then to find out that was not true"

Well, as one musician put it "when one door is closed, many more are open" and it was certainly so in the case of Maria Williams-Jones. This disappointment encouraged her even more to continue on her path to success. During her second year into the MBA, her decision to be an entrepreneur germinated:

"I was deeply encouraged by the favourable reactions of my classmates, to my presentation of the marketing plan for a fictitious company called Mahogany Multi-Corp. This presentation was the real launch of The Business District."

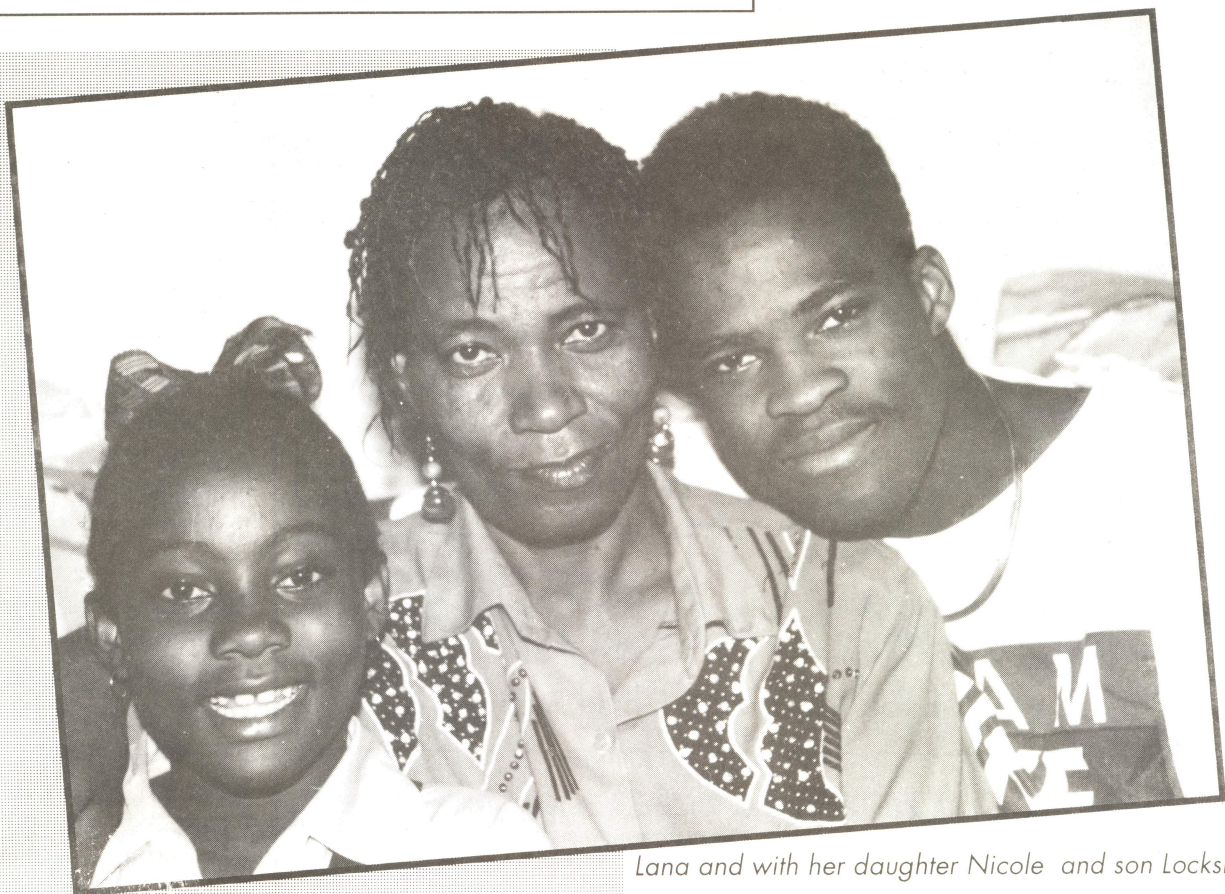
Despite her negative experience at Air Jamaica, Maria speaks of its benefits to her:

"There are certain things that nobody can take from me. I was able to work in an executive position in a company which was not always a typical Jamaican company. I travelled a lot, and had very important international responsibilities, I became vice-president of an important Jamaican Organization."

Her experiences have indeed molded her into being her own person, and those same experiences have been converted into challenges and used as motivational factors in her life. Maria Williams-Jones, a truly dynamic Jamaican Woman, is destined to benefit from the fruits of her labour and the words of encouragement from her humble parents.

She urges others to be innovative, to search for new and different ideas and hopes that through the development of the Business District, she has blazed a trail which will be an inspiration to other women.





Lana and with her daughter Nicole and son Locksley

feels, Sistren must change its methodology in response. What hasn't and won't change — and what Finikin cites as the reason Sistren has survived while many other popular theatre companies have died is Sistren's commitment to exposing the conditions of women's lives.

Her children are very supportive of her work with Sistren although her youngest daughter Nicole, who is 9 years old, has complained about the long hours that Sistren keeps her mother away from home. One of three sons Locksley, now 21, has virtually grown up watching his mother perform and grow with Sistren.

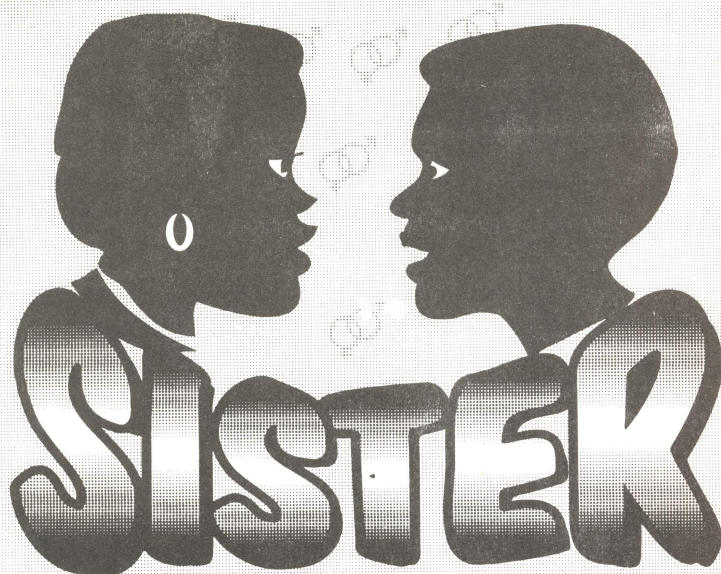
He thinks his mother's work with Sistren has been positive because it has "helped her to broaden her horizons, meet people and talk about different things that women go through." His only disappointment is that he does not get to see her perform more often.

Looking down the road, Finikin's expectations for Sistren are confidently optimistic. "My main role and objective as a member, is to see Sistren well kicking and alive in the 21st century... if we all work together towards it, it can happen "Here's to Sistren in the 21st Century!"



According to Lana, Sistren has an important role to play in the Women's movement, not just in Jamaica but also in the region and the rest of the world.

CAN I CALL YOU



Bev. Hanson Raps with Uncle Barry

*Just to talk a little bit about your impressions on
"WOMEN AND WORK IN THE 90'S"*

*Work as it relates to the economy, the introduction of modern day technology
and the different stages of development within the society.*

UNCLE BARRY: You pose an interesting question. I don't see the changes in technology as anything but offering women the potential for further development as women.

What is the problem? The problem is that the traditional occupations have been to some extent segregated, but they are being desegregated, so to speak. These are the occupations now; the professions, legal and medical professions for example and other similar occupations and professions. I feel that you can't point to any one of them now that you can say exclude women or that they are heavily segregated against women.

