

CARFRA NEWS.

NEWSLETTER OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTION.



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CAFRA NEWS.

CAFRA News is the quarterly newsletter and primary networking tool of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

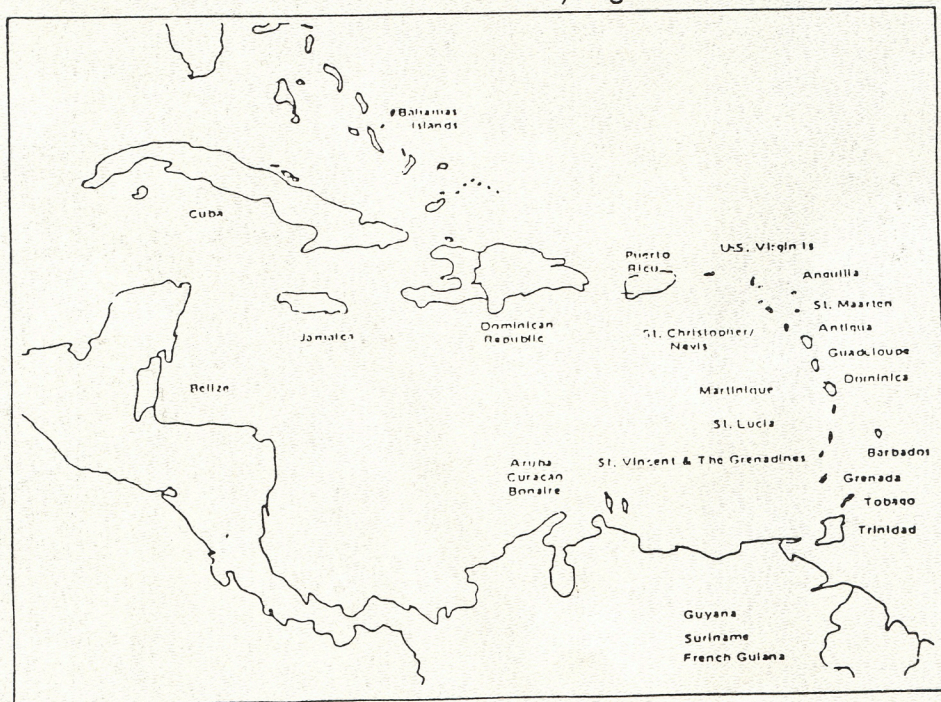
Its main purposes are to:

- Inform members and other interested persons about the activities and programmes of the association;
- Provide a forum for discussion and debate on key issues of concern to women in the region;
- Promote the sharing of experiences and foster links among individual feminists, activists and women's organisations;

- Assist in breaking down language barriers in the region
- Stimulate women's creative expression; and
- Contribute to the development of the women's movement regionally and internationally.

We welcome letters, articles, poems, reviews, opinions and artwork for editorial evaluation and selection. The newsletter committee has a final right to edit content and to reject material not appropriate for publication, e.g. that does not further the aims and objectives of CAFRA and promote a spirit of sisterhood; or that is racist, sexist or "maternalist". Individual authors and reviewers are solely responsible for views and opinions expressed in published articles.

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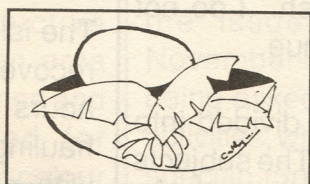
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Editor's Note

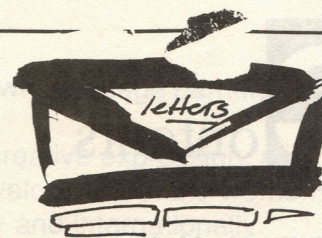
As promised, the main focus of this issue is CAFRA's 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' (WICA) project, Phase I of which was carried out in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and The Commonwealth of Dominica from 1987-1988. The feature article, by Project Co-ordinator Joan French, gives an overview of the research findings and looks at some of the current and planned follow-up activities (Phase II). Some of the people in the communities involved also tell us their feelings about the research, and the researchers talk about its impact on their lives.

On 11, 13 and 14 November, a meeting of CAFRA's National Representatives took place in Trinidad and Tobago. The chief objectives of this meeting were to evaluate CAFRA's work during the last year; to take decisions about the formation of regional bodies to oversee the work of the association; and to give direction to the 1990 programme; . A full report of the meeting will be available shortly; in the meantime, some of the major decisions taken can be found on page .

Those of us working in the CAFRA office are very excited about the recent purchase of a computer (a Macintosh SE/30), and proud to announce that this issue of the newsletter was produced in-house. A big "thank you" to Zorina Shah of Caripress for the encouragement and advice that made this possible.

CAFRA NEWS 2

F eedback



Task Force on Literacy

Your newsletter is very interesting and informative.

I am the Editor of the International Literacy Year newsletter, and I would like to ask for your assistance in obtaining information re. women and literacy in the Caribbean. All the regions of the world are featured in the ILY News with the exception of the Caribbean as, having very few contacts in the region, I have been unable to find materials to publish. I do not want this to continue.

Our newsletter is divided into various sections. The subjects are: Public Awareness, Great Debate, Research, Strengthening Literacy Structures, a lead article, and an update on the activities of the International Task Force on Literacy.

Could you pass this request on to some of the literacy groups who receive your newsletter, or even some of your National Representatives? I would appreciate receiving any small articles, poems, personal experiences, short stories, etc. on the topic of literacy or any of

the above-mentioned subjects.

Darlene Owens, Editor, ILY Newsletter, 720 Bathurst St., Ste. 500, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2R4

A Fierce Monster

As you undoubtedly know, Hurricane Hugo devastated the entire island of St. Croix. The damage and destruction was/is unbelievable. My house suffered a great amount of damage, as did my bee-hives located on another property.

The island is very much in the recovery stage. We've spent hours clearing, cleaning, and hauling water. It's been rough with no electricity, no phone and mail undependable - that Hugo was a fierce monster. At times the winds were 240 m.p.h. and over 90% of houses were damaged.

I read the latest CAFRA News cover to cover by lantern light - it was so very enjoyable, with interesting articles and a fine variety. I particularly appreciated Joan French's report of the seminar on Feminist Theory (I wish I'd been there)

Gloria Joseph, St. Croix

The New Reproductive Technologies

I have recently returned from a Y.W.C.A. sponsored conference in The Netherlands on "Women and the New Technologies". Topics discussed were: the New Reproductive Technologies, Nuclear Technology, Office Technology, Communications Technology, Biotechnology and Appropriate Technology.

I am wondering whether CAFRA would be interested in sponsoring a conference on "The New Reproductive Technologies". It is an area that directly affects women and there is a dire need for information. Women of colour are being used as guinea pigs for the new hormonal drugs without being properly informed of the dangerous side-effects. What does it all mean for our concept of bodily integrity and control over our reproduction?

Marion Bethel, Nassau, Bahamas

Violence against Women

November 25 is the International Day to focus on Violence against Women, and

ways to overcome it.

Women for Caribbean Liberation (WCL) is making a call for a Region-wide and sustained campaign of building awareness and mobilisation on the question of Violence against Women. This call is being made against the background of an increase in sexual violence and abuse against women and young girls.

All women's groups in the countries of the Caribbean region are being asked to mount some form of action on the issue, on or around November 25. Groups are being asked to include in their activities, where possible, some specific form of 'memorial' for Arah Hector, WCL's first Co-ordinator, who was killed in violent circumstances on 28 May, 1989.

Nelcia Robinson, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

A Grand and Glorious Mix

I must thank you for providing me with the landmark experience of the writing seminar at Mt. St. Benedict. (See *CAFRA News* Vol. 3 No. 2, Ed.). It catapulted me into

several new commitments to my writing.

Working with Audre Lorde was like gulping revivifying air after swimming under water for too long. In the poetry workshop, there were about 12 of us ranging in age from 19 to 53. We wrote in a variety of modes and had had varied experiences of poetry. Audre dealt with us together and separately in ways that had profoundly personal significance as well as importance for the group.

Audre's mode of operation in the group should silence forever any of my education students who find it so difficult to work with mixed ability groups. This group had more than mixed ability: it had mixed experience, mixed backgrounds, mixed races, mixed values, mixed languages. It was a grand and glorious mix.

For that week of writing and learning and reading, with plenty of food and fascinating company and the shift from daily pressures and commitments and grind, I am truly grateful.

Margaret Watts, Trinidad and Tobago



lanned to empower

by Joan French

'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' was CAFRA's first major research/action project. It attempted to find out about women's contribution and needs in an area fundamental to Caribbean economies.

The Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Vincent and The Grenadines* were chosen because CAFRA wished to move the focus away from the big territories which were repeatedly the focus of major research, to the smaller, less highlighted territories which had no university campuses and were often left out of major research projects. In addition, those territories had CAFRA members working within agencies committed to and engaged in work with women. These were the Committee for The Development of Women (CDW) in St. Vincent, and The Small Projects Assistance Team (SPAT), through its women's programme, in Dominica. These agencies were willing to collaborate on the project and to be channels for the development of action programmes arising from the research findings.

