

WOMAN SPEAK!

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ABOUT CARIBBEAN WOMEN No. 16 February, 1985



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WOMAN SPEAK!

Editor: Sandra Edwards

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Peggy Antrobus, Tutor/Co-ordinator
Women and Development Unit
Extra-Mural Dept., UWI
Pinelands, St. Michael
BARBADOS

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WOMAN
SPEAK



Editorial

In the Caribbean, as elsewhere in the Third World, women play a major role in the marketing of agricultural produce. But, more often than not, this role is unacknowledged and unrewarded.

Women in the Third World usually grow food for their family's needs or to sell in their local markets to earn some money. Men grow cash crops — that is, for the larger market or for export. Often, development agencies channel aid for agriculture through projects aimed at increasing the man's production, while the woman's role is ignored.

We therefore welcome the step taken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in focusing more attention on women's role in agriculture, through its choice of "Women in Agriculture" as the theme of World Food Day 1984. The FAO itself has been active in promoting women's activities in food marketing within the Caribbean, a policy which has been extended to include support for two issues of this newsletter on the subject of women in different agricultural activities.

This issue of *WOMAN SPEAK!* is just a small step towards recognizing the contribution of these women . . . from the hucksters of Dominica, plying their trade from island to island. . . the Barbadian fish hawkers, reaping the benefits of a modern fish market . . . to the higglers in Jamaica's markets.

We also look at women in food processing, an area that has always been women's responsibility and take a glimpse beyond the market place at the lives of market women—their opinions, aspirations, etc.

It is clear that Caribbean women as one of our contributors puts it, "as traders have made their most significant impact on marketing within the region . . . they have traditionally dominated trade in fruits, vegetables, root crops and fish, both domestically and regionally."

Finally, we thank all of you for your support over the past year and wish you a challenging and fulfilling 1985.



WOMEN IN FOOD MARKETING

A CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVE BY LIONEL JORDAN

"In Marketing, as in agriculture generally, the challenge is to make use of all available human and material resources. There is no excuse for ignoring both the existing and potential contribution of half the population." — (From FAO Feature WOMEN: THE MISSING LINK IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES).

The contribution of women to marketing, and in general to agriculture, is not usually accounted for in official government statistics nor reflected in their status in society. But recent studies show that women play a far more significant role in food production and marketing than has been generally recognized.

It is *estimated* that over 50 per cent of the world's food is produced by women in rural areas. In West Africa alone, as much as 80 per cent of the labour force in all trade is female. In a recent FAO survey of 82 developing countries, excluding Latin America, 42 per cent of the agricultural labour force was found to be female.

The Caribbean is no exception to this general trend. The Caribbean woman performs several roles — not only child-bearer, home-maker and wage-earner, but also farmer, processor, trader, nutritionist and home-economist. The FAO survey already cited concluded that about 40 per cent of the agricultural labour force in the Caribbean was female. Current data for Barbados show that women constitute about 54 per cent of all workers on sugar plantations. Today, more and more, women are entering areas of agricultural activity traditionally reserved for men.

This paper examines the activities and importance of women in the food marketing process within the region. But first, a brief explanation of the food marketing process is given. The paper concludes with a discussion of ideas and suggestions to improve women's participation in marketing.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the limited availability of statistical data on women as a major constraint. However, the view is strongly supported that women are vital to food production and that women must be seen as important to the development process in their own right. As such, women should be involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects

designed specifically to meet their needs as producers and market women.

THE FOOD MARKETING PROCESS

Marketing involves more than mere selling. Broadly defined, marketing includes all the activities involved in the flow of produce from the point of harvest to the ultimate consumer. Some key activities in this process are handling and sorting, grading, packing, transport and distribution, storage, processing, presentation, pricing, and selling.

In addition, the nutritional aspects of food preparation impact so greatly on demand for and consumption of agricultural output that they must be viewed as components of the marketing process. Furthermore, production, extension, credit, and market information are all related to the flow of goods from farmer to consumer.

ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN

Against the above background, an attempt to identify and assess the involvement of women in the food marketing process is now undertaken:

Women as Farmers and Traders

There is a school of thought that views production as the first stage of marketing, and considers careful planning of production and a good quality product itself as essential to effective marketing. Women perform virtually all activities in the process of cultivation — weeding, planting, pre-harvest care, harvesting. Today women are undertaking more laborious tasks such as land preparation and ploughing. There is no doubt women contribute substantially to regional output of food.

But it is, perhaps, as traders that women have made their most significant impact on marketing within the region. Known variously as hucksters, hawkers, or higglers, they have traditionally dominated trade in fruits, vegetables, root crops and fish, both domestically and regionally. In those territories with extra-regional trade in vegetables, women are involved in packing and preparation for export.

Apart from their overt role as traders, the hucksters also provide assistance to farmers, for exam-

ple, in harvesting and transport as well as credit and risk-bearing. Although modernized marketing facilities have sprung up in several territories, the traditional farmer-huckster-consumer mode of distribution continues to be attractive, especially to small farmers with their limited volumes and market outlets.

Women in the Post-harvest System

Women are engaged at every stage of the post-harvest system—handling and sorting, packing and transport, storage, distribution and processing. Proper post-harvest management is necessary if food losses are to be eliminated, or at least reduced. At present such losses are estimated at about 20 per cent in the case of vegetables in Barbados, and may be higher in other territories.

Simple methods of food processing such as preparation of jams and jellies, and drying of fish and fruit, have for a long time been practised by women — both in groups and as individuals — for family consumption, charity or sale. Organizations such as the Bajan Producers group in Barbados and the Grenville Women's Cooperative in Grenada have received assistance in the techniques of small/medium scale fruit processing. Even in the larger and more modernized processing operations women provide the greater share of labour.

WOMEN AS NUTRITIONISTS

Women are responsible for food preparation in the home; they select, cook, and serve food. They are also the leading actors in the running of nutrition programmes. The success of programmes to upgrade the nutritional standards of the population and educate the public on the uses of regional output helps to expand demand for regionally produced foods and, as a result, reduce dependence on food imports.

International agencies are, more and more, emphasizing the relationship between nutrition and marketing. Regional courses — such as that put on by FAO in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization and the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute in Barbados from April — October, 1984 — are needed to train women in planning, implementing, and evaluating nutrition programmes.

Women in Management

Finally, it must be observed that women are gradually assuming responsibility for management and other technical areas of agriculture. Market information and research, extension, retail and wholesale management are but a few of the areas

which are attracting Caribbean women. Statistics of the University of the West Indies show that more and more women graduates are becoming qualified in agriculture and this augurs well for the future.

PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN

As quoted at the beginning of this paper, "there is no excuse for ignoring the existing and potential contribution" of women in our society. It therefore seems logical that steps should be taken to strengthen those roles which women currently play, and to increase women's capacity to contribute to the marketing process in particular and the agricultural development process in general. Some general suggestions are given below.

There is no substitute for training and education for women. Only through a programme of continued training at all levels will women strengthen their capacity to perform more efficiently.

In addition to training, women must be provided with adequate facilities and appropriate technology. Facilities for on-farm storage, handling and packing, equipment, and know-how for enhancing their traditional processing activities, as well as creating new ones, are but a few examples. The introduction of technology should seek to minimize any adverse effect on the employment situation for women.

Co-operative marketing represents an area which can be of great benefit to women in the region. Not only would joint arrangements reduce the cost of farm inputs, transport and other activities, but co-operatives can also increase bargaining power and market share. Moreover, dealing with groups tends to be more attractive to both governments and international donor agencies. Several of these women's groups are already active in some territories, but a greater effort needs to be made to promote and develop this practice throughout the region.