In fact women realise this and are availing themselves more and more of the opportunities at the UWI, for example. I think it is only in the area of Natural Sciences, and professions like Engineering that you still

find male dominance, but women are coming into these professions, these occupations in increasing numbers and are changing the gender ratios.

What I am saying is that this is going to continue. Why I say this? Because women in greater proportions are being qualified more than men at tertiary levels, at UWI. I am not sure of the figures for U-Tech. What it means is that women will find themselves in the best positions to take advantage of the new opportunities for example in computer technology. So I feel that the prospects of the 90's and into the 2000's would be even greater for women based on the development so far.

I feel though that in terms of the "Women's Movement" on a whole, what I see coming out is a greater recognition that women

cannot advance on their own behalf except in collaboration with or in equal development with some of the issues facing men. What is taking place, or what needs to take place at an even greater pace, is bridging the Gender gaps so that women do not see themselves as victims at the hands of men alone, but also see the problems faced by men; and on the other side that men don't take a defensive position. In other words, that men be more self reflective in what is happening to them, because what is happening to them is what is happening to women. Men need to understand what is happening to women, and why women are fighting the way they are fighting.

There is a lot of ground to cover on this, and it's because of that, why I feel that a group like "Fathers Incorporated" should be replicated, developed and grow because it offers a forum in which the men are able to appreciate their changing roles, and therefore we need to respect women, we need to join with women in the development of personal relations as well as relations with children in particular. As far as "Fathers Incorporated" is concern children are our main focus, and because of our children we will undertake anything, you see. I mean in our household, we will improve our relationships with our baby-mothers and so forth.

So there is a need for growing consciousness it seems to me on the part of men. It is very complex thing, but I think it is the way forward.

BEV. HANSON: It is interesting that this is happening, because I personally feel that this is the base at which to start, at the level of family relationships.

UNCLE BARRY: Yes.

BEV. HANSON: Because once you begin to understand the male/female relationship in the home situation, then when you get into the work situation which is a different

atmosphere, we will get to understand each other better. We will understand the kind of educational level we are at, and how best we can cope with what existing resources we have to work with, and people don't feel intimidated by each other because of your sexuality.

I don't think that men want to dominate all the time or always feel that they are above anybody, but they too have their own inner difficulties, and this is something that they will have to deal with. We need to develop a mutual working relationship at the work place, because men understand and want to share too.

UNCLE BARRY: Once of the important factors we need to remember, to always bear in mind, is that the family is already locked into what goes on in the society. You are not going to be able to make any progress in family relations without also seeing changes taking place in the wider society. I would say that the changes takes place in the society first and that these are reflected in the families.

ROLE OF MEN

If you take the question of the role of men in relation to domestic chores. Why do men resist this? Men have resisted this because this was never a part of their definition as to what role they were supposed to play. Men were supposed to provide and that's it. Once a man provides, that is the measure by which to judge whether he is a good father or a good husband. He is a good father in the sense that he provides for the family. But of course men are human beings, and as human beings they have affection and inevitably you find that most fathers would probably have certain feelings towards their children and find their own personal ways of manifesting those feelings towards their children.

I remember on a radio show once, a woman called in and she told us why she thought

her father was a good father. The thing that she valued most was the fact that when he ate his dinner, he would always leave a little something on the side of his plate for her.

BEV. HANSON: Laugh

UNCLE BARRY: That is his personal way. Right. (Laugh). What measures him is the fact that he is a hard working man, working to make his family survive. "The problem now-a-days is that with the changes taking place in the economy, for that family to survive the woman who would have been a housewife, in that situation is now forced to become a worker. Now if a man is working and woman is working to survive, then obviously it has got to impact on the family, and its gonna impact on the way the family is arranged. First of all inevitably you are going to get smaller families. That's partly due to the economy, partly due to birth control programmes. And so there are fewer children. Now therefore a woman can work more, so she is playing the role of provider too. What has happened is that the society feels that man is still the provider and we are training our youths that way, so women expect men to provide.

For example, that in the city. Here is a girl in a certain urban community and there is a Stone Love session coming up. She is expecting her boyfriend, and he is expecting that he is going to have to dip his hand into his pocket to buy the wig, and the this and the that, you understand, if he wants her to go out with him and "trash-out", and things like that. He is very much aware of that kind of pressure. not to mention, of course if they have children. So the society is taking a little while to adapt, to change that mind-set, that thinking which says it is the man who is to provide, to one in which it's man and women who are joint providers. Then it must follow that it is men and women who are joint care-takers of the household, and joint in parenting. You will find changes taking place, but I think the nurturing role will always remain the prime responsibility

of the woman, always, because of the biological and emotional attachments that result from nurturing and suckling. I would hope that doesn't disappear (smiling enthusiastically) because I think it gives women a particular advantage. Certainly men have to be nurturers too, at least find ways to express the nurturing role in a more dynamic way. While focusing on changes in the family, you have to recognise that there are pressures outside too, and if a man is not strong enough to face his friends outside the home in relation to how he conducts his household affairs then he'll just succumb to the pressures. That is the difficulty, but it is a tremendous challenge.

BEV. HANSON: I have heard of cases where men in the family situation feel inferior if he is unemployed for a period of time (lets say six months) because of pressure from his peers, that I think is a problem to the individual.

UNCLE BARRY: It is a serious problem. Because I have had periods of unemployment, and boy, I tell you.

BEV. HANSON: Someone needs to fill that gap, and if there is a kind of bond in the family and the understanding exist right there, that is important, even though people on the outside don't see it like that. There's no need for one to go around explaining to people what the situation is if they can't see it, or understand where the base of the agreement in the family is coming from.

UNCLE BARRY: I agree with you. One of the things I hear people talk about is Parenting Skills, and quite frankly I detest the word parenting skills. As if it is like learning how to drive, and I don't think so. What we need to stress more, if we are going to stress any thing is knowledge. Give people the knowledge about what they are doing, and about what is happening. In addition, what these counselling groups and offices need to do is to evoke ways in which

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people can express love, and the sense of responsibility for someone that you have brought into the world.

I feel that if you love children there are certain things that you would do. I haven't read the article, but I was told, that Jennifer Kean-Dawe's article in the Gleaner on Sunday about the "Barrel Children" contains very interesting and touching revelations about how these parents who have gone abroad, how they actually feel about having to do this. It's a choice they make and a gamble they take, hoping that their absence will be more than compensated by the economic advantage of going or migrating abroad. Are they bad parents, or they don't have parenting skills? It seems to me, that is the way they choose to express their love and responsibility for their children, and these are some of the important issues we need to deal with. Why I think people argue about the lack of parenting skills is because they are talking about young girls having children and they don't have the household support of, let's say, a grandmother or mother who is able to say, "This is how you take care of a baby". Well I don't think it's as simple as that. They may not have granny, but they have friends and neighbours, and people do care. They think that when a woman leaves her baby to go on the street and the place burn down and she's not there they say "What a wicked woman! It's because she lack parenting skills". It's not skill, it's not skill, maybe she lacks something. Perhaps her priorities are not right; maybe she doesn't have a good relationship with the neighbours to say "Miss Jane, I'm going out on the road, can you give an eye on the children please". This a North American concept! Bev, my mother never taught me any skills in parenting.

BEV. HANSON: I believe it has a lot to do with love, it is also a learning process. I say this because of the recent experience I've had with having my son. When he was born

six year ago I said to him, "it's been over sixteen years and I don't remember anything about babies, so you have to teach me and I teach you, and we share what we learn from each other." I have found that loving him has taught me so many different things. I have found raising him to be a different experience from raising my two girls, maybe it's because it's a boy, but it's been good. Sometimes he says to me "Mommy you don't love me, because you beat me" I would say, "Well sometimes when you don't do your work, or when you try to hurt yourself I have to give you a little slap, and tell you when you are wrong, in order to protect you".