The project aimed to help strengthen and develop the work being done with women at the local level. This is why the

** From now on referred to as Dominica and St. Vincent respectively*

researchers were primarily activists rather than academics. Their skills were upgraded through seminars in feminist theory and analysis, report and writing, methods of popular dissemination, and production of popular materials. The process also put them in contact with women in the communities in a way which made them into students learning from the women being researched. The women in the communities came together at various points to have dialogue with the researchers around the issues as they emerged. In this way, they came to see themselves as groups involved in a process which related to their day-to-day concerns. This made them want to engage in group action to address the issues. In these and other ways the project strengthened the local women's movements.

Many other agencies besides CDW and SPAT participated in the process as part of Back-up teams which kept in touch with progress; gave advice; assisted in making arrangements in the communities; and, at the end of the research phase, helped to design action programmes to respond to the needs of the women as indicated in the

the findings



(NCW)
findings.

SUPPORT

DOMINICA

The National Council of Women (NCW)
The Women's Bureau
Domsave
The Hucksters' Association
Save the Children Federation (US)
Dominica Farmers' Union (DFU)
Farm-to-Market Ltd.
The Social Centre

ST. VINCENT

Projects' Promotion Ltd.
Caribbean People's Development Agency (CARIPEDA)
St. Vincent Union of Teachers (SVUT)
National Farmers' Union (NFU)
Buccament Organisation for Social Development (BOSD)
National Youth Council (NYC)
Rural Transformation Collective Organization for Rural Development (ORD)
Committee for the Development of Women (CDW)
National Council of Women (NCW)

Ministry of Agriculture
The Women's Desk

THE PROCESS

Three communities in each country were chosen for study. These represented the main types of agricultural communities in the territory.

Survey questionnaires were administered to women working in agriculture in 10% of the households. Researchers also spent time living in selected households in the communities with the women, observing their day-to-day activities; recording how much time they spent on each; observing how work was shared within the household; and sharing life stories and concerns with the women. There were also workshops in which the women and other members of the community came together to hear

about how things were going, to discuss the issues, to help clarify information, and to make recommendations for action. The process meant that a really intimate relationship was developed over time between the researchers and the women who were sharing their lives.

After the data had been collected and analysed it was shared and discussed in the communities, at the national level, and with regional organisations working with women and/or in agriculture. Recommendations for action were made at all these levels and these were put together and developed into programmes for follow-up action in both territories. (See page 16).

AS A MATTER OF FACT

THE FABRIC OF LIFE:

What are the day-to-day conditions faced by women living in the agricultural communities surveyed?

While there are common problems across communities in both territories, infrastructure is more developed in the communities in Dominica than in those studied in St. Vincent. The main reason seems to be a higher level of community mobilisation and participation. The greater scarcity of reasonably flat land also makes life more difficult in St. Vincent.

OH WOMAN

(sung to the tune of 'Yellow Bird')

*Oh woman, all clothed in a
debt like this
Oh woman, no agricultural
credit
How you going to get food
tomorrow day
Look de children dem
hanging round yuh hem
De shopkeeper say no more
trust today
Malnutrition relay*

*Oh woman, you have no title
to land
Oh woman, your man have
little to land
In the house and land you
working so hard
No leisure you get only toil
and sweat
We can share the work
And don't leave us broke
Then we both go and fete*

*Oh woman, a quarter acre
you get
Oh woman, this ain't an
economic plot
You get less money than de
man dem do
Even if is the same work we
do
We need equal pay
For our work today
To be happy and gay.*

(This song was made up by the
teams at the popular theatre
workshop in St. Vincent)



from Dominica pop. ed. booklet

the findings

The main problems are poor roads into the communities and difficulty in reaching plots, especially in the rainy season; lack of transportation which is often available only from a distant main road, and is expensive and infrequent; inadequate water supply, with many households, especially in St. Vincent, depending on rivers for water for domestic use; limited electricity, inaccessible to poorer households; and the absence of any organised garbage disposal system. Pit latrines are the main form of human waste disposal.

Most communities have access to health clinics for elementary health care. Clinics, however, have problems of staffing and supplies. In some communities access to the clinic means walking one to two miles. In St. Vincent, major health care is only available in the capital, Kingstown. In Dominica, one of the communities has its own hospital, though this is poorly serviced.

In Orange Hill, the estate community which is the most depressed of those surveyed, there is no health clinic. Sixty-eight households shared 2 pit latrines at the time of the research. Transportation is almost non-existent, and available only by walking a long distance to the nearest main road. Children walk two hours to get to school. Families of 6-9 persons huddle in one room which is called 'Housing'. Water comes from the

Rabacca Dry River through an eight inch pipe which serves the whole community. When there is no water from this source, as often happens during periods of heavy rain, residents must walk for up to 45 minutes for their supply, until the pipe line is repaired by members of the community who



Cathy Jones

work as mechanics on the estate.

Educational facilities are mostly limited to primary schools.

Secondary schools exist way outside the communities. Only one community in Dominica has educational facilities from pre-primary to secondary level. The Orange Hill community in St. Vincent has no educational facilities within the community.

The most common diseases in both territories are diabetes, high blood pressure and worms. These are related to poor diet, poor water supply, and poor waste disposal systems.

**NANNY DEAD AN' GONE, AN'
SHE NO LEF' NO WILL**

Who controls the land that women work? The research shows clearly that women's access to land is mainly through men - male spouses or male relatives. Generally, women squat, rent, lease and share-crop land controlled by men, or are simply allowed to work the land at the discretion of the men, usually in exchange for services: providing food, helping the men with work on their land, looking after their common children single-handedly, etc.

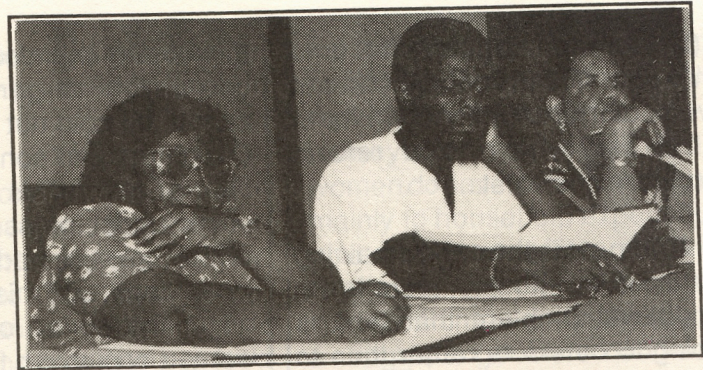
Of the households that had titles for land, the titles were in the names of the women in 23% of the cases in Dominica, and in 25% of the cases in St. Vincent. Marriage is seen as a significant mechanism for acquiring land, especially in Dominica. This is

less so in St. Vincent where marriage is less prevalent and there is a higher incidence of female-headed households. In St. Vincent the land the woman works is more often owned by her relative or the relatives of a spouse than by a spouse. In St. Vincent less of women's ownership of land is tied up with marriage than is the case in Dominica. Women's ownership of land in St. Vincent therefore appears to be more 'independent'. This is very interesting, since in Dominica the community of Marigot which has the highest percentage of female-headed households among the communities studied, also has the most equitable distribution of ownership between males and females. By contrast the community of Giraudel, with the highest level of household ownership and an exceptionally high occurrence of legal marriage (75%) has the greatest disparity in ownership between females and males (11% compared to 44%). The Dominica data suggests that ownership of land comes to the women mostly after the death of the husband (women tend to outlive men).

The women in agriculture in Giraudel are younger than in the other communities. It also appears that the ownership reverts to male children on the death of the woman, though this needs further research to be conclusive.

Apart from the traditional methods of private purchase and marriage, Government Land Reform (Integrated Rural Development) programmes are the next most important mechanism through which women come to own land. If IRDP is included as ownership (the beneficiaries have no titles yet) 44% of the household owned land. Yet women get an unequal share of the land available through these programmes. Most of the land goes to men. Women are not considered if their male spouses get land, and the male spouses are given priority. In addition women tend to be assigned the less fertile, less productive land.

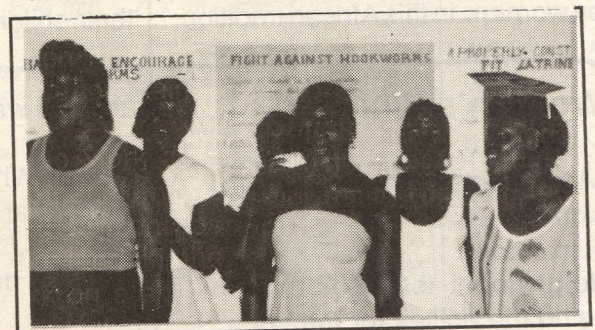
In the Grand Bay community in Dominica, of the



Government and NGO representatives at the SVG National Workshop



Nelcia Robinson, CDW Co-ordinator, shares audio-visual information



Members of a workshop group



Researchers in the field

the findings

400 farmers targeted for land through IRDP, only 24% are women. The situation is similar in all areas where land reform programmes exist.

In Orange Hill, the only remaining estate in the sample, there is the additional problem that land is going to outsiders rather than to the people who have lived and worked on the estate for generations. Of the 83 persons allocated land so far, only 24 are from Orange Hill, and only 7 of these are women.

As far as inheritance is concerned, family land seems to be of particular significance to women. Where family land was found, it was occupied primarily by women. In this African tradition,

the land is handed down from generation to generation and cannot be sold out of the family. Daughters and sons have equal right of use. This tradition has come under pressure from the British colonial tradition of male inheritance, and this has come to affect the sense of security of women occupying family land in cases where potential male contenders exist. The women's security is also being affected by the enhanced economic power of brothers who have advanced through immigration.