Another important consideration is the limited involvement of women at the planning and policy formulation level. Women must inevitably become more involved in the planning of projects designed to promote their own development. Furthermore, there is a strong case for general development programmes to contain a component for women where this is practicable; but there is an even stronger case for the design of specific projects directed exclusively at women. The International community has already initiated action in this direction, and support for such action in the Caribbean needs to be accelerated.

Yet, there is another vital problem with women and their contribution to development — the exclusion of data on women from official statistics.

The simple fact is that unless proper information is available on women, their participation will be unidentifiable and their chances of being included in development programmes reduced. The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (1979) called on governments to revise their data collection procedures and wherever possible to disaggregate information by sex. Such steps are urgently needed in the Caribbean.

The above discussion does not exhaust the range of possibilities for action. For example, programmes to provide easier access to credit, extension, and market information, as well as to develop expertise in export marketing can be developed. It is hoped, however, that the points are sufficient to encourage further discussion and research on the subject.

WOMEN AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE

The available evidence points to one major conclusion: Women participate fully in the activities of production and marketing, and are therefore vital components within the food system. There seems, therefore, to be no case for the persistent myths that undervalue or obscure the contribution of women to the development process.

The provision of proper records on the activities of women, and the development of adequate training and infrastructural facilities were seen as ways of involving women in a more meaningful fashion in the development process. But women themselves must become involved in planning programmes which benefit them. International organizations must themselves be concerned with the formulation and implementation of projects which are designed specifically for women within the region. Such projects may be in support of women's co-operatives, agro-processing, nutrition and home economics, post-harvest management, credit and other related areas of women's activity.

There is no doubt that an efficient marketing apparatus is a prerequisite to higher levels of production and income. All the region's resources, both human and material, will be required if we are to achieve these objectives. Women are an important resource, constituting more than half of the population. It is therefore our duty to develop and use this resource most efficiently in food marketing as well as in all other areas.

Lionel Jordan is a marketing planner in the Agricultural Marketing Services Division, Barbados Marketing Corporation.



The village of Rose Hall nestles among the mountains of St. Vincent.

ST. VINCENT

Agro-industry project in Rose Hall

A small-scale agro-industry project is being developed in Rose Hall, St. Vincent, as part of a larger programme to establish small-scale enterprises in that community.

The agro-industry component is being implemented in stages, starting with the selection and production of three products: carrot juice – for the immediate market of Rose Hall; and seasonings and ginger powder – for the wider St. Vincent market.

The next stage will be training in food processing. About six women will be trained initially, but as the project develops it is envisaged that more people from the community will be involved.

The project includes ongoing research and development of the selected products – that is, testing, standardization, production development, and solar drying methods.

The project, which will be co-ordinated by the Rose Hall Community Working Group, is expected to provide skills and generate income for the community of Rose Hall.

Food technologist, Dunstan Holder, will carry out skills training; consultant, George Huggins, is to provide organizational assistance in the development of systems to monitor the project and in marketing techniques.

Technical assistance and ongoing support will be provided by the Women and Development Unit (WAND) which is interested in trying to develop a model, based on the project experience, for community-based enterprises.



HUCKSTERS

Dominica's Human Resource

Hucksters are a very important link in the market chain; they make contact with growers and consumers.

As regards Dominica, the hucksters' clients are overseas. The hucksters buy produce from farmers and travel to the other islands to sell it. As far back as the 1930s hucksters have been operating in Dominica . . . trade was mainly in citrus fruits and the islands involved were Barbados and the French-speaking territories.

Hucksters were always a group of hard-working women with few men. They managed their own loads with little help and most of the packaging was done near the house or on the side of the road.

In those days there was little else for a woman to do, for apart from being a housewife, a housekeeper, or a field hand, she had little opportunity to be a self-made person. This had always been the only area where she could organize herself, acquire some dignity and at the same time be economically independent.

Becoming a huckster was one of the easiest avenues at the time: Women get organized with a small working capital; buy a couple bags of produce or even credit it from farmers; to the shipping agent to pay for a ticket and freight, to get warrants prepared and goods declared on ship manifest; go to customs to present warrant, pay for

wharfage at the port, and get a phytosanitary certificate which they must have at all costs (even though many do not always understand why they must have it).

Having made all the declarations, having had a visa and the amount of money required by the country they intend to visit, the women are ready for the first voyage.

When they reach the oversea port they have to unload, pass through customs, and pay certain duties before they are allowed to leave with their goods. Then they make their way to the marketplace to begin selling their goods for the next two to four days, depending on the sales.

The trade also involved the return trip with dry goods to be retailed either from the home, or on the roadside in trays.

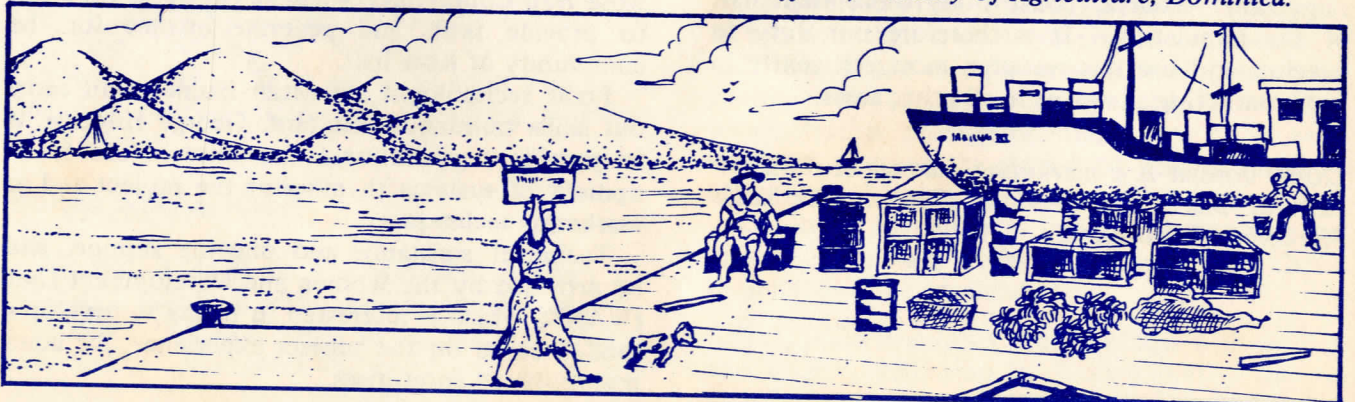
If one goes to Barbados today, most of the women selling in the marketplace are Dominican hucksters who did not return home.

In 1981 about 500 persons were involved in the huckster trade and 200 fully employed that way. The amount of money generated by the trade was roughly E.C. \$3 million per year. In addition, approximately 1,000 people were dependent on this trade.

The huckster trade now extends from Venezuela in the south to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, in the north, involving movement on boats, schooners, canoes, and aircraft.

In fact, we still have in our midst today women who braved the seas on all kinds of schooners and in all kinds of weather trying to make a living as hucksters.

Adapted from "Profile of Hucksters in Dominica," October 1981, by Hannah Clarendon, Crop Protection Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Dominica.





FAO's ACTIVITIES ON WOMEN IN FOOD MARKETING

FAO's policy on project formulation treats the integration of Women in Development activities as a priority. All projects include a component for women as long as the project itself is such that women are part of the target group.

But FAO's concern is also reflected in the formulation of specific projects aimed exclusively at promoting full participation of women in the development process. These involve producing more information about women; devising ways of involving women in agricultural, fisheries and forestry projects; and supporting governments in their efforts to involve women in development programmes.

A special programme – *Community Action for Disadvantaged Rural Women (CADRW)* has been initiated to encourage full participation of women in their own development.