UNCLE BARRY: Yes, it is a process of learning, but you can't learn if you are not open. You are closed, if you think you know it all already, so it is when you can open up to your children, and they open up to you with respect, then you can have continuous dialogue. Love is one of the most used words in the world, but it's one that is hard to define, because it's a feeling, and more than a feeling. Sometimes you don't feel, it's an attachment, it's in the mind as well as in the heart. It is the kind of thing you would do any thing for, you would sacrifice if you love.

BEV. HANSON: The children themselves have so much to contribute, whether you want to call it "Children's Rights" or whatever, but if you don't find the time to actually listen to what they have to say, or be part of what they are doing then you won't appreciate their contribution to the whole family structure, family affair.

UNCLE BARRY: That's right. I think the term "Parenting Skills" reduces it to a mechanical thing. These are some of the challenges we have to face, the Women's Movement have to face. The problems are not just the problems of women but also of men and the family, they are not going to go away,

they will remain with us for a long time, that "Glass Ceiling" as they call it, is there and I don't see how it is going to be shattered unless men also come to realise that it is not in their best interest either to use women, and that women should be respected on the basis of their potential as well as their gender.

It's going to take a long time, but there is no turning back. We are going into new territory, like moving to a land that is unknown to us, to settle and we don't know the hazards and the dangers, or the future, whether it will be bright or not. What we do know is that we have to go because we cannot any longer continue in a society in which one half of the group, one half of the race is so oppressed, so victimized by the other half. It's not right, and we certainly don't gain from it.

The other day Paulette had a church service in marking the 20th Anniversary of the school (The Charlie Smith Comprehensive High School) and the member of Parliament was one of the guests (I represented Paulette at the function because she was ill), and in talking to the audience he said "I knew Barry before I met Paulette, and I used to consider Paulette as Barry's wife, but now, having known Paulette, you see, I think of Barry as Paulette's husband" (Laugh). I mean there is no reason why it has to be "Behind every successful man there is a woman/wife." You should be also able to say "Behind every successful woman there is a supportive man/husband". I feel proud about her achievements at the school and in the educational system on a whole, just as I know she is proud of my achievements in my academic career. Things are changing however, and this again is another challenge facing us, that gender should not be a threat. Very, very, important.

BEV. HANSON: Thanks a lot Uncle Barry, it was nice rapping with you. ♀

MARGINALLY FEMALE

BY DEE ROBINSON

She was standing outside the Supermarket dressed in a grotesque track suit which fit her badly, provoking the assumption it came out of a barrel.

Her hair was in one of those ugly colours and styles which certified her residence as below Cross Roads, (de facto or de jure) and her voice was more of a bark.

If she wasn't discussing how she stabbed her boyfriend Siggy with an ice pick, you'd assume she was a Lesbian, for there was nothing remotely feminine about her.

She was not a feminist. She had never had a door opened for her, or a man offer to carry her package. She was more masculine than many males who drifted around the plaza.

One couldn't image a man being attracted to her if he was straight, for she had all the qualities of a rough necked centre forward on the National Team (male).

Her audience, two girls in school uniforms, were throwing words to keep her talking, enjoying her bulldog behaviour. She had not the intellect to appreciate they were laughing at her. Anymore than she would know the kind of vibes she gave off.

What prompts a female to look and behave as this one?

She is not rare. There are many like her, some in dresses, some partially naked so there's no question of their sex, but all behaving as young male hooligans.

Is the portrait of the 'bad boy' so pervasive that even females emulate? What possible attraction could she have to 'Siggy' when she may be more 'macho' than he?

If she were a feminist or lesbian she may have had some 'point', either dressing and acting this way to 'prove' she was 'liberated' from stereotype in the former, or 'coming out of the closet' in the latter; but she is not.

She is an average unliberated heterosexual female who stabbed her boyfriend for kissing Denise. She explained to her two listeners where she was when she heard, and having suspected him, had taken her ice pick, gone out on the lane, caught him, stabbed him for betraying her and having lied about his relationship with 'just a friend' Denise.

So here she is, a female who has lost or been denied every 'feminine' virtue to the extent of becoming a pseudo boy, yet desiring a real boy to love her.

Desiring to be a man's woman, yet being no woman at all. Acting like a young boy, but wanting to be treated as a girl, she gets the double looks from shoppers on the plaza, and young voices, who do not get the gist of the conversation ask their mothers, "is that a boy or a girl?".

Confused, violent, she probably can not begin to understand why Siggy would seek a girl friend, why he would betray her. This is because she doesn't understand that when Siggy wants a girlfriend, she doesn't fill the bill.



*She had never
had a door
opened for her;
or a man offer to
carry her pack-
age. She was
more masculine
than many
males who
drifted around
the plaza.*

WOMEN AND WO

BY CHERRY NATURAL

JOYCE WRIGHT (GEE)

Cosmetologist

Cosmetology is nothing new to the artistic world. It has been an ancient art form one could trace back to our ancestors in Africa: then women used to dye and wax their hair, braid and adorn with beads. Our African Queens used to practise detailed beauty care to enhance their personal appearance. Cleopatra and Queen Makeda are perfect examples. Now we have people choosing cosmetology as a career, either operating from home or working in someone else's or even their own parlour away from home.

Joyce Wright, also known as Gee has been doing this as a way of life for the past fifteen years. Her desire to become a cosmetologist was embedded in her from early childhood days. She used to love to see people's nails looking clean and their hair well-groomed. She first started out by working on weekends and then full-time. It took her eight months to learn the trade. After becoming more qualified by training on the job, she entered the world of professionals and then on to her own business



at home. 'I was working with this lady, when she migrated she left the business with me because of trust shared between us. I subsequently became the owner'. She had to give up the place where she operated from, so she moved home. Most of her customers could not continue to support her because of the distance. She has since gotten new customers, however.

ACCOMPLISHED BUSINESS WOMAN

Seeing herself now as an accomplished business-woman, she is living out her

dreams. She said even when it was cheap to live by such a profession she still 'sticked to it' because she had a deep love for it and I am very satisfied and I have no regrets. 'The income was low at the time when I first started out, but I could take care of my personal needs and put something back into the business,' Gee added.

Joyce remembers having some bad experiences. She said people would come to do their hair, mainly new customers and make excuses to go outside to buy a drink or get some air with the rollers in their hair and never return. She also said

WORK IN THE '90'S

sometimes, after the hair is done they would choose to tell her that they are requesting credit.

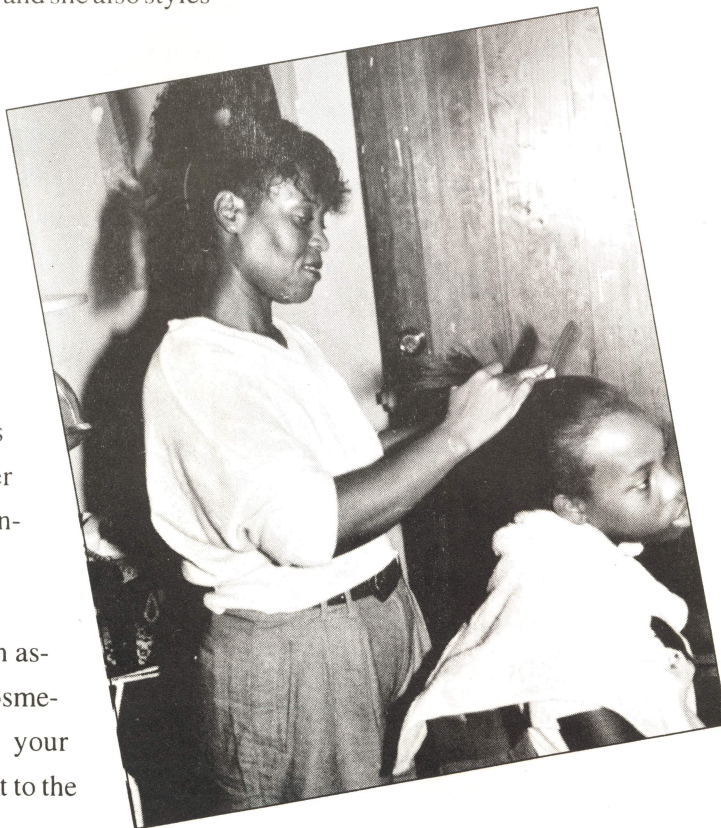
'I had some good experiences too though', she relates. 'People will come once and return with their friends because of the treatment they receive'. It is now a profitable business for Joyce especially during holiday seasons.