How does this insecurity in relation to land, the basic resource for their livelihood, affect the quality of life of women and their ability to improve their own lot and that of their children?

THE TIES THAT BIND

The dependence on men for the most basic resource, land, means that women's relationships with men are based primarily on economic and only secondarily on affective considerations, although it is also true that in practice women try to get the best deal, i.e. to find someone they like who can supply their economic needs. The primacy of economic considerations, however, has serious consequences. Cases were found of women tolerating incest because they were dependent on the men who were abusing their daughters; of women tolerating relationships because they had no alternative

Woman's Wuk

(An excerpt from a workshop skit)

Neighbour: Isabel, you finish doing the doilies for me yet?

Mother: No, me can't study that now although we want the two cents. The nurse tell me to rest.

(a noise is heard outside like quarrelling)

Girl: Boyin, help me wash up the wares, nuh. Me alone have to cook and clean up the house

and still wash up wares.

Father: What you making noise fah? That is woman wuk.

Boy: Eh heh.

Girl: But he could help.

Boy: Me nah help do no woman's wuk. My wuk is fo go in the land and wuk.

Mother: But all yo nah weary mek noise? Girlin, stop grumb-ling and do the wuk.

Girl: But Ma, he could help.

Mother: Look sharp put the dinner pon table. Yo father hungry.

(girl cries quietly while she prepares dinner)

Neighbour: Girl, yo ha fah learn fo cook. How yo expect' to get a man?

(goes out)

Girl: Is not girl alone who must wash and cook and clean. Boy could do it too. And if all ah we do it, woman wouldn't have it so hard in life.

means of survival; and of fathers using the fact that their daughters were dependent on them for land, to prevent the daughters from establishing relationships based on affection, and to force them to accept partners chosen by the fathers.

Dependence on men also affects women's access to credit. Few

women. No males need to get their female partners to co-sign loans.

Another effect of women's position in relation to land is that the men keep the best land for themselves, and use it to grow cash crops, mainly bananas. Women grow mainly ground provisions to feed their families, for sale on the local

are therefore usually in a stronger position to get loans, or to develop their productive capacity with money from savings. While women do save, their money goes mainly to household expenditure and looking after children (uniforms, books, shoes for school). Some women are waging a struggle to get more involved in banana production, but are up

against the men's control

From SVG pop. ed. booklet - "Dis a Hard Wuk"



of the better land. In any case, there is a need to maintain the provision production which guarantees a food supply. A major move by women into bananas would jeopardise this food supply, both at the individual

household and national levels.

Extension services such as technical advice, fertilizers, pest control, etc. are available mainly for bananas. Women's main crops (provisions and vegetables) gets little or no attention. In this situation they depend mainly on experience or on each other for

such as the Caribbean Agricultural Rural Development Advisory and Training Service (CARDATS) which has credit schemes to address these issues. The need for partners to co-sign is a reflection of the weak position of women in relation to collateral, and the 'guardianship' role which society gives to men in relation to

market, and for export if there is a surplus. Cash returns are lower than for bananas. Both in cash and kind women's production goes primarily to family consumption. Men leave that to the women and put their cash from bananas in the bank. Cash and land collateral are what credit institutions usually ask for. Men

information. The aerial sprays used for bananas are destroying their vegetables. The governments have shown little concern. The women are simply told to cover their vegetables with plastic if they want to protect them. Some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are beginning to do surveys to determine exactly who are affected with a view to helping them to get remedial measures.

Marketing services are also geared towards bananas. Women and men doing provision or vegetable farming have to make their own arrangements. In St. Vincent a private firm, Eastern

low. Farm-to-Market Ltd. in Dominica also assists with marketing products other than bananas. In general, however, it is easier for the women to market through women traders (also called hucksters or higglers) who come into the community and take responsibility for getting the goods to market, and selling them. They retain a portion of the sales for themselves and give the rest to the farmers. Farmers often have trouble collecting as traders complain of spoilage and low returns.

While women most often do not own or have primary control over the land they work, everyday farm

decisions about farm improvements, hiring labour and acquiring services. Men, however, lead in making the decisions about purchasing farm equipment. In Dominica women participated fully in decisions about farm improvements and labour, as well as equipment. Men were cited as the main decision-makers when it came to type of crops to be grown, credit and agricultural services. The data suggests that while men control the land and determine policy in relation to crops, women bear the main responsibility for everyday farm management and day-to-day decisions. This situation mirrors somewhat a proprietor-worker relationship.

The absence of a spouse or resident partner does not mean that these relations do not exist, as the proprietor role is often held by a brother, a father or other male relative. The social contract is maintained without conflict where the woman honours the unwritten terms of the agreement: services in exchange for access, and adherence to the policies determined by the male. Otherwise there is friction, frustration, and sometimes separation.

Where women manage to establish an independent base, they make their own decisions in all areas, but the possibilities for this are very limited, except for squatting on government land.



Connexions

Caribbean Agencies, buys provisions from farmers but the farmers complain that prices are

management and maintenance is most often left to them. In St. Vincent women lead in making

Then the government moves into the role of male spouse or patriarch, and usually does not even feel it necessary to consult his "wife" or "daughter".

Most women who establish a base independent of the fathers of their children, and discontinue sexual relations with them, forfeit support for the children.

Women have different strategies for dealing with this situation, as the quotations below demonstrate:

Marriage:

"If you and a man work together for what you all have, when you married and he dead before you, nobody can't come in to claim wha' he ha', because you know for sure dat is yours, but when you all live together jus' so, other people could come in and tek away wha' you ha'; that is the law."

"Me want a man to help me, so me get married".

The Single Life:

"I don't want no man in my life; I can make it alone because I have enough to live by."

"All they good for is to give you children, den leave you alone to bring dem up".

In the survey, marriage was not

the most common situation, though it was far more popular in Dominica, where 47% of the women were married, than in St. Vincent where only 22% were married. The rest were single or in common-law unions.

THE UNENDING DAY

In-depth studies of 10 households in Dominica and 12 in St. Vincent (chosen to reflect the variety of situations) showed that in 14 of the 22 households women had no resident partners, and no partners assisted in work in the field. This is because in Dominica especially women engaged in agriculture were mostly of advanced age and, even if previously married, partners had died. At the same time, in St. Vincent as well as in the Marigot community in Dominica, households were mainly run by women without resident partners.

What this means is that in most cases women were doing their field work themselves, assisted by older male children and occasionally by hired labour. In St. Vincent, where there were resident male partners who assisted, they spent significantly more time in field work than the women. In Dominica this was not so; in fact the women either did almost the same or more hours of work than the men.

In addition to doing this large amount of field work, the women



Claire Kujundzik 'Mother and Child'

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Commonwealth of Dominica

carried the main responsibility for domestic work and the training and rearing (i.e. socialisation) of children in their households. While the research did not measure the time spent on socialisation, a mini-survey among 15 year olds in the communities in St. Vincent revealed that mothers were exclusively responsible for telling their teenage daughters about matters like menstruation and sex, for buying their clothes, and for looking for jobs for them. The general survey showed that women were the main decision-makers in all matters related to the everyday care and rearing of children.

Excluding the socialisation tasks, most of the women in St. Vincent spent 5-10 hours per day in housework, and those in Dominica 3-10 hours per day with more spending roughly 3 hours. It would be interesting to explore further the link between the higher level of basic facilities in Dominica and the generally lower number of hours spent on housework.

Men gave little assistance with housework. The maximum assistance given by males in the 5 households where there were resident male partners was 156 hours per year or 24 minutes per day.

The majority of time spent on housework by the women was spent on childcare (where there were young children), on cooking and washing wares, followed by

washing and ironing. This was the same for St. Vincent and Dominica. In St. Vincent up to 65% of domestic work time was spent on childcare, and up to 47% on cooking and washing wares. In Dominica the figures were 38% and 51% respectively.

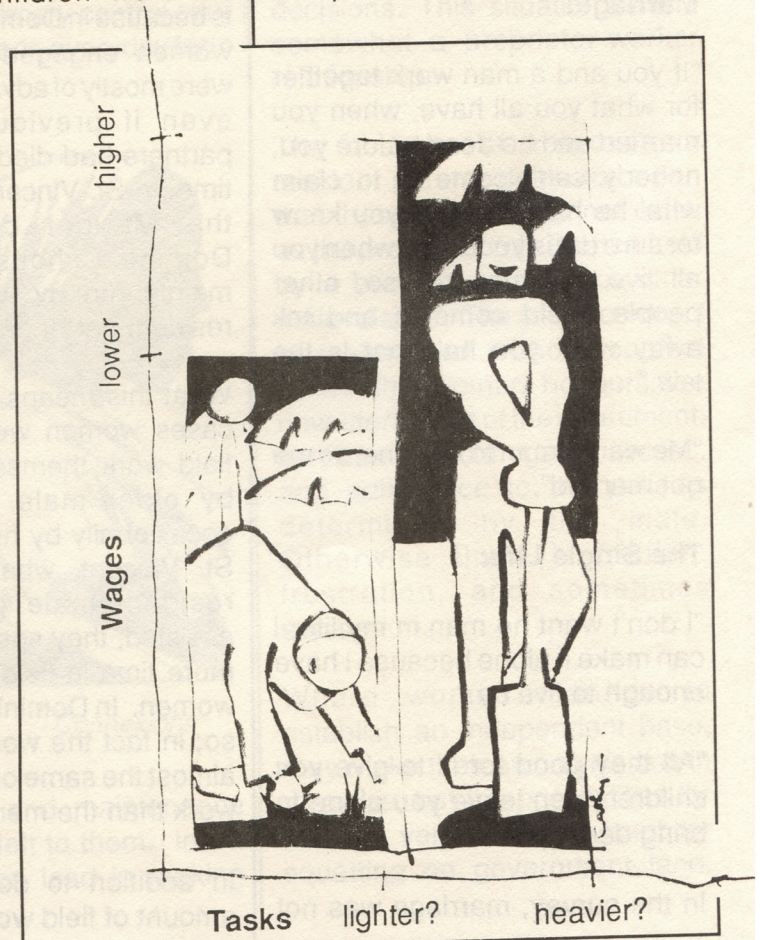
The long hours involved in childcare means that there was a definite relationship between the age of children in the family and the amount of housework. Where there were young children, the amount of work was greater. Where girl children were old enough to help, they were made to do so, and the woman's work decreased.