CADRW seeks, through a number of pilot projects, to increase the capacity of rural women to meet their own needs, plus those of their dependents. It does this, for example, by creating opportunities to earn money. The projects work with and through rural women's organizations, even helping to establish such organizations where need be.

There are other programmes such as the *Programme for Better Family Living (PBFL)* in several East and Southern African countries and the *Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP)* which provide women with training and facilities in production, marketing, and other areas of agricultural activity.

FAO IN THE CARIBBEAN

In November 1984 a project identification mission visited the region to identify the design projects specifically aimed at supporting women in food marketing, and satisfying their needs as marketing agents.

FAO is also currently considering a request from the Women and Development Unit (WAND) to fund a proposal for integration of women in the

development process in Nevis. The proposal seeks to provide "Mechanisms and Instruments for linking Action Programmes, Training and Policy for the Integration of Women in Development." The programme is expected to last for two years.

Since April 1984, the FAO – in collaboration with PAHO and the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute – has been conducting a seven months Community Nutrition Course for regional participants. The course seeks to train middle-level nutrition personnel to plan, implement, and evaluate nutrition programmes. Nineteen participants, mainly women, attended the course which was held in Barbados.

Participants are expected to identify pilot projects for implementation in their respective countries at the end of their training.

Recently FAO has supported women's activities in food marketing through programmes in Dominica (1984), St. Vincent (1983), and Grenada (1982).

A small demonstration project was undertaken in Dominica in 1984 which involved the delivery of crates and baskets to assess the impact of such equipment on marketing of produce. Audio-visual aids were also used to teach hucksters how to store their produce, and how to improve their marketing channels.

In St. Vincent (1983) a Home Economics and Extension Project was implemented. The main objective was to promote greater awareness of the place of proper nutrition in the rural family, and to educate rural family members in home economics, extension, and preservation and processing of local foods. Workshops were also held in nutrition education and food demonstrations carried out. Women were expected to be the main beneficiaries from these activities.

In 1982, the Pope Paul's Ecumenical Leadership Training Centre, a women's co-operative in Grenada, received FAO assistance in training in the use of equipment for fruit processing. The target group of the programme was young, rural, unemployed mothers. They were taught skills in areas such as food nutrition, hygiene and budget

management. They were also instructed in the practical aspects of food processing and preservation, and in the making of simple homemade articles.

These three programmes cost approximately U.S. \$60,000.

Follow-up action is planned for the three territories. In Dominica, FAO will provide technical assistance in the implementation of two pilot programmes related to agricultural extension and nutrition education. These programmes include an appropriate food production and marketing package for vegetables, legumes, and livestock.

In the case of Grenada and St. Vincent, technical assistance will be provided in training of personnel involved in nutrition programmes and the identification of income-generating activities related to food processing, respectively. These programmes involve activities in which women play a vital role, and as such are expected to be of major benefit to women.

World Food Day

"I wish to emphasize that the choice of the theme of Women in Agriculture for this World Food Day observance, ought not to be viewed as some kind of token recognition intended to compensate for previous omissions. It must signal instead, a fundamental shift in the concept, design and execution of rural development programmes."

— *Edouard Saouma, Director General, FAO.*

The FAO first observed World Food Day in 1981. Since then, the Day has been celebrated each year throughout the world on October 16 in tribute to the food producers among us. In 1984, World Food Day was dedicated to women in agriculture. Below are a few of the events and observations arising out of celebration of the Day in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

BARBADOS

Barbados' Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Richard Cheltenham, paid tribute to women's contribution to the development of agriculture in his country.

In a message marking World Food Day, Dr. Cheltenham said that this year's theme "Women in



Smoking fish in Ghana. These women, like their sisters in other Third World countries are beneficiaries of FAO's Women's Programmes. (Credit): FAO Photo by P. Mattioli.

Agriculture" was particularly appropriate because Barbadian women, like those in most countries, were involved in all aspects of agriculture – in planting, weeding, harvesting, extension work, research, veterinary medicine, and in other agricultural disciplines.

"Most of our plantation workers are women," he pointed out, "and a recent survey by a group of sociology students at the University of the West Indies revealed that most small farmers and backyard gardeners in Barbados are women."

The Minister said the FAO's selection of "Women in Agriculture" as this year's theme demonstrated that agency's concern that public attention be focused on the vital but often forgotten role of women as food producers.

ST. VINCENT

The Committee for the Development of Women (CDW) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines held activities around World Food Day, aimed at increasing public awareness of the role of women in agriculture in those islands.

CDW organized an agricultural exhibition and rally at Vermont, during which a prize was presented to the most outstanding female small farmer.

Collaborating organizations involved in the event were: Projects Promotion, Organisation for Rural Development, National Farmers Union, Rural Transformation Collective and National Council of Women.

CDW Co-ordinator, Nelcia Robinson, says the Committee's project "Education for Development Among Women" intends to address some of the problems confronting women in agriculture, such as: little or no wages; and difficult farming conditions.

Ms. Robinson notes that the project will provide "educational experiences to expand women's awareness of the real conditions and relations which underdevelop them, and allow them to work towards change."

For further information, contact the CDW Women's Desk, Projects Promotion, Kingstown, St. Vincent.

AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Caribbean women were among participants at a seminar held at U.N. Headquarters to celebrate World Food Day.

Among those speaking on the theme "Women in Agriculture" were: Dame Nita Barrow of Barbados, representing the non-governmental organizations; Faustina Ward-Osborne, Administrator, Women's Bureau, Guyana; Dunja Pastizzi Ferencic, Director, International Research and Training

Institute for the Advancement of Women; and Ruth Finney, Chief, Women in Agricultural and Rural Development Service, FAO.

According to Dame Nita, women were mainly unpaid, except by the proceeds from their own efforts which made it impossible for them to obtain credit.

"By underestimating women's contributions . . . to the rural economy and ignoring their relevant needs, women have no access not only to credit, but to participating in the planning process . . . They are therefore excluded from the relevant education, both at the basic level and for more advanced agricultural education. . . They have demonstrated that they're able to participate in planning and yet they are seldom involved in agrarian development plans . . . The result of no involvement at this level can lead to poor motivation and diminishing results."

Ruth Finney said the improvement of extension and training contracts with rural women was a priority for the FAO.

"Obviously, rural women are very active in food production and they have insufficient support proportional to what they do . . . What are some things that can be done? First of all there are very few women students involved in agricultural training programmes. We would like to see these numbers increase. But for that to happen, girls are going to have to be freed at a young age from the burdens they have which are their share of their mothers' burdens, because their mothers are overworked, both in the field and at home, and turn to the daughters for help. So it is a circle and until you break it, it's going to be very difficult for the girls to have a long-term chance in education that will lead them to be extension and agricultural experts."

Ms. Ward-Osborne observed that in a small country like Guyana women's training programmes should be organized at home.

"We have found that to train people outside of Guyana robs the country and the majority of the people (of) the opportunity or the benefit of that training. What happens is that two, three, or four people might be trained out of the country, but when they return their ability to . . . transfer what they have learned to the people is limited. We are suggesting that as far as possible, training be done within the country, as long as the resources are there. . . ."

In her address to the seminar, Ms. Pastizzi Ferencic stressed the need for stronger co-operation between the U.N. agencies, governments, and NGOs in the preparation and implementation of technical assistance and investment projects for women in agriculture.

Edited from WOMEN October 19, 1984 – United Nations Radio Series, WOMEN EIGHTY-FOUR, No. 255.

Women and Food Processing in Guyana

by Valerie Wint-Bauer

Food processing in Guyana goes back to the time when mothers dried and prepared cereals and flours for porridge and other menus; made their own coconut oil, jams and jellies; preserved shrimps, and produced cassava bread and its by-products.