Some of the services Joyce offers at her parlour are massages, dyeings, weavings, trimmings and she also styles natural and processed hair for both women and men.

Joyce maintains her independence because of the advancement of her career and encourages other members of her family to be independent.

Her advice to women aspiring to become cosmetologists is 'follow your heart's desire and do it to the best of your ability.'

Her desire to become a cosmetologist was embedded in her from early childhood days. She used to love to see people's nails looking clean and their hair well-groomed.



Working masterfully with her hands to style customer's hair

MRS. MAY LEE

Housewife

Oftentimes in our society we tend to overlook the woman who by choice stays home and takes care of the family, being there at all times for them. Class bias affected certain aspects of our daily lives. We tend to look up to someone who is a doctor, a lawyer or a public figure, not giving respect to the person (i.e. their persons) who would have made many sacrifices in order for those professionals to go through. Until we acknowledge the value of the household helper or housewife then our society, will only continue to remain a hypocritical one.

Some women have no problem in staying home to look after the family, but they should be respected in the same manner as we respect others. May Lee is one of such women who makes this her choice. She said from a young girl growing up she had aspired to become a nurse, this did not work out in that formal way, but she still had to give that service to all the children she raised.

Married at a very early age, giving birth to five girls and operating a small nursery at home, she had approximately

Cont'd on pg. 16



Mrs. May Lee

nine children looking after, her own five and four from the nursery. She can remember always loving children. She had to get up very early, make their breakfast, take them to school, come back to take care of the smaller ones and then pick up those at school in the afternoon, prepare their meals and make sure their homework was done. She had to raise her five girls alone because their

father died. She married again and had four more children, this time three boys and one girl and still ran the nursery from home. Two left for England and left three grand-children under her care.

May Lee was a very industrious woman, she has her own garden and she did not buy clothes, she sewed clothes for the children. They did not have to buy

Some women have no problem in staying home to look after the family, but they should be respected in the same manner as we respect others.

clothes until they were working to buy their own. When asked why did she make that sacrifice, she answered with a smile saying she thinks she was the best person to pass down certain values both to her children and grand-children.

She got a lot of discouragement from her neighbours, they would pass remarks like 'I don't know how you do it'.

There were adapted children, her children and grand-children living under the same roof at the same time. Says Mrs. Lee, 'Although I did not actually become a professional nurse, I applied my skills to my household and I rarely took any of them to the hospital. Mrs. May Lee has never gone out to work and says she does not regret being a housewife after all these years. She has passed on her values to her children as well as the many others she looked after. May Lee thanks God that He has allowed her to travel this journey and says she is now getting returns from all she has looked after. 'If I had the chance I would do it all over again. I have passed through the roughest of the roughest and I have never given up'.

SOPHIA VIRGO

Table Tennis Player



Sophia's warm smile, a part of her winning personality

Jamaican women seem to be moving ahead socially, economically and politically, but when it comes to the arena of sports, Jamaica seems to be doing very little for its women. Besides Merlene Ottey, it is very rare that you find younger women who can claim to be strong role models in that arena.

I had the opportunity of speaking with Sophia Virgo, Jamaica's top female Table Tennis player and what she told me was very discouraging for younger

women who want to achieve outstanding success in that sport.

TABLE TENNIS PLAYER

Sophia has been playing Table Tennis for eleven years. She played for the Montego Bay Social Club while she resided in St. James. After moving to Kingston in 1985, she played for the Hylton's Club and while in first form at Kingston Technical High School she played Inter-Schools Championship. She made it on the Jamaica Team in that

same year. Owing to the success she achieved, she devoted her whole life to the sport after leaving High School. She asserted, despite the fact that she was not getting paid, it is still an encouraging sport as it gives tremendous satisfaction from playing and receiving trophies and other incentives.

Table Tennis as a sport was highly respected during the period of 1985-1989, but later took a decline. There was a Table Tennis tournament held once a month, now it's only two to three times per year and since 1995 Virgo has only played one tournament. "Being a woman there is a lot of discrimination in the sport". Sophia said the women's team won the Caribbean Championship in 1992 and 1993, came seventh in 1994, yet they did not select the team this year. She also said that every other Caribbean country sends four women to the championships, but Jamaica only sends two. The reason they give is that women are inconsistent and that they don't have many to send more than two. It is always just herself and Sandra Rettie who is always going and she thinks it is unfair that other girls are not given the chance to gain international exposure and excel. Other girls give up because there is no room for growth as it is always the same two players who are being sent away for championships. There was a time when Sandra Rettie went off on maternity leave and they wanted another player to send to the championship, and they went to Miami and took a girl from there although there were many girls here who were much better than her.

Cont'd on pg. 18



Sophia rearing up for a game

"It is a bit frustrating that you are being deprived of an opportunity because of your gender"

"It is a bit frustrating that you are being deprived of an opportunity because of your gender". If I should take time out to start a family now, that would be the end of women's team for Jamaica. I am the one holding the women's team in Jamaica right now. I have even been offered jobs to coach at schools, but I

don't accept them because there is not much interest on the part of the younger women".

Sophia related that the organizers couldn't care less if there were no women's team. The discrimination is so obvious that in one instance, when a male and female player were needed to go on the championship, they sent two males. "Right now in Jamaica it seems as if Table Tennis only surrounds two people".

For people who are interested in entering the sport, Sophia says "It is a full-time activity, you have to train everyday. Table Tennis is fast becoming an upper class sport, if you don't have money it is hard to come out on top". ♀

SISTREN RESEARCH

Sistren Research Functions as a semi autonomous division of Sistren Theatre Collective. It works in the following areas:

- * Research & Documentation
- * Dissemination and Outreach
- * Networking

The information generated by Sistren Research comes from a variety of mechanisms which informs the rest of the Collective. Not only is it incorporated in Theatre and Workshop programmes, but it is used in educational and training programmes with out-reach groups with which Sistren Research works, on an ongoing basis and is also published in the news magazine.

At present we are hoping to upgrade the Research Department into a perfect documentation centre with a Caribbean grassroots women focus. In time we are hoping that this centre will be fully equipped with relevant materials and equipments to serve the wider society of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

Although we are lingering a bit, we have in our stock a variety of books, research papers, videos on Sistren's work, such as workshops, plays, interviews and documentary. Our audio cassettes are compiled of a story from our book 'Lion Heart Gal', and a few traditional folk song and ring games.

Seeing the value of this department we realise the need of a constant exchange of ideas and also research materials. In this light we try to focus on networking strategies, where we try to assist in the dissemination of any research papers which bears relevance to our aims and objectives, and also provide materials from our collections on request.