Where the older female child in a household was a relative (in the Household Case Studies these were always nieces) the bulk of the domestic work was passed onto them. This suggests that they are

brought into the household specifically to help with domestic work.

There is a relationship between the age of the children and the ability to work land. For example, a family which owned 10 acres was only able to work 3 because so much time was taken up with the care of young children.

In Dominica the majority of households (50-70% in the 3 communities) comprised 1-5 persons. One quarter to one third comprised 6-10 children. There



Cathy Jones

were very few households larger than this. In St. Vincent 46% had 1-3 persons, 47% had 4-7, and very few were larger than this. It is clear that household size in Dominica is generally larger than in St. Vincent, yet children take up less time. This appears to be the result of better social conditions in the Dominican communities (availability of schools, water, etc.) and perhaps more help from extended family networks, which are more associated with legal marriages, the proportion of which is relatively high in Dominica. Over 35% of households in the two larger communities in Dominica were extended, while only 18.1% of Vincentian households were extended.

'LIGHT WORK'

When working their own plots, both men and women tended to do the whole range of tasks. However, when working as hired labour, tasks were strictly divided according to sex. Both women and men hired men to plough, dig and clear, while men hired women to weed. Women rarely hired women to weed, which could either mean they do it themselves or rely on non-wage mutual aid mechanisms. Fertilizing, sowing, harvesting and field picking were also done mainly by women. The application of chemical sprays was done by men.

Where couples worked land jointly, there was a tendency for

men to do more of the "men's tasks" and for women to do more of the "women's tasks".

Tasks done by women are regarded as less physically demanding, but requiring greater care and skill. Tasks done by men are regarded as physically more demanding. In official literature and to a certain extent in popular language this has been reduced to women doing "lighter" and men doing "heavier" work. The distinction hardly holds good even when only physical requirements are considered: the back-breaking task of weeding can hardly be said to be less physically wearing than digging or ploughing, and the long term physical effects can be far more damaging.

The concentration required for sowing, harvesting and field picking should place them above less mentally demanding tasks such as digging and ploughing. However, this definition of men's tasks as "heavy" and women's tasks as 'light' is used to justify lower wages for women.

Tasks which require technical knowledge and skills, such as applying chemical sprays, are done by men. Extension officers are involved largely in giving technical advice.

BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?

The majority of women in the



CARLOS GONZALEZ

Carlos González

survey (93.9% in Dominica and 85.2% in St. Vincent) found time for activities other than income-generation and housework despite, or perhaps because of the long hours spent in survival activities. Visiting friends and church related activities were the main forms of leisure, although

many refused to categorize their church activities as leisure on religious grounds.

The women were also reasonably active in community organisations (43% in St. Vincent and 40% in Dominica), church based groups and farmers' organisations. While the leadership of the church is all male, church women lead social and fund raising activities at lower levels. In farmers' organisations both the leadership and the composition are predominantly male.

27% of the women in Dominica and 15% in St Vincent said they had limited leisure or no leisure at all. In Dominica one third of these said they were 'not interested'. This appears to be due mainly to religious attitudes and influence. Otherwise the main reason given in both territories was "too much work". In St. Vincent, weddings and funerals were regarded as leisure occasions.

In both territories women often cited as leisure activities which could be categorized as work:



trimming hedges, weeding the yard, shopping or craft work.

Participation in the electoral process was high in both territories: 91.3% in Dominica and 82.8% in St. Vincent.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Although agriculture is their main income-earning activity, the Household Case Studies suggest that most women involved in agriculture are unable to show cash profits from their agricultural activities alone.

Women employ a variety of survival strategies to supplement income from their agricultural activities. The Household Case Studies show that women employ 1-3 other strategies to survive in Dominica, and 3-5 in St. Vincent.

The main supplementary strategies are wage work (which is primary, not supplementary, for women with no access to land), remittances from abroad, trading in small goods (food, sweets, cigarettes, etc.), the rearing of small livestock and exchange of goods and labour. As we can see, these strategies include not

only income-earning activities, but also activities which substitute for the expenditure of cash. For example, excess produce and labour is shared with friends, but friends can also be depended on for similar help.

Remittances are usually linked to past or present services of childcare and household services. They constitute an informal "wages for housework" network in which women are the main donors and recipients.

NONSENSE

Despite the use of these multiple strategies, the Household Case Studies show that less than half of the households in St. Vincent, and just over half of those in Dominica, were able to meet their basic needs and show a positive balance - but only just. The remaining 50% of households were unable to maintain themselves from these activities even at a very minimal level, and lived in perpetual debt.

The level at which household maintained themselves was generally very low. In all communities the bulk of expenditure was on food: an average of 70.5% in St. Vincent

and 66.59% in Dominica.

Despite this, the nutritional content of the food was low. Only small quantities of protein could be bought, and vegetables did not figure substantially in the diet of most households. A particular contradiction is the high use of flour and rice in St. Vincent, while green figs (bananas) are hardly consumed. This is of particular concern since the main diseases found in the survey were diabetes and hypertension.

NEST EGG

In spite of poverty and debt, the women managed to put aside some cash savings for crises, primarily medical expenses

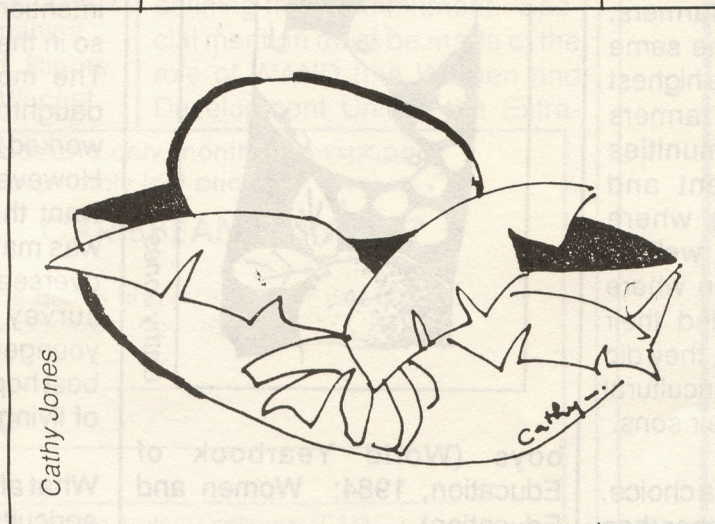
Credit Union, and in St. Vincent in the Friendly Society. Smaller savings such as subs (Dominica) and sou-sou (St. Vincent), and the saving of medium livestock (e.g. on the Orange Hill estate) went mainly towards outfitting children for school or purchasing or replacing household equipment

LOOK INNA YU CRYSTAL BALL!

So what of the future? What is women's participation in agriculture likely to be in the next generation?

The majority of women presently involved in agriculture are over 35 years of age. The highest participation is in the over 45 age group. In the communities surveyed there were two factors which determined the involvement of younger women: repressive conditions and the proven success of farming as an income-generating activity. On the Orange Hill estate in St. Vincent there are more women under 35 involved than women over

35. However, this is because Orange Hill is an estate with almost slave-like conditions where



(Dominica) and burial (St. Vincent). In Dominica formal savings were kept mainly in the

alternatives to wage labour on the estate are almost non-existent: residents have no access to land for any substantial independent farming. In Giraudel in Dominica, on the other hand, vegetable farming has provided the opportunity for the earning of substantial incomes by women. In this community there are as many younger women involved as older women.

In general, however, returns from farming for women are so poor that they wanted neither their sons nor daughters to be totally dependent on farming. They preferred them to have some other skill as well. The women did not see farming as a viable activity by itself.

With this proviso, 60-70% were willing for their sons to be farmers, while only 40-50% felt the same way about daughters. The highest preference for girls as farmers existed in those communities (Lauders in St. Vincent and Giraudel in Dominica) where women are doing quite well as farmers. However, even where women said they wanted their daughters to be farmers, they did not involve them in agricultural work. They involved their sons.

If they had to make such a choice, they would take a boy rather than a girl out of school. The main reason given was that a boy could get along in life without an education more easily than a girl.