As happened elsewhere, such skills began to disappear with the ready availability of imported prepared foods, including preserved fruits such as dates, prunes, raisins, currants, canned fruits and vegetables, and pickled meats and fish. However, import restrictions imposed as a means of saving foreign exchange necessitated that use be made of local food items.

At first this idea of local substitution was not totally accepted, but in some areas farmers increased their production of fruits such as carambola and bilimbi which were distributed either free of cost or for a very small price. These fruits, which in previous times were allowed to rot on the ground after a trifling use in pickles and home-made drinks, were now in demand.

To enable women to widen and improve their skills in food preservation, training programmes were established. The Community Development Division, the Carnegie School of Home Economics, home economics centres in schools, as well as women's organizations and several community-based groups took full advantage of the import restrictions. They trained women and prepared fruits for Christmas black-cake and held country-wide food preparation demonstrations. These activities were supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and the women's organizations who encouraged their members to get involved in the income-generating opportunities provided.

Women began at first to produce preserved fruits for their own uses. Excess quantities were



Preparing food for processing.

sold, which led to the development of cottage industries. More fruits were experimented with and the list grew to include citrus, cashew, malacca, green pawpaw and many others. Fruits were made available by the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC), the government agency that purchases and distributes farm produce. However, it was found that cottage industries and household production could not fully use the thousands of pounds of fruits produced.

Consequently, government and private firms became involved in the large-scale production of fruits as well as in research to improve and extend the range of food and fruit processing. The Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation (GPC) and other companies have been very innovative in the area of research, and there has been success in securing markets in the Caribbean and the German Democratic Republic. Private firms are now engaged along with the GPC in the production of drinks and table sauce from the by-products of concentrates and syrups.

In Guyana hams, sausages, pickled beef and pork, and salted fish are produced for the local market. The Guyana Marketing Corporation, with the aid of the Ministry of Co-operatives, has done much to encourage the growth of the pig-rearing industry in Guyana. Private firms are also involved in helping to meet the demands of the local market.

The preservation of fish and shrimp follows a similar pattern. Salted fish has always been a favoured fish, and with the availability of cheap fish through the Guyana Fisheries more persons at the cottage level are involved in this area of food preservation. On a larger scale, smoked and salted fish are also produced by the Guyana Fisheries.

Plans are afoot to establish processing units nearer to the areas of harvesting, as presently most processing is centrally located. One such factory is nearing completion in the rural area of Charity-Pomeroon, while another – a fruit and nut processing unit – is planned by the Women's Affairs Bureau for the Lethem area of the hinterland. It is felt that a factory located close to the source of available raw materials will reduce spoilage, absorb excess quantities, and alleviate some of the burden of the cost of transportation.

Guyana's Women's Affairs Bureau is actively seeking funding for the Lethem project, as well as for a project planned by the Guyana Federation of Women's Institutes to involve groups of women in meat and fish processing, and the production of coconut oil and sweets. The project is intended to provide training for young girls and early school-leavers towards income-generation.

The full potential of food preservation in Guyana is still to be explored. The present growth-rate of the industry indicates room for further expansion, aided by financial incentives to farmers and small producers. At present, gains go to farmers and women who are in the majority in the cottage industry, and who can optimize profits by producing both the raw material and the finished product. More emphasis is being placed on preserved fruit as a major foreign exchange earner, and additional markets are sought every year.

With the encouragement of the Women's Affairs Bureau, the examples set by other women's organizations, schools, and individual home-makers Guyanese women are taking positive steps in the direction of self-reliance, at least in the areas of food production, preparation, and preservation. The goal is not entirely altruistic; it is a matter of survival. – (CWFS)

Ms. Wint-Bauer, a Jamaican, is a media consultant. This feature was first published by the Caribbean Women's Features Syndicate.

It's a FACT

In all the countries studied, the basic marketing facilities afforded to the huckster trade are ante-diluvian and, generally, inadequate by any standard.

- in Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia, about half the respondents had no running water close to their place of business, and the percentage was not much higher in Grenada and Dominica;
- in St. Lucia, hucksters operate without the use of weigh scales, a few have them in Dominica, about half in St. Vincent and Grenada, and most use scales in Barbados;
- throughout the region refrigerated storage is almost totally absent and dry storage areas in or near the point of retail sale are few and far between;
- in St. Lucia and St. Vincent, toilet facilities are virtually non-existent, and in the three remaining islands there are, at best, sporadic toilet facilities in or around the major market places.

(Source: A Survey of Small Scale Agricultural Marketing Enterprises in the Eastern Caribbean, FAO – SYSTEMS Group of Companies, Barbados, 1981.)

In Africa . . . close to 70% of agricultural labour is performed by women, but in some countries this can be as high as 90%. In addition to production, women also take care of the preservation of food. This information is essential, for lack of attention to women as food producers contributes to ill-health. Development programmes which are not based on an adequate understanding of the role of *women as farmers* can seriously damage community health. For example, if men are provided with advanced agricultural technology, land which so far has been farmed by women may be taken by the men to be used for the production of cash crops. This in turn leads to a deterioration in the family's nutrition, because in many societies it is the traditional role of women to provide sufficient food for family consumption.

(Source: Women, Health and Development Kit prepared by the JUNIC/NGC Sub-group on Women and Development of the Joint United Nations Information Committee's Working Group on Development Education, Geneva, 1981).

(Cont'd on Page 18)

Market Vendors Unite

by Phyllis Thomas



These Jamaican bread sellers unite on their day.

The group of 22 women sat around the tables – conference style. They exuded an air of eager anticipation. One was busily knitting a woolen cap. Another did embroidery, transforming an ordinary piece of cloth into a masterpiece. Fingers and tongues moved in easy harmony as they planned a week-end retreat to the countryside. In the far corner of the room, another group of women engaged in a similar discussion.

Besides being all women, they have one thing in common. All but two of them are market vendors – women know variously as higglers, hawkers, or hucksters – who make their living selling food.

The groups merge. They would now see a film, "Abortion – A Woman's Choice."

"Jesus," one whispers. The gory details shock the viewers into stunned silence; stomachs churn; guilt and fear pervade the room.

According to the film's narrator, 69,000 abortions are performed annually in Jamaica. The same figure was quoted for Trinidad. The women are horrified. It is their job to talk to their daughters – some of whom were already sexually active – they are told.

The showing is followed by frank and lively discussions, led by the person who brought them the film, Miss Denise Kelly a co-ordinator of family life programmes, and Miss Dorrit Bent, a social worker and, at the time, Co-ordinator of Women's Programmes with the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC).

Since all but two of the women are market women—renowned more for their active, physical life-style and less for critical intellectual inquiry – the circumstances of their meeting would seem highly unlikely.

The women, however, comprise the nucleus of a unique experiment in non-formal, adult education and grass roots mobilization called the Market Women Project. It is the brain-child of Dorrit Bent who functions as its chief source of creative energy and emotional support.

The Project was conceived in 1975 – observed as International Women's Year – initiated with a seminar in that year, and formalized in January 1976 with funding assistance from the CCC.

"The idea is both educational and recreational," Ms. Bent explains. "We aim to educate. We try to get them to understand who they are, to understand the dignity of parenthood, to help them with family life education and nutrition, and to stimulate their interest in nation building.

"More and more we have to let people know that it is not the government who is going to build the nation; it is not the private sector but everybody . . . who calls himself a native of this land."