Our news magazine which comes out three (3) times per year, will bring you up to date on current issues of women in various organisations, communities, schools, churches, runnings in Sistren and other relevant news or matters. ♀

HOW TO HOLD YOUR JOB

BY ZANDI BARKER

The only thing harder than getting a job is keeping it. You may have been recommended by Society's Saints, but it is you who must fill the job.

There are many ways to lose a job. Getting into a fist fight, burning down the building, being arrested for stealing are just a few of the major boulevards to being fired. Most people take the minor roads.

One of the easiest ways to get canned is to be late and absent whenever the occasion arises.

Not getting a bus works once a month. Talk bus two days in succession, you might not get a chance to talk it three times.

Get up extra-early if the bus is a problem. It is better to reach 8:30 for a 9:00 job than 9:30. If 8:30 becomes your usual start up time, perhaps rearranging your hours from 9 to 5 to 8:30 to 4:30 can be accomplished.

If not, either start work, or lounge in the bathroom, but make 9:00 find you at your post.

Some people 'take the day' when it suits them. These are explained by the following unacceptable excuses:

- 1) followed (my mother, cousin, friend) to the (clinic, lock-up, office)
- 2) I had a (doctor/dentist/lawyer) appointment
- 3) I (got my period, felt sick, slept late)
- 4) I (got my period, felt sick, slept late)

If you know you will be absent, inform your employer in advance. If it's an emergency, make a phone call or get someone to call for you.



If you're really sick get a doctor's certificate, (this applies for family members) then try not to be absent again for the next few months.

The statement, 'she's always sick' gets you fired or passed over for promotion. Taking

one or two unscheduled sick days a month will mark you unreliable.

There are hundreds of people willing to take your job, some with excellent health. Employers would prefer to make a cash bonus of untaken sick days than have your absence disrupt the flow of business.

The Employee of five years who is occasionally late and sick is treated far different from the new worker who within three months has been late five times and absent twice.

Make it your rule never to be late and never to take a day unless you're really sick. It is better to take your half dead self to office en-route to the doctor, than to stay home and assume no one will notice you're not there. ♀

VROUWENBERAAD ONTWIKKELINGSSAMENWERKING *Towards an alternative economy from a gender perspective*

"THE GENDERED ECONOMY"

Author: Irene van Staveren
Publisher: Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking
Final Editing: Alide Roerink, Irene van Staveren, Erna Kager
Translation: Yvonne Hassing
Pages: 71
Price: US\$ 10.00
Order: Deposit US\$ 10.00 (F1. 15, =) on Bank account no. 630495491 to Stichting Ondersteuning Vrouwenberaad Nederlandse Ontwikkelingsinstanties, Generale Bank, The Hague, The Netherlands. Under reference of: order "The Gendered Economy".

Recently Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking published "The Gendered Economy". It is the revision and translation of a study by Irene van Staveren (working for Oikos at that time) about the fundamentals of global economy from a gender perspective. This study was conducted on assignment of the Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking in connection with the choice to centralize the theme 'gender, economy and development' in the programme of the Vrouwenberaad of 1996 and 1997. "The Gendered Economy" is taking on the relation between feminism and economy to gain new insights for the search of an alternative economy.

POETRY PAGE

MANKIND

BY PATRICK DAVIS

Every man should respect the
being of a woman

For it is due

And when it is due,

Don't let it over due

And woman, let me tell you how
I don't mean he has to bow.

He's the man, and you must be
kind.

And if you been kind

And he been blind

You both will never get the feel-
ings of mankind.

She has the ability

To carry you for nine months in
her stomach

You cause bad feelings, pain, and
vomitting

She has to bare it, because it's a
part of her

She gave you nature

For you to feel so strong

She gave you nature

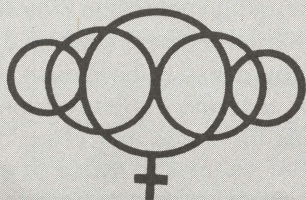
For you to come back to her

She lift you up

Put you down

She sings

Hush mama baby.



THINK AFRICA

BY PATRICK DAVIS

When you think of a woman

think africa

When you think of any woman

think africa

When you think of her compassion

think africa

cho

she's still in travail

yes she's still in pain

says today's bloodstain

she's the mother of a nation

her sensation is strong for her children

she knows her children

she cares for her children

she's independent

she can feed her children

she gave suck to many nation

her soil is rich

she bare many prophets, kings, queens,

prince an princesses

cho

she never grows old

she's the ever blooming flowers of life

she only knows love

her footprints must be respected

she's strong

her strength is unlimited

she's the mother of battle

battle of survival

she's a winner.

cho

she's the only real mother

the only true mother

she's a true path of life

she's like the half that never been told

she's always coming at you

she needs to be meet along the way

when i go research of mother africa

i found my blood

my tears

chilled

i'm thrilled

she has many faces

don't abuse her

don't use her

if she's down over there

she's up over here

she cry while she smiles

she loves a man who look at her through

the eyes of wisdom

she knows wisdom

she is wisdom

cho

she knows her journey

journey of life

her journey is long

she can complete her journey

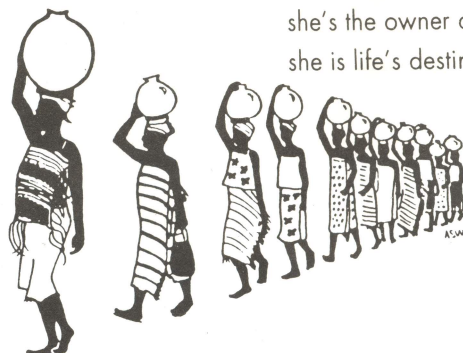
for she is strong

she's the backbone of life

life eternal

she's the owner of victory

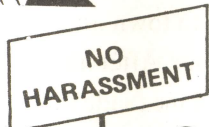
she is life's destiny.



EVERY WOMAN IS JUST A WOMAN



Every woman is just a woman
None better than none
Prone to the same injustices
No matter your condition
We have a history of oppression
We have a heritage of pain
But together we can do something
So the same thing won't happen again.

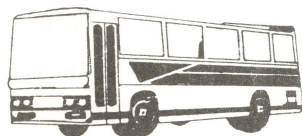


So sisters come row
Come mek we stay afloat
We know we are sailing in the same boat
Although some things may be cool with you
You have to help in the struggle too.

No matter what your walk of life
Certain things affect the whole of us
Whether you're in the front seat
Or hanging onto the door
We're riding in the same minibus.



So sisters come row
Come mek we stay afloat
We know we are sailing in the same boat
Although some things may be cool with you
You have to help in the struggle too.



COMING UP IN SISTREN VOL. 17 NO. 3

WOMEN, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- *The Internet - Why We Must Use It*
- *In-Vitro Fertilisation - Is It A Viable Option?*

SISTREN

Artistic Team

Sistren Artistic Team is an arm of Sistren Theatre Collective that concentrates on workshops and Major Productions.

We do these by working with Community Based Organisations, Collaboratively with other Non-Governmental Organisations or merely by requests.

What we do is use issues that affect women, children or gender on a whole. We also facilitate Workshops relevant to the issues stated. We have Children's Summer Workshops which are held at Sistren's Headquarters every August for 2 weeks. The age ranging from 9-18 years of age.

Our workshops are participatory ones and calls for the input of our participants at all times. We have also started an Adolescent Motivation Programme Project (AMP). This project consists of two teens who are now in training to become Animators, to facilitate workshops in Schools along side the animators within Sistren. This idea came about after an evaluation on the schools workshop programme and it was realised that students learn better from persons within or relatively close to their age group.

MAJOR PRODUCTIONS

Sistren develops their productions from issues that affect them as women and women at large. Most of our productions are done from the testimonies of our members and are issue based. Within our Productions we role play the parts of Men and we use symbolisms to illustrate a lot of the problems that are brought out within the production.