This finding is significant as it differs from findings for other regions of the world where there is usually a clear preference for giving educational opportunity to



Cathy Jones

boys (World Yearbook of Education, 1984: Women and Education).

The education of the women interviewed was almost exclusively primary, and often not

complete because of having to look after young children or help in the field, or because of the distance of school from home. Most had become involved in agriculture in their early teens. This suggests that girls of an earlier generation were more involved in field work than is presently the case. However, 28 of the 48 young women interviewed in St. Vincent from a random sample said they assisted their parents in field work.

Twenty-three of these young women said they would like to follow their mothers into agriculture, while nineteen did not. The mothers, however, sometimes discouraged their daughters from going into agriculture. For example, one daughter who declared her intention to go into agriculture did so in the presence of her mother. The mother confirmed that the daughter loved agriculture and worked the land with good results. However, she said, she did not want that for her daughter, and was making attempts to send her overseas. Most women in the survey saw the migration of younger family members as the best hope for improved standards of living.

What all this means is that unless agriculture can be made viable for women, unless its prestige can be raised, and unless young women interested in agriculture can be given the necessary

practical and propaganda support to overcome the obstacles to participation and success, including control of land, women in agriculture may well be a dying breed.

ACTION IN PROGRESS

- Women's farming cooperative, Orange Hill, St. Vincent
- Women's vegetable production projects, Dominica
- Land Reform: lobbying and organising for more and better land for women within these programmes
- Building of toilet facilities in Orange Hill, St. Vincent (almost completed)
- Organisation building
- Public education and consciousness-raising on the issues e.g. Radio Series in Dominica
- Workshops on Land Rights, Inheritance, etc., in St. Vincent

- Use of WICA materials in existing education programmes
- Short stories based on the life stories of women in the communities (St. Vincent)
- Lobbying: e.g. for improved statistics on women; realistic and equitable credit terms; equitable wages; improved roads and water supply; and recreational facilities.
- Further research to support lobbying activities, e.g. survey on effects of aerial spraying of bananas on women's vegetable production in Dominica.
- Exchanges between Dominica and St. Vincent to share experiences and strengthen skills.

Several national and regional agencies have committed themselves to these follow-up activities. Others are in the process of defining their commitment. Special mention must be made of the role of WAND (the Women and Development Unit of the Extra-

Mural Department of The University of the West Indies). WAND will be working with CDW to promote follow-up in the communities in St. Vincent.

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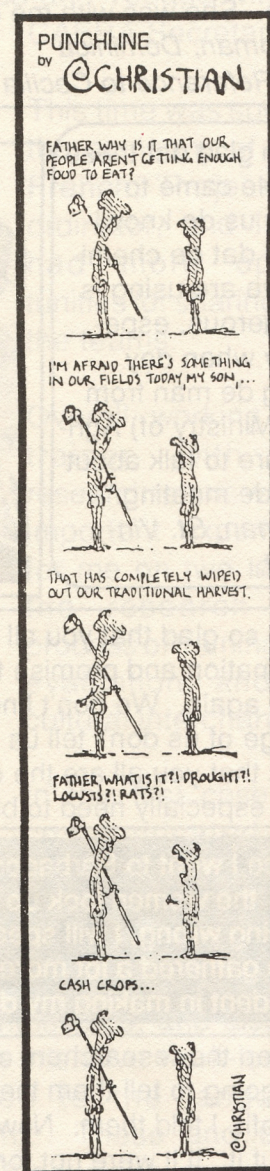
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New Internationalist

Ccommunity voices

"Me now come to realise dat ah some-ting good ah yo intend fo' help we and na fo get information fo give government fo dem tax we, ah so me begin to get interested".

Woman, St. Vincent.

Cecilia* is my main man! She didn't scorn me. She took me like a piece of bread and a cup of tea. She came to the farm with me. She was with me in everything".

Woman, Dominica

(* Reference to Cecilia Babb, researcher)

"After me see you all keep coming and coming and seeking more information, me bin a bit suspicious, so me tell me wife na give you all too much information. But when I went to the meeting and listen to what you all had to say about the purpose of the project I began to change my mind about you all and tell my wife that you come to help us farmers".

Man, St. Vincent.

"Me bin glad when me see all you because me know is because all you want fo' help we farmers wey mek all you come, so me support de project fully from de marning".

Woman, St. Vincent.

"I am glad dat these people came to bring us de knowledge dat de chemical we are using is dangerous, especially when dey bring de man from de (Ministry of) Agriculture to talk about it at de meeting."

Woman, St. Vincent.



"The research really meant a lot to me. Maybe if we had a body to stand up for women, I would not have borne what I bore. Maybe if this group was in action long ago, women would survive in a better situation."

Woman, Dominica.

"I am so glad that you all come to Orange Hill because everybody coming to get information and promise to come back and help us for years, and we never see them again. We don't know what is happening with the lands, and the people in charge of us don't tell us anything. We continue to live in ignorance all the time. I see that you all are the only ones who are really showing interest. The women dem especially need to be educated."

Man, St. Vincent.

"Since I went to Barbados to represent my community (at the Regional Meeting), the women look up to me for a lot of guidance. When I think something is going wrong, I will speak out against it. Thanks to the research team, I have gathered a lot more information and experience and feel more self-confident in making my decisions."

Louise, St. Vincent

"When the researchers asked questions like, 'Who brings in the money?' I was not going to tell them the truth, but when I studied that it might be to my own benefit, I told them. Now that the research is finished, I am feeling real proud about it. If it were not for the researchers, we in our community would have been blind to what is going on. With their help, I can now do something for my community. The research also helps me to keep the women in my community together."

Pricilla, St. Vincent.

"I was so glad when de nurse came to talk to us about hookworm and contraceptives. I never knew those things before. I am sorry the whole village did not turn out to that meeting. Those who didn't come miss a lot. I do hope that dese people will continue to come and educate us."

Woman, St. Vincent

A

sharing of methodologies and cultures

the training

by *Elsie Doñe Molina*

Through the WICA project it was intended to communicate the methodological experience acquired from the research on rural women of the Dominican Republic carried out by CIPAF (Centro de Investigación Para la Acción Feminina) to the CAFRA research team. It was an admirable effort of regional solidarity and cooperation which tried to break down language barriers.

The first training course, at which CIPAF was represented by Belkis Mones and myself, took place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines during two weeks in January 1987. The course included presenting the theory of research hypotheses and objectives, and also an explanation of the techniques employed and the ways of using them in the field. We discussed different techniques to be applied when studying cases and communities, as well as the different questionnaires used in CIPAF's National Survey on Rural Women

(1985).

Working days were very intensive due to the short time we had in the training course to organise this part. The study of Rural Women in the Dominican

evaluation of work in the field which had been done by the teams. It was organised over 6 weeks (September 11-October 27, 1987) and included visits to both territories and meetings in Trinidad and Tobago with the CAFRA Secretariat.

CIPAF Trainer Elsie Doñe Molina and Belkis Mones



Republic had involved a three-month course in methods and techniques of research on rural women. It had been an open course from which the research team was chosen, and all the research team members were university educated.

The second training course was more of a follow-up and an

This time was spent in the company of Joan French, Project Co-ordinator, and I also had more opportunities for sharing with the teams.

Overall, working as a trainer with the research teams was an important experience for me on two levels: the research and process of training and evaluation; and the cultural interchange.

In the first case, we communicated our experience to a non-university educated group. This caused some co-ordination problems since the teams came from different islands, and also we had an intensive work-load in addition to the language problem. These and other difficulties were overcome thanks to the support and interest of the Project Co-

New knowledge and skills **the researchers**

ordinator and the teams.

Consultation continued for a while during the first months of 1988 by fast mail. Then I had the opportunity to read and comment on the report of the findings. Given all the conditions, it was an agreeable surprise for me to realise from this that most of what I had wanted to convey was well understood.

It is important to point out that the research teams in both countries strengthened their theoretical and practical knowledge on social research. It was of great significance to them to get to know feminist research and all that this implies about raising the consciousness of both the researchers and the persons being researched.

In terms of cultural interchange, the experience was very important. We could test the differences and similarities between our cultures: music; racial variety; and the colonial past. In this way we could more closely see and feel the elements which make up the diversity and complexity of the Caribbean region.

Burn de Bra?

by Ancelma Morgan, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Prior to 1987, I was exposed to progressive writings and teachings, including the "woman question" and was associated with Caribbean revolutionaries who were mainly males.

However, my studies in dealing with women were limited. Most, if not all, of the literature I had read or studied was written by male authors. I considered my male colleagues to be more ideologically developed, and therefore I accepted their viewpoint on the 'woman question'.

They spoke out against the inequalities between the sexes and agitated for change by encouraging women to organise themselves and deal with the issues that affected their lives. But I was still dependent on them for guidance and support, even when carrying out my work among women.

It was not until I was employed by CAFRA as a researcher and began to look at the issues that

affect women's lives and what can be done to effect positive change that I became aware of my ignorance in relation to the true meaning of feminism.

At the training session with CAFRA and CIPAF in feminist theory and research methodology (in January 1987), I reacted negatively because I felt incapable and confused in grappling with these new concepts. At the time, I saw myself as an activist who should therefore not be engaged in such a heavy academic exercise, especially when I learnt that the research activity must be done from a feminist perspective. Part of me resisted the whole idea of feminism ('burn de bra' ideology), while the other part was saying, "give it a try".