Her initial interest was the "real" higglers or itinerant vendors. "We thought of methods to mobilize this group of persons but found it would not be feasible to work with the higglers," she says. Her attention turned to the markets and the women who sell there. Every Friday morning for six months, she travelled to the markets in the Kingston Metropolitan area and conducted a sur-

vey on selected aspects of the lives and habits of the market women.

Her next step was to mobilize those who were interested in meeting her once a month. This had to be on a Monday morning, since by Wednesday the women – most of whom are small farmers – have to begin preparations for the marketing of their produce.

The women are all over 40 years of age, and nearly all of them are married and have familial responsibilities. They operate at the Constant Spring, Papine, and Cross Roads markets in Kingston and St. Andrew. Most of them own and cultivate their own farm plots in the agricultural community of Woodford, St. Andrew. The others buy food from other producers in the bigger markets like the Coronation, for resale.

Mrs. Pearline Burke is one of the participants and a late recruit who finds the Project very rewarding. "There are a lot of things I didn't know about until I came here," she says.

At age 46, Mrs. Burke knew absolutely nothing about birth control. "Now I understand something about it. In our days, if we knew something about these things probably we wouldn't have so many children. I have 10 children."

Mrs. Burke cultivates gungo peas, banana, yams and other foodstuffs on several acres of land in Woodford with her husband's assistance. She goes to the market on Friday.

Mrs. Henrietta Enlis is one of the original members. She enjoys her livelihood. "I have been selling from I have sense. I sold at the Constant Spring Market at the age of 10 years. I loved to have my own things, so I would go to school in the week and on Saturdays I went to the market to make my own money."

She likes the sense of comradeship generated by the Project. "I come here for the enjoyment and learned things I did not know before. I go to, places I did not know . . . St. Mary where they make chocolate, the milk condensery, Port Royal. I find that some of the women, though they come from other districts like Papine and Rock Hall, understand that we can get together in unity."

Mrs. Enlis, 49, is a skilled needleworker. Through the Project, she has been encouraged to teach embroidery skills to unemployed young girls in her community.

The secretary of the Project is Mrs. Gloria Fender. She is awed by the film on abortion. "It is shocking," she keeps repeating. "I never realized that's how it goes."

The whole project gets her nod; the educational aspect gets a special one. "We are getting a lot of education. We have learned to crochet and to bake buns; we learned budgeting and money management and we got to know a lot of places."

She discloses that the group is trying to start a prep school to accommodate the children of Woodford.

Since its inception, the Project has undertaken

several activities which embrace education and recreation.

The National Savings Committee has assisted with money management discussions. Demonstrations in the economics of recycling have been conducted by a former staff member of the Social Development Commission. Other resource persons have included a Sri Lankan doctor who lectured on hypertension and glaucoma, and an Italian consultant who discussed produce marketing.

Miss Bent has observed behavioural changes in the members. "One could actually see the transformation taking place. They have become very vocal, whatever the subject. One member of the group is the president of the Parent Teachers Association at the Woodford School."

Some of the women are also interested in voluntary social work. Twelve were accommodated by the University Hospital and served a stint on the wards and in the laundry. Others volunteered for work with the National Chest Hospital. They also spent a day at the Best Care Lodge which houses physically and mentally disabled children.

"I try to let them do what they want to do," Miss Bent says.

Recreation comes through several educational trips, for example to the Ariguanabo Textile Mills, the Highgate chocolate plant in St. Mary, the milk condensery in Bog Walk. They have also visited Port Royal, the coastal town famous for its fish cuisine, and worked two days on a farm in Morant Bay. The trips are occasions for unbridled enjoyment.

"The fact that they are out of the house gives them the opportunity to relax," Miss Bent observes.

The Project has survived annual evaluations because the women are determined to make it work.

The success of the Market Women Project in terms of the women's personal development, social awareness, and community spirit despite limited finances and myriad responsibilities demonstrates what can be accomplished when the human spirit is inspired, nurtured, and channelled creatively. —

Phyllis Thomas is a correspondent for the Caribbean Women's Features Syndicate. This feature was first published by the CWFS.

Dorrit Bent left the Project in August 1984, on her retirement from the CCC. She has nearly always been associated with women. Her three major jobs have been with the YWCA; the Jamaica Society for the Blind; and the Women's Programme of the Caribbean Conference of Churches.

"My first commitment is to the poor," she says, and of the women in the Project: "They are open to learning and that is very important. They are interested in what is happening in the country, although they might not understand everything.

They care about what is happening and how they can help to improve some of the conditions. I believe in the mobilization of groups to address the needs of any country. We are not going to educate people in masses. I believe in club activities, as long as they are mobilizing people to discuss and think through their own problems."



On the way to market.

NOW expands Food Preservation Programme

By Valerie Wint-Bauer

Barbados, like all other Caribbean territories, is engaged in the process of transforming its economic base away from traditional mono-crop agriculture. It is a task of immense social and economic implications, and Barbadian women are determined to play a critical and useful role in this process.

The National Organisation of Women (NOW) in Barbados, one of the most dynamic non-government bodies in the region in the area of women's affairs, is on the verge of expanding its successful food preservation, training, and production programme.

NOW is a non-sectarian, non-partisan, umbrella organization – comprising some 13 organizations and several individuals – which has, since 1970, been dedicated to focusing attention on women in agriculturally-based, income-generating activities. Over the years, NOW has offered adult education classes in such subjects as: home management, journalism, basic agriculture, basic English, and food preservation. All agro-industrial training has included processing technology and business skills – accounting, production, management.

It was found that many women were attracted to the food preservation courses but, on completing their studies, did little or nothing with the skills acquired. Hence, the idea of a food preservation factory was born, with the expressed purpose of marshalling the graduates into income-generating activities.

In 1983 NOW gained access, through the Barbados Government, to a site at the Pine Industrial Estate. It is here that a food processing factory opened under the voluntary management of NOW president Carmeta Fraser, on January 29, 1983. Seven women became involved in factory production. Another 25 produced preserves as a cottage industry. Workers are provided with transportation and a stipend instead of a weekly wage.

The expansion project is intended to train women for commercial activities, principally food preservation; to demonstrate the potential economic viability of such enterprises; and to develop a model for women, not only in Barbados but elsewhere in the Caribbean. Three important project objectives are: increasing the level of income-generating activity among women in agro-industry; providing a package of services to small-scale, individual and cottage-level producers, namely, marketing and quality control; and developing a greater social awareness of and taste for domestic food preserves.

Women in Barbados have traditionally been involved in the old plantation system of sugar production which is now on the wane. In its place has risen tourism, into which women have moved as sugar's importance has decreased. However, like sugar, tourism is seasonal and, for a women, a precarious enterprise. She is more susceptible to low wages, part-time work, and retrenchment than her male counterpart. And tourism eats up the foreign exchange it earns, through the high importation of foodstuffs – even such tropical fruit as mangoes.

Under the expansion programme training will continue, with greater interest in complementing acquired skills and management training. Resource personnel from a variety of institutions will be used along with certain individual technicians – these services being free of cost. At present three courses are planned, two at advanced level, in which some 40 trainees will be involved.

Facilities at the Pine Complex now comprise 1350 sq. ft. of production space, a storeroom, and an office. It is fairly well equipped to undertake and sustain the kind of comprehensive training programme envisaged.

Preliminary production and test marketing to introduce the products produced by this pilot project have met favourable responses. Consumers generally have welcomed the local preserves which include: egg-plant relish, Bajan sweet and sour piccililli, green pawpaw in syrup, and cucumber relish.

The Agricultural Commodity Trading Company Ltd., a subsidiary of the Barbados Agricultural Society, is the main marketing outlet for the NOW project. Through this relationship, NOW has been able to regularly acquire local fruit.