If you ever need an issue based workshop or presentation please call us at Sistren Theatre Collective, 929-6171, 929-2457 or fax us at 968-0501.

A WORKING WOMAN

EXCERPTS FROM LIONHEART GAL

By eight o' clock, ah finish tidy out di house. Ah had to wash and iron every day for di man change a white shirt every morning and every evening.

Di first ting ah going tell yuh is what really mek me conscious of how dis life do me. Ah been working from ah was seventeen years old until now and all di lickle money dat ah work only go fi food and rent. An don't have none save. Di lickle money si too small to save.

Di first job ah ever do was a domestic servant. Ah do it fi three years. Ah was living in Alexandria in di country wid me family. A Big Man in di district had a big property. His son grow up and come to town and was working at Hanna's shops as one of Hanna's big supervisor. After him get married, him wanted a helper so him come down and ask me faada if him can let me come and me faada say 'Yes' Dat was how ah come to Kingston.

Ah was di washer and do di cleaning and tidying of di house. Dem have anodder lady who cook. It was stop pon premises. Three of us, di cook, di gardener and me, stop pon premises. Di gardener deh one side by himself

inna one room wid only a lickle bed and one table in deh. Me and di cook share a room. Inna it we have two lickle single bed fi me and she and one lickle table in a di middle, to put anything we had. We suitcase was put down at di odder side pon di floor or pon one box. Di table was de place weh we eat.

A bell connect from fi-dem room to fi-we-room. Every morning at five o' clock dat lady ring dat bell. Breakfast have to ready, for Mr Iris have to be on di road by six thirty to reach work by seven. Him a di manager so him carry home most of di key dem and him open di shop in di morning. Ah had to get up and go in di kitchen and get di breakfast. Dem had a big breakfast. Green banana and mackerel or egg and bacon and tea and toast and cornflakes different. As di breakfast finish and him go through di gate, me start tidy di house and mek up di bed. It was him and him wife and him maada in a two bedroom house. Me mek up di bed and sweep out di house.

By eight o' clock, ah finish tidy out di house. Ah had to wash and iron every day for di man change a white shirt every morning and every evening. Every week yuh have fourteen shirt fi wash fi him, fourteen underpants, fourteen marina, fourteen pair a socks. When him come in from work in di evening, him tidy and put on one. When him go a him bed, him tek off dat and put on him pyjama. In di morning, him wake up and put on one clean suit fi go a work, so ah have dat amount of clothes to look after fi di man plus her clothes and di madda's. By twelve o' clock yuh have to put di clothes on di line. When him come for lunch, it was a small lunch. We have to find our own lunch. She never give we lunch. She only give us breakfast and dinner. We buy banana and mackerel or saltfish and we

After serving dinner some a di helpers dem in our area don't stop pon premises dem go home and have their domestic work to do.

rest pon a side table and stand up beside it. If somebody want anodder piece of something dem say 'Can you bring whatever it-is?' an yuh tek it up and yuh serve and yuh go back go stand up side a di food again. If a next somebody want a piece a meat, dem say 'Can you bring the meat?' An yuh bring it. It go on like dat until everybody stomach is filled. When yuh see everybody close dem knife and fork yuh know dem finish eat and yuh can clear di table. If dey want coffee, dey ask. Den when dey finish and everybody get up from di table yuh go in go tidy di kitchen.

cook dumpling. Sometimes we used to buy bread or biscuit and dat last we fi di week.

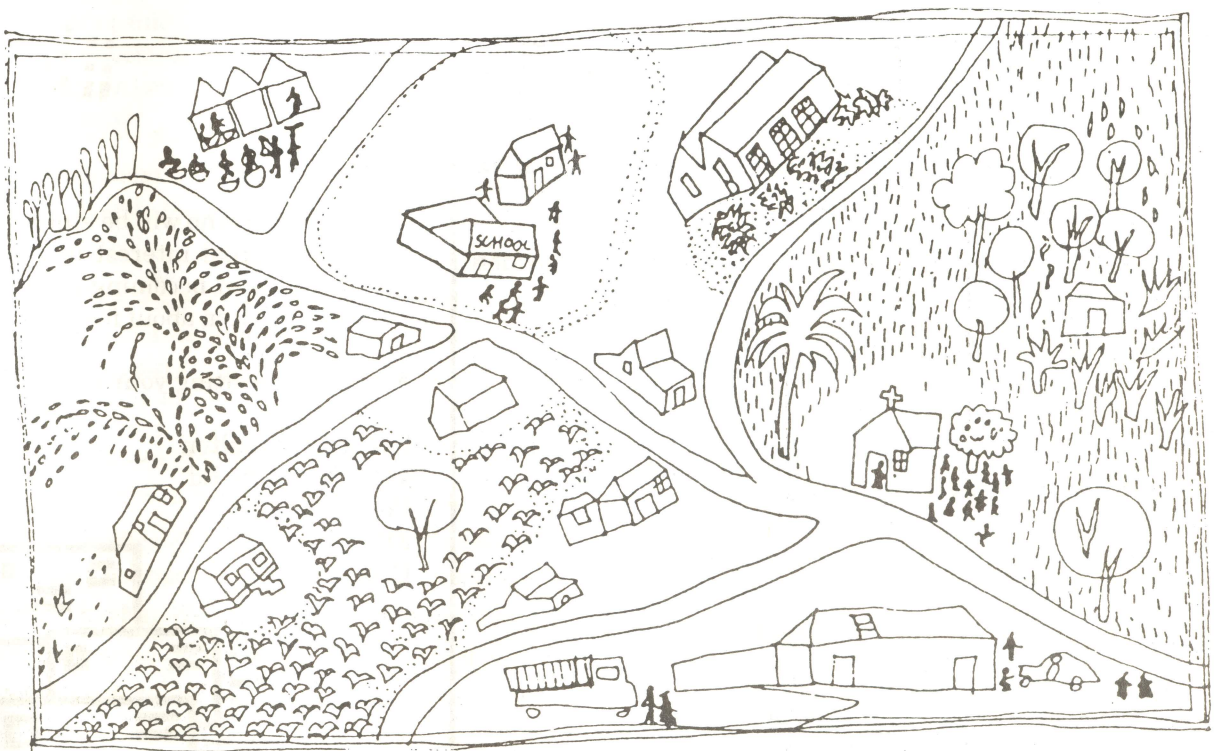
At two, yuh start pick up di clothes to iron dem. She never allow di clothes dem to dry on di line. She just make dem half quail up and den yuh pick dem up and fold dem, damp dem and start press dem. Yuh put way did clothes and by five yuh go to bathe and change yuh clothes.

Six o' clock is dem dinner time - table set and dey have a big dinner - steak or chicken, vegetable. Dey don't eat much starchy food. Di cook finish dinner and dish out. My duty was to go round di table wid it in di waiter. Yuh serve di meat first, den di rice, den di vegetable. Dem only tek out a small amount each time. Yuh put di

It end up dat is a whole lot of dishes since everything dat cook have to go into a separate dish. All dose dishes have to wash and pack up and all di pots. Yuh sweep di kitchen. At eight thirty yuh finish work fi di night — dat is if dey don't have visitors. Sometimes dey have visitors dat a come before dinner and mek dinner an hour late. So instead

dey have dinner at six, it might not be until seven thirty. Den yuh finish work nine or nine thirty. Di pay was twenty five shillings per week. Yuh got one evening off a week and one Sunday a Month.