At the end of the training session, I was even more confused and scared. All the fears began to fade, however, when we made our exploratory visits to the communities talking to people, especially the women, and gathering information from them. Then a lot of what was said at the training workshop began to make sense. I found myself seeking more information, reading any relevant material and relating it to my own

experience.

My real test began when we developed our own instruments and executed them - applying theory and practice. As I took my instruments into the field and began to question the women and men out there, I gradually regained my confidence. It brought home to me the realities of life for women involved in agricultural work, and since then I have developed a greater appreciation for their contribution. I have also learnt a lot about our cultural traditions of which I was totally unaware, and observed with sadness how 'development' is destroying the culture of our rural people.

Our information was not collected easily. We got a lot of negative responses in the communities at first, especially from the men. They were suspicious of us and were our main opponents. They tried in

some instances to stop the women from giving us information. Occasionally, some of the women chased us away. They even told us lies at first, which they later admitted. As their confidence in us developed, however, they opened up to us and I have developed close links with a number of families in the three communities researched. They still look to me for guidance and support in dealing with their many problems.

This research has certainly in the long run brought out the best in me. It was the first time

in my life that I began to analyse what I write, speak and hear. My exposure to several seminars, meetings and conferences has empowered me with new skills in participatory research and creative writing. I have participated in the entire research process - gathering information, writing reports, and presenting the findings at community, national and regional levels through the use of popular theatre methods, comic books and videos.

I am also writing short stories/ life histories on the lives of these

women - dreams that yesterday were beyond my wildest imagination have today become a reality.



Ancelma (at right) and some community women deliver a report in song

Like an Oasis

by Cecilia Babb, Dominica

In the very early stages of the project, a concern was voiced by an individual that farmers might not co-operate with me given the low social status of Rastafarians.

I did not share those misgivings because I had been doing research for several years and had had a lot of amiable contacts with farmers.

My subsequent field experience bore out my expectations. Farmers were generally warm and friendly, and willing to share information. In many instances, farmers offered me some of their produce: plantains, bananas, grapefruits, medicinal herbs - there was always something they wanted to share. Their responsiveness made the physical hardships

of the field work much easier to deal with.

The WICA project is an experience for which I am very grateful. I had worked with farmers in capacities which combined agronomic research with extension responsibilities. Immediately prior to joining the WICA team, I had attempted while working on an evaluation of a community development

theoretical framework within which to analyse and articulate the concerns which had occupied so much of my attention. The very thorough and methodical treatment of the subject matter at the orientation workshop was like an oasis to me, and I am very grateful for being allowed the space in which to grow.

Also to be treasured in the WICA ex-

perience is the very close friendship that developed with persons that I met and worked with at various levels. I have been closest with those persons with whom I worked more frequently, and there is every indication that as I come in more contact with others in

the project similar friendships will emerge.



Cecilia, 2nd from L, out in the community

project to voice my concerns about the situation of women farmers in that community.

The WICA project gave me the

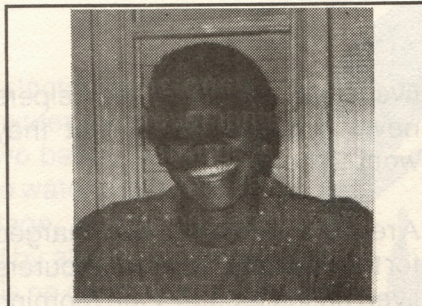
A Burning Desire to Help Women

by Josephine Dublin, Dominica

It was indeed a dream come true: to do research about women's lives, to empower them and to empower me. It was another opportunity to help the women's movement.

In January 1987, I joined the research team. I began by reading and rereading the job description, and could not accept that I could be a researcher, knowing fully well that researchers are intellectuals and academics. I could not accept that I could do such a task! Though I had a burning desire to help women, yet that big word 'research' and the report writing were a headache.

This attitude was soon transformed into one of active reading, while being motivated by the Co-ordinator saying, "You can do it". I began reading a bulk of information about the research idea, the theory, and the methodology. I also read the project proposal and other important information about women in agriculture. Though the training period was short, we managed to assimilate as much as possible on feminist



Josephine Dublin

theory in research on women.

The team of researchers was like a family, and real sisterhood exists even today. The two research teams communicated with each other, exchanged experiences and strengthened each other.

I had been working with women's groups in my community, in a trade union and a political party, and I was very happy to go back to those women and talk with them.

In the field, researchers worked relentlessly in the sun and rain, and saw a lot of poverty among women in particular. At first, respondents were reluctant to give information because they thought that the information was for tax purposes. Later, however, their confidence in the researchers was splendid. They found us wherever we were to give us information, bring us agricultural products, and invite us for lunch. I learnt how to bake bread and plant a

banana tree while doing an in-depth study of a female-headed household.

[This research project was a challenge to me to assist in giving people information about themselves so that they are able to analyse and make decisions about their situation. It was for me such a thought-provoking and touching experience that I would be heard talking in my sleep about the research. I must say that I have also learnt a lot of skills, for example, popular dissemination of information and video production.

My confidence to speak out on women's issues grew as a result of the WICA project. It was this experience that encouraged me to accept the position as Member of Parliament to further bring women's concerns to the fore, and to assist in sensitising policy makers, since political decisions affect the situation of women.]

Stories of Women in Agriculture

Freedom: Janice

Janice Morgan * is 60 years old and has lived on a coconut estate all her life. Her mother, who also lived on the estate, died when Janice was a young girl and left her without any means of support. She had to leave school and work on the estate to maintain herself.

Janice worked as a labourer, picking up and carrying coconuts from the fields to the depot. These coconuts had to be carried in baskets which the labourers, mainly women, had to buy for three dollars. Each labourer had to carry at least five loads for a day's pay of eight dollars. If the field was an outlying one, the labourers could only carry three loads and had to take someone to help so that they could make the

five loads. However, the helpers never charged those that they went to help.

A rent of three dollars was charged for the land on which the labourers lived on the estate. One morning in 1974, Janice remembers that she was drinking her tea and preparing to go to work when a loud speaker was heard coming up the main road of the estate saying that the estate had been sold. After the sale, the overseers were paid a gratuity by the previous owners, but the labourers were not given anything.

The government changed, and soon after the people living on the estate were told to pay down some money on the land that they were occupying and had laid claim to. Janice paid one hundred dollars on the land on which her house was situated, but did not lay claim to any other land to work. To this day, she still has no clear title to the land.

neighbouring village to work as a labourer for other persons who had claimed land. She was involved in weeding and planting to feed a family of eight until they grew up. She did this until a stomach ailment forced her to stop working in the fields. She continued working as a labourer, but this time with the government, as a road cleaner.

Most of Janice's family of eight have grown up and moved away from home. Of three boys, one is married and living in a neighbouring Caribbean island; the other two have their own homes in a village close by. Two of her daughters are married and also live in a neighbouring village. One lives in the same yard, taking care of her father, and the other two still live at home.

The house that she lives in is owned by her. Previously, it was made of wattle and daub, but when she turned sixty and received her Provident Fund savings (money owed to her by the government that was taken out of her pay during the time she worked), she used that money to help build up the house into a concrete structure. The money was not enough, however, even though she used some of it to buy coconuts and dried them into copra to sell to the factory. The house is still unfinished, and she says that she doesn't have the money to complete it. During the tropical storm of 1986, the roof of

Ejected from the estate work as a result of the sale of the estate, and without any compensation, she went to a

* The names of the women have been changed



life histories

the house was blown off. Help was sought from the government, but never received. She had to repair it herself whenever she worked - for, despite her age, Janice continues to work as a labourer whenever there is work, which is mostly seasonal.

Yesterday today: Inelda

Inelda Robinson was born in a village about eight miles from the capital, and twenty-two miles from the estate village where she now resides. She is 47 years of age.

Inelda has been involved in three consensual unions lasting a total of twenty years, out of which she had twelve children, two of whom died. Her two oldest children have left home and are in unions of their own, while of the eight remaining, five are boys and three are girls, ranging in age between six and twenty-two. They are either unemployed or in school, and Inelda looks after them all.

Inelda works as an estate labourer picking up coconuts for a living. She works four days a week at this task, and is paid according to the weight of coconuts collected: EC\$1.20 per hundred pounds. Most of what she makes goes to buy food and clothes, which she buys at the local shops or in a nearby town.

Like most residents in this estate village, she lacks the basic services like her own toilet and

bath, electricity or pipe-borne water to her house. Only two baths, two toilets and two water pipes exist in the village, and these are shared by all the residents. There is no electricity in the village itself, but a few houses close to the main road are connected to the main line running outside the village.

Inelda has worked a plot of land on the estate since 1956. She plants peas, ginger, tannias, eddoes and plantains, mostly for home consumption. She also faces the problem of animals eating her produce, since their owners allow them to roam the estate untethered. These animals are owned by persons from as far away as the capital. Inelda is having serious doubts about planting any more crops because of this problem.

People in the village look up to Inelda. Because of the position of her house, all the villagers have to pass near it to leave the village, and they usually stop to chat with her. Inelda describes this as her form of relaxation, because she doesn't have a radio.