Both demand levels and supply capability have resulted in a decision to concentrate initially on supplying pickles, relishes, and fruit preserves to hotels, restaurants, fast-food outlets and catering services. It is envisaged that as the project gains momentum, and with plans for the recycling of containers, the unit cost and overheads should be substantially reduced.

Production of the preserves will be carried out by skilled persons identified through the training courses, supervised by project staff. Quality control, output, inventory and wastage will be carefully monitored, and precise and detailed records maintained.

The project has contracted the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity to institute

and train project participants in the use of a modern management and accounting system. It is estimated that initially 10 to 12 line production workers may be required, with their income related to output and comparable to similar small agro-industries in the island. A major development goal is to ensure, through growth, both job expansion and security for participants.

This pilot project will play an additional role in Barbados' small business community. For years, NOW has played an *ad hoc* advisory role to such enterprises, with the result that their output of sweets, confectionary, pastry, and meals have assumed new status both domestically and among tourists. The project will be capable of making such services as quality control, standards, packaging, distribution, and marketing available on request. It is projected that as the service develops it will attract more resources and inter-agency support.

The overall project will be administered by NOW's Board of Directors and its officers, who will also monitor the project in conjunction with the Barbados Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Women's Affairs.

The practical nature and far-reaching scope of the project should serve to raise the standard of living of those involved, while spin-offs to the wider community will be felt at many levels. — (CWFS)

Ms. Wint-Bauer is a media consultant from Jamaica. This feature was first published by the Caribbean Women's Features Syndicate.

It's a FACT Continued from Page 13

(The St. Lucian small-scale farm woman) . . . rises very early, feeds her children and husband, then completes a portion of the work in her house, before going to the field, frequently weeding for some four hours on their land, which lies a thirty minute walk away. She returns to the house in the late afternoon and begins the evening household work, dinner and clean up. On Friday she will often spend a half day or more in the market at Castries, selling extra vegetables which have been harvested during the week.

(Source: The Economic Role of Women In Small Scale Agriculture in the Eastern Caribbean — St. Lucia, Barbara Knudson and Barbara A. Yates, Women and Development Unit, Barbados, 1981.)

Recent studies on the role of women in agriculture . . . show that women produce much of the Third World's food, and that they process and cook almost all of it. Furthermore, they play a leading role in marketing cash crops . . . Women are more involved than men in buying and selling food in most developing countries. In West Africa, for example, women traders handle most of the domestic farm and marine fisheries produce. In much of Asia, marketing vegetables at the local level is done by women.

(Source: "Women: The Missing Link In Development Programmes", FAO Feature October 16, 1984.)



Dominica:

HELP FOR HUCKSTERS

The Dominica Hucksters' Association is to establish a revolving loan fund in January 1985 to assist hucksters in that country.

The fund has been provided with E.C. \$352,200 over a two-year period and is aimed at assisting hucksters to purchase fruit and vegetables for export; purchase packaging material; pay for transportation of produce within and outside of Dominica; and obtain other services relevant to their trade.

Under the fund, hucksters will be provided with short-term soft loans as well as support services. Three hundred full-time hucksters are expected to benefit from this project.

Meanwhile, the Association has appointed an executive secretary who will: collate, analyse, and disseminate all data relevant to the huckster trade; manage the operation of the revolving loan fund; supervise the operations of the Association's packaging and shipping; co-ordinate the buying and selling of packaging material for the huckster trade; set up and co-ordinate training for hucksters; and provide all necessary services for the hucksters.

The appointment of the executive secretary, which was made possible through a grant from the Inter-American Foundation, is expected to benefit hucksters in a number of ways.

These are: increased co-ordination and efficiency of hucksters; full-time representation on behalf of hucksters to national and regional institutions, associations, and organizations; provision of regular marketing information and assistance in identifying new markets; increased promotional and educational activities for the hucksters; and exposure to further technical and financial assistance.

Further plans of the Association include: a group insurance scheme to cover members against loss of produce; warehousing, packaging, and storage facilities for hucksters; and a membership drive to recruit new members.

The Association, which was formed in 1981, now has 152 members. Its objectives are:

- to promote hucksters' interests;
- to secure financial and technical assistance for its members;
- to organize training for members in areas of direct interest to the hucksters' trade;
- to provide all relevant services necessary for the hucksters to carry out their trade, e.g. licensing, accounting, shipping documents, and so on.

An executive committee co-ordinates and guides the Association's work.

PROFILE PROFILE



PROFILE PROFILE

Miss C.- She sells fish by the seaside

It's about 11:30 in the morning as C makes her way from her Sargeant's Village home in Christ Church, Barbados. Once on the main road, she will catch a bus to take her to the fish market in the seaside town of Oistins where she plys her trade.

C is a fish vendor, a hawker—as women in her field are called in Barbados.

She carries on a tradition, for fish selling in Barbados has always been done by women. Indeed, they have controlled the Oistins fish market since its inception in 1950 and continue to do so in the new facility which replaced it in May 1983.

Grandly titled the Oistins Fisheries Terminal Complex, the new market has made a big difference to C and her sister hawkers. It is equipped with ice-making machines and storage facilities, so that fish can now be kept in cold storage until it is sold, and there is running water for cleaning the fish and the counters.

The stalls in the market are controlled mainly by those hawkers who sold fish in the old market. C is an exception, having only been in the market since December 1983.

"I get that place on account of my uncle's wife works there too and the partner that was working with her died. I am pleased with what they have, but I think they need more space to accommodate all of those people that want to come in."

Before taking up a stall in the market, C was a domestic for eight years — a job she's glad to be rid of.

"I find domestic work is a lot of hassle, 'cause people want you to do this and they would tell you do that and when done you can't get through . . . giving you more work than they should. So, I couldn't stick it any longer. Sometimes their children are very rude to you. If you have to speak to them they would tell their parents, and parents try to put all the blame on you and don't try to correct the children. I couldn't stand for that, I have my children too and I wouldn't like my children to be rude to anybody."

Prior to her experience as a domestic, C was an agricultural worker but she says she prefers selling fish.

She buys her fish from the fishermen at \$50* per 100 flying fish and \$3 or \$3.50 per pound for the bigger fish like dolphin or king fish. "I figure it's a little steep, but better can't be done at the moment 'cause they're (the fish) not flourishing yet . . . they're now coming in." (Fish season runs from December to July.)

She then sells her fish ready-boned, although she claims she is "no expert" at boning. Being a relative newcomer to the trade, she is yet to compete in the annual Oistins Fish Festival at which a prize is awarded to the hawker who can bone fish fastest.

For 200 boned fish C makes between \$150 to \$160 per day — depending on the going rate for fish. Out of this she has to pay the fishermen from whom she buys her fish, and the rent for her stall. At the end of the day C may take home only about \$50, but she says this is "enough to keep me together and the children."

She has six children — one girl and five boys. "I would prefer all boys . . . don't mind the boys 'hard ears', when you tell them to do something they do it. But, girls . . . I find them a little bit stubborn."

Four of the children are at school; the others have finished but are unemployed. What kind of future does C envisage for her children?

"I would like to see them have a good opportunity in doing most things, make themselves comfortable, become independent. I can't make a choice for them, they'll have to make it themselves. For my part, I would like them to grow up and after leaving school to look for a job, and not depend on me."

For her daughter, C's hopes are much the same. "I would like her to finish school, study—depends on what she wants to study — and then she would have her house and her kids. I wouldn't be in her way."

This Barbadian fish hawker may return home on a given day anytime after 9 p.m., but this does not deter her from her chosen profession. She is happy with her work and with life in Barbados in general.

"I born in Barbados and I'll remain in Barbados. I love this little island."