To tell di truth di job was very boring, but in those days we just accept di fact. We, di young people wasn't crazy like di young ones now. Everyting was quieter. Yuh stay in dah job for months before yuh find a friend yuh could change thoughts wid. After serving dinner some a di helpers dem in our area don't stop pon premises dem go home and have their domestic work to do. Dey have to come out by seven di next morning. It change a lickel now, because during di seventies di government pass di minimum wage law. It say yuh must only do eight hours a day and it fix di wage; but some a dem who stop pon premises still have it hard.



FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN - BEIJING CHINA

Critical Areas of Concern

- The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
- Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training
- Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services

Violence against women

The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation

Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources

Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels

Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women

Lack of respect for and inadequate promotions and protection of the human rights of women

Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media

Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment

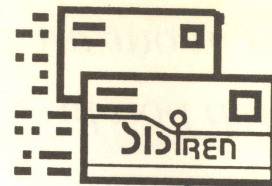
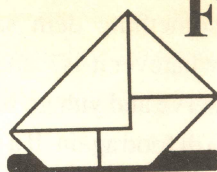
Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child

More community participation is needed e.g.:

- Politics
- More need to be better informed
- Strategies



From Our Mailbag



Dear Editor,

I am a counsellor of West Indian descent, and I am always happy to hear of the work done by women back home.

Coming across an old copy of "Sistren" I was quite thrilled about the magazine/newsletter and the work you are doing in both Jamaica and the West Indies. My work involves working towards empowering women in all walks of life.

How can I obtain copies of your newsletter. I find them quite uplifting to women and also very useful in my work.

I look forward to hearing from you and continue to encourage you in your work

Sisterwood
Valerie Rowe
Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre
P.O. Box 3127 Station
Ottawa K1Y 4S4

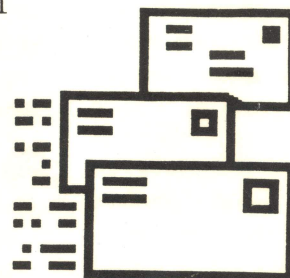
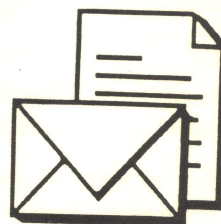


Dear Editor

I am a scholar who will be studying in Jamaica in '96, and have taken great interest in your magazine. I would be very grateful in becoming a subscriber. Please send me some information about fees and how often it is published.

Anxiously awaiting your reply.

Robin N. Hamilton
4913 Ten Mills Rd.
Columbia MD
21044-1541
USA



Asia. But progress in many countries was reversed in the 1980s, particularly among those experiencing problems of war, economic adjustment and declining international assistance as in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and eastern Europe.

In high education enrolments, women equal or exceed men in many regions. They outnumber men in the developed regions outside western Europe, in Latin America and the Caribbean and western Asia. Women are not as well represented in other regions, and in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia they are far behind—30 and 38 women per 100 men.

SEEKING INFLUENCE

Despite progress in women's higher education, major obstacles still arise when women strive to translate their high-level education into social and economic advancement. In the world of business, for example, women rarely account for more than 1 or 2 percent of top executive positions. However, in the more general category of administration and management including middle levels, women's share rises in every region but one between 1980 and 1990. Women's participation jumped from 16 to 33 percent in developed regions outside Europe. In Latin America, it rose from 18 to 25 percent.

In the health and teaching professions—two of the largest occupational fields requiring advanced training—women are well represented in many countries but usually at the bottom levels of status and wage hierarchy. Similarly, among the staff of an international group of agriculture research institutes, women's participation at the non-scientific and trainee levels is moderate but there are few women at management and senior scientific levels.

The information people receive through newspapers, radio and television shapes their opinions about the world. And the more decision-making positions women hold in the media, the more they can influence output, breaking stereotypes that hurt women, attracting greater attention to issues of equality in the home and in public life, and providing young women with new images, ideas and ideals. Women now make up more than half of the commu-

nications students in a large number of countries and are increasingly visible as presenters, but they remain poorly represented in the more influential media occupations such as programme managers and senior editors.

In the top levels of government, women's participation remains the exception. At the end of 1994 only 10 women were heads of state or government; of these 10 countries only Norway had as many as one third women ministers or sub-ministers. Some progress has been made in the appointment of women to ministerial or sub-ministerial positions but these positions are usually tenuous. Most countries with women in top ministerial positions do not have comparable representation at the sub-ministerial level. And in other countries, where significant numbers of women have reached the sub-ministerial levels, very few have reached the top. Progress for women in parliaments has also been mixed and varies widely among regions. It is strongest in northern Europe, where it appears to be rising steadily.

Missing from this summary is women's remarkable advance in less traditional paths to power and influence. The importance of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) and international women's conferences should not be underestimated, for these forums enabled women to develop the skills required for exercising power and influence, to mobilize resources and articulate issues and to practise organizing, lobbying and legislating.

Since the women's conference in Nairobi in 1985, many grass-roots groups have been working to create new awareness of women's rights, including their rights within the family, and to help women achieve those rights. They have set agendas and carved out a space for women's issues. And as seen in recent United Nations conferences, NGOs as a group can wield influence broad enough to be active partners with governments in deciding national policies and programmes.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH— REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

With greater access to education, employ-

ment and contraception, many women are choosing to marry later and have fewer children. Those who wait to marry and begin child-bearing have better access to education and greater opportunities to improve their lives. Women's increased access to education, to employment and to contraception, coupled with declining rates of infant mortality, have contributed to the worldwide decline in fertility.

The number of children women bear in developed regions is now below replacement levels at 1.9 per woman. In Latin America and in most parts of Asia it has also dropped significantly. But in Africa women still have an average of six children, and in many sub-Saharan African countries, women have as many or even more children now than they did 20 years ago.

Adolescent fertility has declined in many developing and developed countries over the past 20 years. In Central America and sub-Saharan Africa, however, rates are five to seven times higher than in developed regions. Inadequate nutrition, anemia and early pregnancies threaten the health and life of young girls and adolescents.

Too many women have no access to reproductive health services. In developing countries maternal mortality is a leading cause of death for women of reproductive age. WHO estimates that more than half a million women die each year in childbirth and millions more develop pregnancy-related health complications. The deteriorating economic and health conditions in sub-Saharan Africa have led to an increase in maternal mortality during the 1980s, where it remains the highest in the world. An African woman's lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes is 1 in 23, while a North American woman's is 1 in 4,000. Maternal mortality also increased in some countries of eastern Europe.

Pregnancy and childbirth have become safer for women in most of Asia and in parts of Latin America. In developed countries attended delivery is almost universal, but in developing countries only 55 percent of births take place with a trained attendant and only 37 percent in hospitals or clinics. Today new importance is being placed on women's reproductive health and safe motherhood as advocates work to redefine reproductive health as an issue of human rights.

cont'd on pg 26

FEWER MARRIAGES— SMALLER HOUSEHOLDS

Rapid population changes, combined with many other social and economic changes, are being accompanied by considerable changes in women's household and family status. Most people still marry but they marry later in life, especially women. In developing regions, consensual unions and other non-formal unions remain prevalent, especially in rural areas.

As a result of these changes, many women—many more women than men—spend a significant part of their life without a partner, with important consequences for their economic welfare and their children's.

In developed regions, marriage has become both less frequent and less stable, and cohabitation is on the rise. Marriages preceded by a period of cohabitation have clearly increased in many countries off northern Europe. And where divorce once led quickly to remarriage, many postpone marriage or never remarry.

Since men have higher rates of remarriage, marry at an older age, and have a shorter life expectancy, most older men are married, while many older women are widows. Among women 60 and older, widowhood is significant everywhere—from 40 percent in the developed regions and Latin America to 50 percent in Africa and Asia. Moreover, in Asia and Africa, widowhood also affects many women at younger ages.