Making ends meet: Martha

Martha James is 63 years old. She lives in a valley where bananas and ground provisions



Cathy Jones

are the main crops. At the time of her birth, her mother was employed as a wage earner on the estate and, as a child, Ms. James picked cotton and sometimes transported arrowroot for a very meagre wage in order to assist her mother with family expenses.

At the age of 17, Martha had the first of four children who all subsequently died at the age of six months. She then had three other children less than two years apart who also died. Fourteen to sixteen years later, her last two children (a son and a daughter) were born and these survived. She now has four grandchildren.

At the time of the children's birth, their father worked on the estate and assisted with their maintenance. When the son was six years old, however, the father migrated to Guyana in search of

work and has not been in touch with the family since. When he migrated, he left five head of cattle and other small livestock, including sheep and chickens. After his departure, life became very hard, as Martha was now a single parent, solely responsible for the welfare of her family.

At that time, she worked as a wage labourer. Like many others she was forced to go into the interior and work land which was many miles away from home in order to provide food for her family. She grew a lot of food, but was unable to harvest it because of the distance, and because she was unable to get assistance with transport. As a result, she suffered many losses, and her family members were much too young to help her.

When her daughter was ten years old, she had to give her up to her sister who took her to Trinidad. In

this way, the child was able to start her primary education. She was forced to return home at age thirteen, however, and her mother was unable to continue her education. This Martha very much regrets.

In the early 1920s, when the estate owners were selling house plots to its employees, Martha's mother was able to obtain one. Martha took care of her mother up to the time of her death, and so inherited the land, thatch house and kitchen. The house has since been renovated by the children's father and later by Martha's daughter and partner, who transformed it into a wooden structure. The thatched kitchen, however, remains.

After working hard for many years without assistance, Martha married a man who came from a community more than thirty miles away, much to the displeasure of her children. They felt that she had passed the stage of having intimate relations with men. Her intention was to get help in obtaining income for the family, but unfortunately, things did not

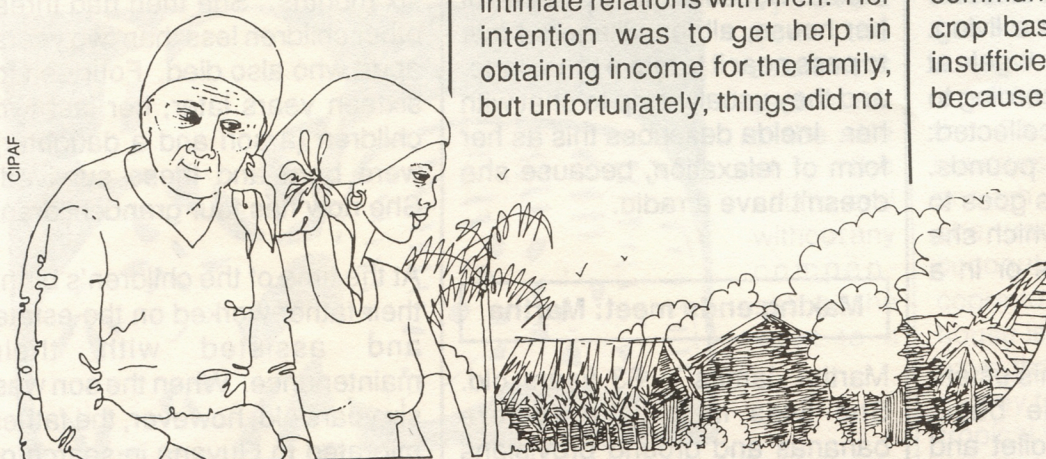
go according to plan, as he has turned out to be of little help to her and her family.

Her husband works mainly outside the community as a gardener. The income he receives is spent to provide his own food, while the rest is spent on alcohol. He spends most of his leisure time in the community shops, and returns home drunk. He has destroyed all the large livestock by strangling or poisoning them when there is a conflict in the family, and has now turned on the small livestock and almost depleted the lot.

His behaviour has led to conflicts between the children and himself, as they insist on him leaving the house. Martha maintains that she alone has the authority to send him away, and often refuses to listen to the children's complaints.

Martha continues to work as a wage labourer for other members of the community. Her son was able to get some land in the community to work on a share-crop basis, but the returns are insufficient to maintain the family because they have to be shared

with the land-owner. To help make ends meet, Martha sells charcoal and does a number of other supplementary activities. Her daughter also



does several regular short jobs and so is able to contribute to the home. She is employed at present as part of a road construction team, and she also works occasionally as a domestic helper.

Martha's hope is that her daughter will migrate to a bigger country so that she can be of greater assistance to her family. Her daughter is the mother of four children, who were conceived from different relationships. None of them receives support from their father.

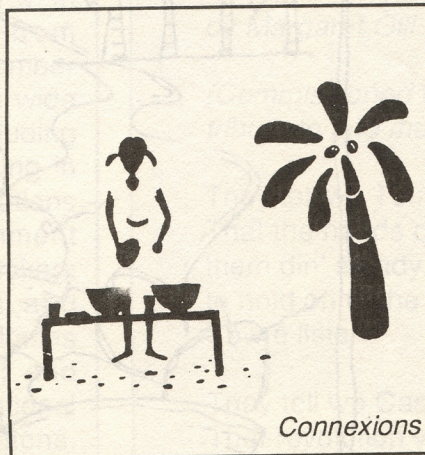
Martha's son left school at the age of eight and so received little education. He works occasionally on the plot or as a mason. Martha shows him a lot of affection and allows him to use his income to buy personal items. She does not want him to migrate.

Despite her many hardships, Martha is a fairly healthy woman. She only visits the doctor to "keep on the list" and believes in bush medicine. She actively participates in any cultural event in the community, and gives assistance to those in need of help.

Producing for Waste: Decilia

Seventy-year-old Decilia Baptiste is the only member of her household. Her home is located on family land that houses her sister's home and that of an adult grandson as well as her own.

The family land (as it is called) was first acquired by Decilia's grandfather. The land passed into the possession of his widow



Connexions

who stipulated at her death that the land must neither be subdivided nor sold, but must remain a family property from generation to generation. Members of the family who have an interest may occupy and farm whatever portion is available during their life-time. No-one may will over any portion of the property to an offspring.

Decilia has never married and is not in a consensual union at present. She has three grown-up sons alive. Her only daughter died of cancer a few years ago. All Decilia's children left her home more than twenty-five years ago to seek employment and to form new families. She has lived alone for several years now, but intermittently over the years she has assisted one or other of her children in the care of their

offspring by having the child reside with her for a period of time until the parent can resume that responsibility. At the time of the WICA research, she had one grandson and three great-grandchildren staying with her while their parents were on a short trip overseas.

Decilia has had a complete primary school education, and has also had exposure to other educational programmes such as school vacation classes in cookery. She has also attended many agricultural demonstrations through her membership in a Women's Backyard Garden Group.

Decilia's ten-year-old house is in good condition and is made of concrete walls with a galvanised roof. Her personal savings and contributions from her children financed the purchase of materials and other costs, and children and grandchildren assisted in the building.

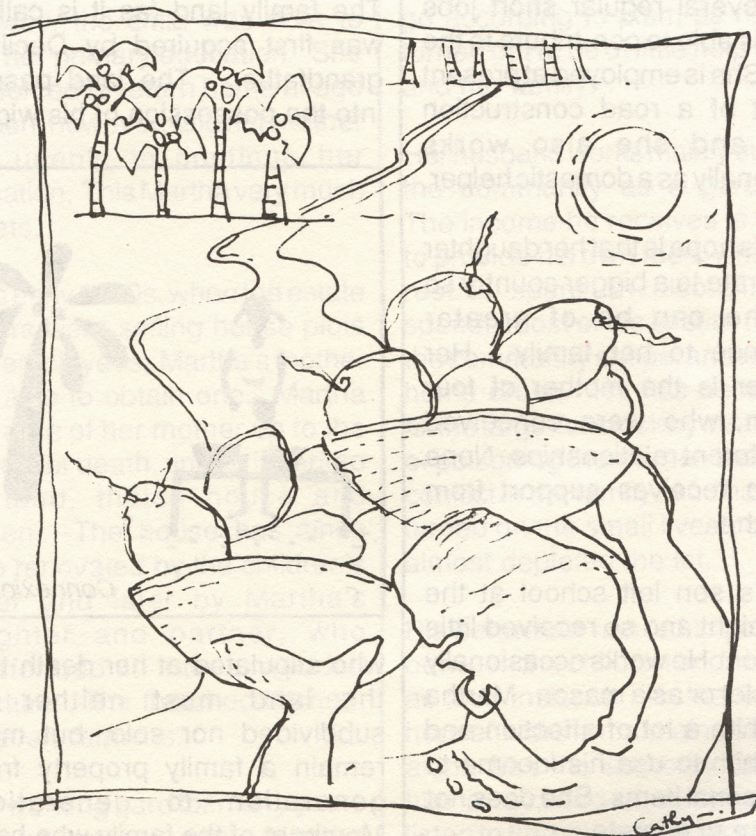
The volume and intensity of Decilia's agricultural activities have decreased over recent years due to her diminishing physical strength, but today, at age 70, farming is still Decilia's main occupation and source of income. She cultivates vegetables and ground provisions and maintains her permanent trees. Her harvests satisfy her food needs and provide her with a small surplus which she shares with her

relatives. She sells her produce if she receives a direct request, and in this way earns small infrequent sums of cash.