**All prices quoted in Barbados dollars.*

Note: The name of the woman in this article has been withheld, at her request.

News from WAND...

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

At its November meeting in Barbados, WAND's Advisory Committee made a number of recommendations pertaining to: the restructuring of the Unit, in the light of U.W.I.'s restructuring; financing of WAND's activities beyond 1985 (the end of the Decade for Women); WAND's relationship with the U.W.I.; and WAND's internal administration.

The Committee agreed in principle that sub-committees be set up to consider strategies for dealing with the areas contained in the recommendations.

During the meeting, it was disclosed that plans were on stream for a regional workshop to highlight the Caribbean region's achievements in the course of the Decade for Women.

This regional meeting is expected to identify gaps in the programmes for women and those issues which need further work. It will also identify linkages and bring together those regional agencies which are involved in women's affairs.

RESEARCHERS COMPARE NOTES

Researchers in the project on the history of women's movements and organizations met in Barbados in August to compare their findings and note the progress of the three Caribbean sub-projects.

The meeting, which was organized by WAND, brought together the regional project co-ordinator, researchers from St. Vincent and Jamaica, and a representative of WAND.

At the meeting, researchers focused on the various issues surfacing in the project; discussed and abstracted theoretical concepts from the data; and streamlined their plans for documenting their findings and for the development and usage of the material.

The Caribbean projects are part of a larger project entitled "Women's Movements, Organizations and Strategies in a Historical Perspective, with Special Reference to Colonial and Contemporary Societies."

The aim of the project is to recapture women's history of organization in selected countries, in order to strengthen women's own efforts towards emancipation.

It is being co-ordinated by the Institute of Social Studies of the Hague and involves women's institutions in countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

WORKSHOPS FOR TRAINERS

The training skills of participants in the WAND-sponsored "Training of Trainers" programme were assessed at a workshop in Dublanc, Dominica, on September 12.

The workshop provided the 20 participants with the opportunity to improve their leadership skills and techniques.

Workshop facilitators were: adult educator, Norine Joseph, and Doreen Francis, Director of Dominica Save the Children Fund. The resource person was consultant to the programme, Audrey Roberts of the Human Resources Development Unit, Extra-Mural Department, U.W.I.

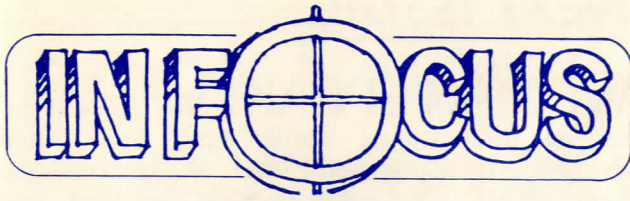
And . . . in Grenada, a one-day workshop was held at the Extra-Mural Department, Marryshow House, on September 24 for staff of the Ministry of Community Development and the Department of Women's Affairs.

The workshop focused on interpersonal relationships in these departments in the light of difficulties between the field staff and their supervisor over work attitudes.

Workshop activities were designed to accomplish the following objectives: to encourage sharing among participants and allow them to focus on their personality; to have participants identify their strengths in terms of skills, and to realize the number and variety of skills they already possessed; and to encourage participants to trade an unfavourable trait for a desirable one.

Facilitators at this workshop were: Michael Roberts, Grenada Save the Children Fund; Keith Clouden, Ministry of Community Development; and Margaret Neckles, Department of Women's Affairs.

WAND programme officer, Pat Rodney, co-ordinated the Dominica workshop and acted as a resource person at the Grenada session.



MONTSERRAT – Group is 1 Year Old

The National Organisation of Women in Montserrat celebrated its first anniversary in October.

To mark the occasion, the Organisation held a week of activities which were open to the public; and produced a “mini-publication” focusing on areas of women’s involvement in Montserrat.

In her anniversary message, President of the Organisation, Margaret Ponteen-Daly, noted that the women of Montserrat had a valuable contribution to make to their families, communities, and society in general.

She pointed out, however, that “For our efforts to have greatest effect, we must work together.”

Edited from WOMEN, publication of the National Organisation of Women of Montserrat.

ST. LUCIA – For the Good of Women and Children

St. Lucia Save the Children Fund says it’s looking to improve the lives of children through programmes which involve them directly – such as day care services and sponsorship – and through programmes for parents, particularly women.

The main purpose of the programmes for women is to make them as self-reliant as possible, so as to lessen the day-to-day strain of providing for a family under depressed conditions.

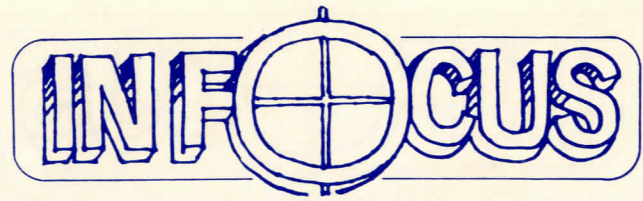
Some of the programmes involve skills training, and many women have already benefitted from courses in crochet, knitting, macrame, sewing, flower arrangement, basic plumbing, and maintenance of certain household appliances.

GUYANA – WPO Publishes Booklet

“Forward With the Women’s Struggle” is the title of a booklet recently published by the Women’s Progressive Organisation of Guyana.

Dedicated to the WPO’s 30th anniversary, the booklet informs about equality between men and women; women and socialism; the history of the struggle of Guyanese women; health and education for women; and other matters concerning women and their special problems.

Contact: Women’s Progressive Organisation, 41 Robb Street, Lacytown, Georgetown, GUYANA.



TRINIDAD – WOMEN’S DESK ON CAMPUS

The External Affairs Committee of the Guild of Undergraduates, on the St. Augustine Campus of the U.W.I., has established a women’s desk to focus on the concerns of women.

The Desk is seeking to: examine the condition of Caribbean women; redress inadequacies, particularly those caused by lack of education and awareness; and liaise with national, regional and international organizations to exchange information on the status of women and to further solidarity among women.

The Desk’s programme of activities for 1984 – 1985 includes: forging links with similar organizations within universities and in the wider community, on an international scale; participation in forums designed to address women’s issues; organizing activities to raise the level of awareness and understanding of women’s role and condition in society; and examination of the physiological concerns of women – particularly contraception, social diseases, abortion, and the effects of drugs.

Other activities which will engage the Desk are: lobbying for the introduction of a Woman’s Studies programme at St. Augustine; lobbying against discriminatory laws; exposure of sexual exploitation in the society, and of sexual harassment of female students at St. Augustine; publication of a newsletter; organization of practical workshops in auto mechanics, cooking, carpentry, and electronics; and recognition of women who have contributed positively to the development of society.

Contact: Women’s Desk, External Affairs Committee, Guild of Undergraduates, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, TRINIDAD.

Edited from EAC Update, Vol. 1 No. 1, October 1984.

INFOCUS

ST. VINCENT – Nelia for President

The new president of the St. Vincent National Council of Women is Nelia Robinson.

Other members of the executive are: Yvonne Francis-Gibson and Shirley Byron-Cox, vice-presidents; Celene Jack, secretary; Agnes Lovelace, assistant secretary; Yvonne Patterson, treasurer; Cherryl Johnson, public relations officer; Lafern Cato, Sandra Davis, Anesta Rodney – committee members; and Nora Peacock, co-opted member.

The new executive is planning a national consultation to determine the level of activity among existing groups; to highlight issues and problems presently experienced by groups; to make recommendations for advancement; and to formulate a three-year development plan.

Contact: National Council of Women, c/o Salvation Army Headquarters, Kingstown, St. Vincent.