Between 1970 and 1990 household size decreased significantly in the developed regions, in Latin America and the Caribbean and in eastern and south-eastern Asia. Households are the smallest in developed regions, having declined to an average of 2.8 persons per household in 1990. In eastern Asia the average household size has declined to 3.7, in south-eastern Asia to 4.9. In Latin American countries the average fell to 4.7 persons per household, and in the Caribbean to 4.1. In northern Africa countries household size increased on average from 5.4 to 5.7.

In developed countries the decline in the average household size reflects an increase in the number of one-person households, especially among unmarried adults and the

elderly. In developing regions the size of the household is more affected by the number of children, although a shift from extended households to nuclear households also has some effect. Household size remains high in countries where fertility has not yet fallen significantly—for instance, in some of the African and western Asian countries.

WORK—PAID AND UNPAID

Women's access to paid work is crucial to their self-reliance and the economic well-being of dependent family members. But access to such work is unequal between women and men. Women work in different occupations than men, almost always with lower status and pay. In developing countries many women work as unpaid family labourers in subsistence agriculture and household enterprises. Many women also work in the informal sector, where their remuneration is unstable, and their access to funds to improve their productivity is limited at best. And whatever other work women do, they also have the major responsibility for most household work, including the care of children and other family members.

The work women do contributes substantially to the well-being of families, communities and nations. But work in the household—even when it is economic—is inadequately measured, and their subverts policies for the credit, income and security of women and their families.

Over the past two decades, women's reported economic activity rates increased in all regions except in sub-Saharan Africa and eastern Asia, and all of these increased are large except in eastern Europe, central Asia and Oceania. In fact, women's labour force participation increased more in the 1980s than in the 1970s in many regions. In contrast, men's economic activity rates have declined everywhere except central Asia.

The decline in women's reported labour force participation in sub-Saharan Africa stands out as an exception—dropping from a high of 57 percent in 1970 to 54 percent in 1980 and to 53 percent in 1990.

In 1990 the average labour force participation rate among women aged 15 and over

ranged from a high of 56-58 percent in eastern and central Asia and eastern Europe to a low in northern Africa of 21 percent. The participation rates of men vary within a more limited range of 72-83 percent. Because so many women in developing countries work in agriculture and informal household enterprises, where their contributions are underreported, their recorded rates of economic activity should be higher in many cases. The estimated increase in southern Asia—from 25 percent of women economically active in 1970 to 44 percent in 1990—may be due largely to changes in the statistical methods used rather than to significant changes in work patterns.

Although work in subsistence production is crucial to survival, it goes largely underreported in population and agricultural surveys and censuses. Most of the food eaten in agricultural households in developing countries is produced within the family holding, much of it by women. Some data show the extent of women's unreported work in agriculture. In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, government surveys using methods to improve the measurement of subsistence work, report that more than half of rural women engage in such activities as tending poultry or cattle, planting rice, drying seeds, collecting water and preparing dung cakes for fuel. Direct observation of women's activities suggests that almost all women in rural areas contribute economically in one way or another.

The informal sector—working on own-account and in small family enterprises—also provides women with important opportunities in areas where salaried employment is closed or inadequate. In five of the six African countries studied by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, more than one third of economically active women work in the informal sector, and in seven countries of Latin America 15-20 percent. In nine countries in Asia the numbers vary—from less than 10 percent of economically active women in western Asia to 41 percent in the Republic of Korea and 65 percent in Indonesia.

Although fewer women than men participate in the labour force, in some countries—including Honduras, Jamaica and Zambia—more women than men make up the informal sector labour force. In several other countries, women make up 40 percent or more of the informal sector.

In addition to the invisibility of many of women's economic activities, women remain responsible for most housework, which also goes unmeasured by the System of National Accounts. But time-use data for many developed countries show almost everywhere that women work at least as many hours each week as men, and in a large number of countries they work at least two hours more than men. Further, the daily time a man spends on work tends to be the same throughout his working life. But a woman's working time fluctuates widely and at times is extremely heavy—the result of combining paid work, household and child-care responsibilities.

Two thirds to three quarters of household work in developed regions is performed by women in most countries studied, women spend 30 hours or more on housework each week while men spend around 10 hours. Among household tasks, the division of labour remains clear and definite in most countries. Few men do the laundry, clean the house, make the beds, iron the clothes. And most women do little household repair and maintenance. Even when employed outside the home, women do most of the housework.

EFFORTS TO GENERATE BETTER STATISTICS

The first world conference on women in Mexico in 1975 recognized the importance of improving statistics of women. Until the early 1980s women's advocates and

women's offices were the main forces behind this work. Big efforts had not yet been launched in statistical offices—either nationally or internationally.

The collaboration of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)—beginning in 1982—on a training programme to promote dialogue and understanding between policy makers and statisticians, laid the groundwork for a comprehensive programme of work.

By the time of the world conference in Nairobi in 1985 some progress was evident. The Statistical Division compiled 39 key statistical indicators on the situation of women for 172 countries, and important efforts at the national level included the preparation of *Women and Men in Sweden*, first published in 1984 and with sales of 100,000.

Since Nairobi, numerous developments have strengthened and given new momentum to this work. The general approach in development strategy has moved from women in development to gender and development, the focus has shifted from women in isolation to women in relation to men—to the roles each have, the relationships between them and the different impacts of policies and programmes.

In statistics the focus has likewise moved from attention to women's statistics to gender statistics. There now is a recognition,

for example, that biases in statistics apply not only to women but also to men—in their roles as husbands and fathers and in their roles in the household. That recognition reaches beyond the disaggregation of data by sex to assessing statistical systems in terms of gender.

The first *World's Women: Trends and Statistics* presented the most comprehensive and authoritative compilation of global indicators on the status of women ever available. The *World's Women 1995* shows considerable development in the statistics available on women and men—and in ways of presenting them effectively. But it also points to important needs for new work—addressed in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Some problems—such as the measurement of women's economic contribution and the definition of the concepts of household and household head—are still unresolved. But significant improvements have been made in many areas. Data users know much more today than 20 years ago about how women's and men's situations differ in social, political and economic life. And they are also asking many more questions that are increasing the demand for more refined statistics. And still other areas, not commonly addressed in the regular production of official statistics, have only begun to be explored: the male role in the family, women in poverty and women's human rights, including violence against women. ♀

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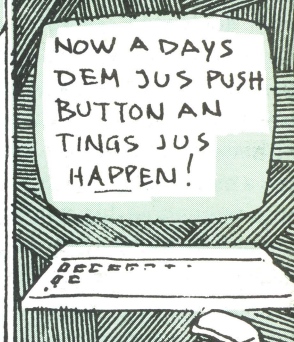
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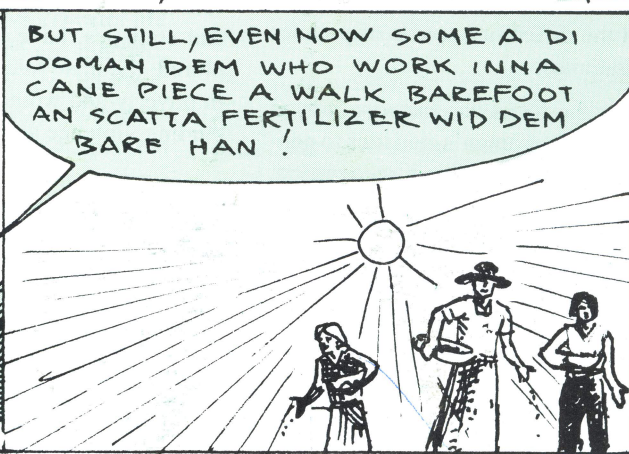
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