She also engages in roadside farming of small kitchen items, toiletries and stationery at month-ends and during festive seasons when more money is in circulation. Both agriculture and vending bring her small, uncertain incomes, however, and the remittances she receives from her children abroad are an important source of regular cash.

Decilia planted many permanent trees during her earlier years of agricultural involvement on the expectation that, when mature, the trees would yield crops seasonally and provide her with harvests from the sale of which she would obtain cash. Her trees do bear abundant produce, but the bulk of the harvests go to waste for lack of markets both locally and overseas. She does not have access to labour and/or capital to manage her land's productivity or facilitate transport and marketing. Much of her limes, coconuts, avocados, sour sops, guavas, pomegranates, gooseberries and other crops remain in her fields season after season, their only value being the return of their nutrients to the soil.

Her inability to cash in on her labour invested at an earlier stage



Cathy Jones

of her life is very disappointing to Decilia, and she is vocal in her call for a village market. This idea is supported by many farmers who believe that the community population, the school feeding programme and people who pass through the village are potential customers. The market would also make known to hucksters, hoteliers and other buyers the range and extent of produce available in the community.

RegiOnews

A bi-monthly news bulletin on events and personalities in Central America published by CRIES (Coordinación Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales) which links together some 30 social science research centres in Central America and the Caribbean region.

Available from Regionews, Apdo. C-163, Managua, Nicaragua at the following rates

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M

eetings, etc.

1990-1991

The Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands, is offering a Master of Arts in Development Studies from September 1990 to December 1991. It is intended for a wide range of participants, including activists and women working in non-governmental organisations and movements; government officers, including policy makers and planners; teachers and researchers in women's studies and other related fields; and women working in international organisations and institutions. The main admission requirement is a sound academic background, preferably in one of the social sciences.

Special emphasis is placed on the documentation and analysis of women's organisations and on their struggles to change the situation of women generally, particularly in Third World countries.

Applicants who seek a fellowship from The Netherlands Fellowship programme should submit their applications to The Netherlands Embassies by 1 February, 1990. For further information, application forms, etc., contact the Academic Registrar (c/o Student Office), I.S.S., P.O. Box 90733, 2509 LS The Hague, The Netherlands.

Geopolitics

Praises for Andaiye who speaks

by Margaret Gill

(Commissioned by the Women's Forum of Barbados as a tribute to and meaningful flower for Andaiye, October 1989)

They tell we Toussaint din' ready -
That the hands of the "slaves"
them din' steady enough
to hold on ta the reins of na country.
So we listen

They tell we Castro din' righteous.
That revolution wasn't really for us
cause socialism
was a Russian invention
and Cubans cou'n't tell the real
difference, in fact,
they still can't

And, God help us, we listen.

So Garvey did crooked,
and Rodney was mad,
and poor people stupid
(and dead men can't bad)
And Winnie killin' Kinsmen.
And Shaka drinkin' blood.
And Martin lovin' women.
And Jackie din' na good.

But wait,
Wait!

Is you Family dem talking 'bout.
Is how you stan' up, stan' up so!
You lef' you mout in you mudda or wha!

You don't Namibia know
how the De Klerk these people is!
The next rasta far I thing is
they going got you own
children telling you so!

Taking decisions for 1990

National Reps. Meet

CAFRA held a meeting on 11, 13 and 14 November at Naden's Court, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago of National Representatives, Project Co-ordinators and the Secretariat. The meeting was the end-product of a year's activity (starting immediately after the November 1988 General Meeting in Barbados) towards the

setting up of a truly representative management body of the membership of the association. It had been felt by the Secretariat, made up primarily of Trinidad and Tobago nationals, that it could no longer justify being the only body to oversee and give direction to the work of the association between biennial General Meetings.

The meeting's agenda was, as usual, too heavy for the 3 planned meeting days. The Co-ordinator's, Financial Officer's and Project Co-ordinators' reports and the

ensuing discussions took up the first day. The second day was given to the country reports of all

National Representatives present, their recommendations in respect of CAFRA's role in their

countries, and to discussion. To the final day fell the tasks of presenting a summary of the country situations and recommendations; a presentation of the 1990



Back Row L-R: Eugenie Rezaire (French Guiana); Sybil Seaforth, 'Women's History and Creative Expression Co-Project Co-ordinator; Mari-lucy Gonzales (Puerto Rico); Magaly Piñeda (Dominican Republic); Josephine Dublin (Dominica); Roberta Clarke, 'Women and the Law' Project Co-ordinator; Nelcia Robinson (SVG); Cecilia Babb (Barbados); Tina Johnson, *CAFRA News* Editor; Ann-Marie Sinkia, Financial Officer; Julieta Alfonso; Ruth Bowe-Darville (Bahamas).

Front Row L-R: Claudia Kadera (T & T); Joan French, WICA Project Co-ordinator; Elsie Doñe Molina (Dominican Republic); Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, CAFRA Co-ordinator; Rhoda Reddock, Secretariat member; Anne-Marie Bonner (Jamaica)

Photo: Edwin Chu For

programme of the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the Extra-Mural Dept. of the University of the West Indies, Barbados; discussion of the implications of these for CAFRA's current programme; as well as the discussion and institutionalisation of the new bodies to oversee/give direction to the work of the association.

The following are now the decision-making bodies of the association (to be ratified at the 1990 General Meeting of CAFRA's membership):

National Reps. Meet

(i) The biennial General Meeting of the membership of the association, including the diaspora;

(ii) The annual meeting of National Representatives, a representative of the diaspora, Project Co-ordinators, and the Secretariat;

(iii) Bi-annual meetings of a Consultative Committee made up of a representative of each of the four major linguistic groups in the region, the Project Co-ordinators and the Secretariat; and

(iv) The Secretariat, which is made up of the CAFRA Co-

ordinator; the Financial Officer; the Office Manager; and a few members of the feminist movement in Trinidad and Tobago. It is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the association.

In addition to the meeting's heavy agenda, CAFRA held a public forum on the night of 13 November to discuss 'The Role of the Women's Movement in the Current Economic, Political and Social Crisis facing the Caribbean Region'. Panellists were Peggy Antrobus (WAND, Barbados); Magaly Piñeda (Centro de Investigación para la Acción Feminina, Dominican Republic);

Eugenie Rezaire (Association des Amis de Leon Damas, French Guiana/Cayenne); Indra Chandarpal (Women's Progressive Organisation, Guyana); and Josephine Dublin (ex-WICA researcher and opposition Senator, Dominica). Joan French (Jamaica) gave the introduction to the forum, which was chaired by Rhoda Reddock (Trinidad and Tobago).

The report of the meeting will be available for circulation by the end of December.

N ews, News, News

The Guyana Women Artists' Association selected Barbados for its first Caribbean Exhibition, held at the Barbados Museum between November 10 and 24.

The Association was inaugurated in 1987, and its first major project was a massive Retrospective Exhibition in April 1988 in Georgetown which covered 60 years of work by women artists in Guyana. A spokeswoman explained that the Barbados exhibition is in keeping with the association's objectives of making contact with other workers in the

various areas of the visual arts, and of bringing to the attention of a larger audience the work being done in the arts in Guyana.

Over 100 works of art from 18 women artists from the association were displayed, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, textiles and ceramics. A group of women from the Meten-Meer-Zorg village, West of the Demerara River, who are members of the "Red Thread Women's Collective" were invited to display a selection of their pieces as Guest Artists at the



Stephanie Correia 'Emerging'

exhibition.

A number of the women whose work was on show were in Barbados during the period of the exhibition, and activities included an art workshop for children, a public panel presentation and visits to artists' studios and art galleries.

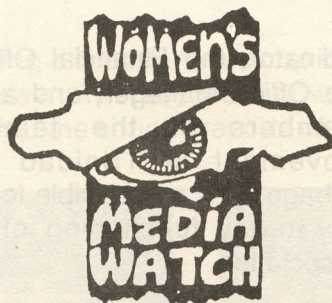
Carifem Update

Jamaica

Women, Violence and the Media

Women's Media Watch evolved out of a gathering of 34 women's organisations from across Jamaica in 1987, as part of a research project by Sistren Research exploring women's involvement in national development. The research exposed a clear finding: island-wide, women cited violence as a major factor hindering their participation in activities at the community and/or national level. Further, the women identified the media as being largely responsible for shaping negative attitudes towards women.

The overall goal of the group is to highlight the causes of violence against women, and



to improve the image of women in the media. A number of strategies are used to achieve this, such as monitoring the media; gathering information; education; lobbying for action; and collaborating with other organisations. Membership in Women's Media Watch is voluntary, non-partisan and non-sectarian.

Activities undertaken to date include participation in radio and television debates nationally; the development of a Joint Media Committee with the Women's Bureau; "clean up the calendars" campaigns ('88 and '89); the wide

distribution of up-to-date information packages to a wide range of persons; and collaboration with Sistren Research to produce the 2nd edition of the booklet, No to Sexual Violence (1989). The group is currently undertaking a survey among women to see how they feel about the portrayal of women in the media.

Having existed up to the present on a voluntary basis, Women's Media Watch is now seeking funding to carry out its projects over the next two years. These will take the form of further research leading to the production of information materials; and increased public education and outreach.

Women's Media Watch can be contacted at P.O. Box 344, Kingston 9, Jamaica. Tel: 929-2457.

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