WOMEN CONFER IN CUBA

The regional inter-governmental preparatory meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, leading up to the U.N. World Conference on Women, took place in Havana, Cuba, from November 19 – 23.

The meeting was organized by the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and attended by representatives of national machineries for women and ministers of government from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Prior to this meeting, a regional conference of non-governmental organizations was also held in Havana for women to share their experiences during the Decade for Women, and to look at directions for future action.

The NGO conference was organized by the Federation of Cuban Women in collaboration with the NGO Planning Committee of the Conference of NGOs.

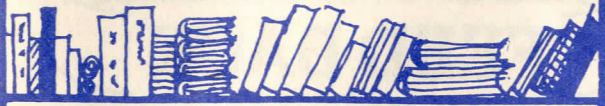
The NGO Planning Committee is responsible for organizing the meeting of women's NGOs to run concurrently with the U.N. World Conference on Women. Both meetings will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from July 15 – 26, 1985.

NEXT ISSUE...

WOMAN SPEAK! No. 17 will focus on International Youth Year. The United Nations has designated 1985 as International Youth Year. To commemorate the year, and recognizing "young women" as one of the issues on which the 1985 U.N. World Conference on Women will focus, the next issue of *WOMAN SPEAK!* will be dedicated to young women in the Caribbean. It will look at the specific needs of young women; prevailing societal attitudes towards youth and young women in particular and how these attitudes affect their own outlook; and the opinions of young women on various issues concerning women. Expected date of publication is March 1985.



BOOK NOOK

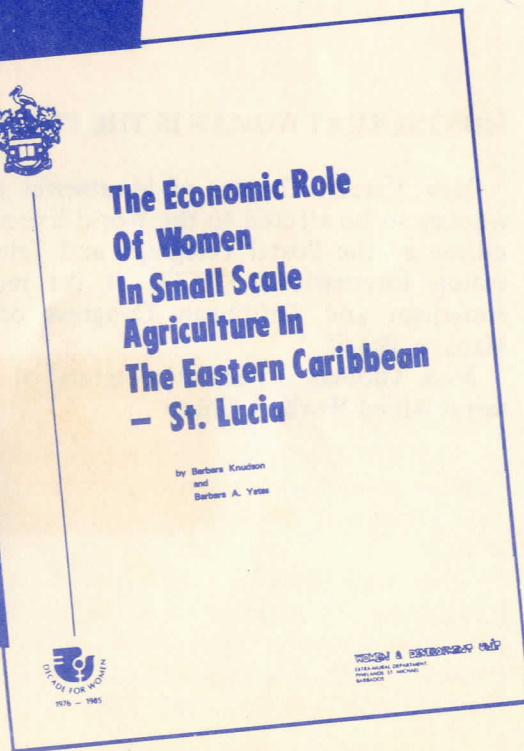
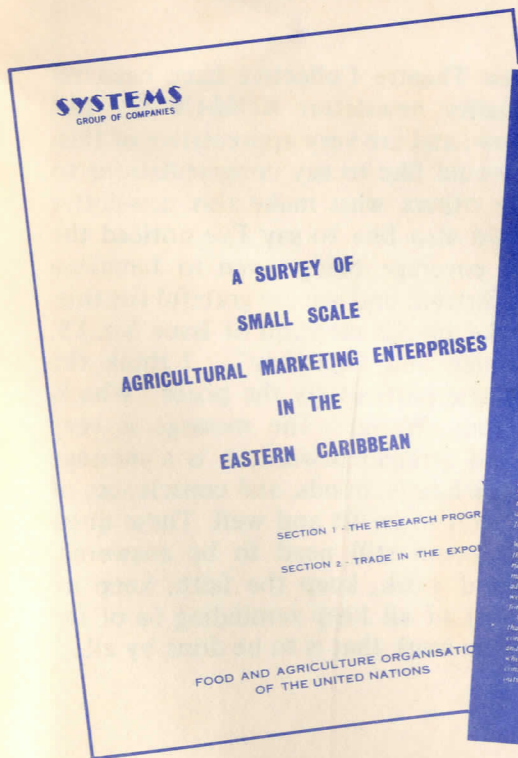


A Survey of Small-Scale Agricultural Marketing Enterprises in the Eastern Caribbean – FAO 1981, by SYSTEMS Group of Companies, Barbados. Assesses domestic and export huckster trade in Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Barbados based on interviews with 200 women and men. Survey results indicate hucksters on the average purchase produce from four to five farmers, although the full range is one to 15. The majority are helped by numerous adults and children, some of whom are paid a wage. No reliable income data are available, as hucksters were cautious about giving full information. Hucksters cite spoilage, transport, and low profit margins as problems. Contact: FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 – Rome, ITALY.

The Economic Role of Women in Small Scale Agriculture in the Eastern Caribbean – St. Lucia

by Barbara Knudson and Barbara A. Yates, June 1981. The findings of a study carried out in St. Lucia for the Women and Development Unit, Extra-Mural Department, U.W.I. Analyses the agricultural sector of St. Lucia, focusing especially on the structure of the agricultural labour force and the role of women. Sets out policy recommendations and programme ideas for improving the delivery of services to women engaged in small-scale agriculture. Available from WAND, Pinelands, St. Michael, BARBADOS.

“Food, Agriculture, Women – A World Food Day Tribute To A Role Too Often Undervalued” CERES FAO Review on Agriculture and Development, October 1984. A special supplement prepared for World Food Day and aimed at raising public awareness of women’s vital role in agriculture. The challenges confronted by women farmers are highlighted in articles which also analyse some of the persisting dilemmas impeding these women’s progress economically and socially. Available from FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 – Rome, ITALY.



MILESTONES

FEED BACK



JAMAICAN HEAD FOR CIM

Jamaican Princess Lawes is the first woman from the English-speaking Caribbean to be elected President of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States.

Ms. Lawes is Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Community Affairs in Jamaica.

MONTSERRAT WOMAN IS THE FIRST

Miss Vereen Thomas of Montserrat is the first woman to be elected to the World Executive Committee of the Postal Telegraph and Telecommunication International (PTTI) at the recent Latin American and Caribbean Congress of PTTI in Manaus, Brazil.

Miss Thomas is general secretary of the Montserrat Allied Workers Union.

Congratulations on the issue of **WOMAN SPEAK!** devoted to Woman and Disability in the Caribbean! It's exciting to see an idea become reality, and I'm happy that Goodwill Industries was able to play a part.

I am really impressed at the variety of articles and information that you were able to obtain for the issue. Particularly good were the profiles of prominent disabled women in the region. Having recently attended a Symposium on Development sponsored by Disabled Peoples' International in Kingston, Jamaica, I can attest to the important role Kathleen Webb and Sarah Newland are playing in the Kingston Community as a whole.

Your publication is excellent and deserves to be widely read.

Robert Ransom, Director
International Dept.
Goodwill Industries of America, Inc.
U.S.A.

We the Sistren Theatre Collective have been receiving your quality newsletter *WOMAN SPEAK!* for some time now, and are very appreciative of this.

I personally would like to say congratulations to you and all the others who make this newsletter possible. I would also like to say I've noticed the vast amount of coverage being given to Jamaican articles, and on Sistren, and we are grateful for this.

I'd like to make special mention of Issue No. 15, July 1984 "Woman and Disability". I think the articles are fantastic particularly the poem "Who is Disabled" by Tony Wong. The message is very strong, sharp, and straightforward, it is a message that will touch the hearts, minds, and consciences of all of us who claim to be fit and well. These questions in Tony's poem still need to be answered. Keep up the good work, keep the faith, keep informing, and most of all keep reminding us of the work done, and the work that is to be done by all.

In sisterhood,

Bev Hanson, Secty.
Sistren
JAMAICA



