

# WOMAN SPEAK!

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ABOUT CARIBBEAN WOMEN No. 17 April, 1985



YOUNG WOMEN

# WOMAN SPEAK!

Editor: Sandra Edwards

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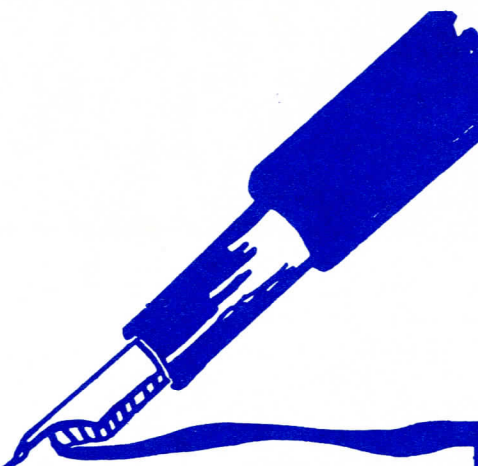
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# Editorial



More than 700 million of the world's youth live in developing countries – half of them, young women.

Like their mothers, these young women face a number of problems that will mushroom as they grow to womanhood. Problems such as unemployment, illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, abortion, violence against the person seem to be the special preserve of women. It is said the future belongs to youth, but what kind of future can young women expect when faced with these seemingly impassable obstacles? What of the young woman who has to forego her education, jeopardizing her future, when she becomes pregnant? What of her sister who never got a chance to attend school, because she had to assist in the upbringing of her siblings and with other domestic chores? Can there be any meaning in the "future" as long as these and other problems remain to plague half our youth population?

Yet, there are few programmes which cater specifically to the needs of young women. In preparing this issue of **WOMAN SPEAK!**, we realized from the responses to our requests for information on young women that much of the programmes set up for youth in the Caribbean lumped all young people together, not taking into consideration the special needs of young women. The stock response, even from women's organizations and women's desks, was: "Our programme is not specially designed for young women."

Nevertheless, we are pleased that the few programmes and projects which tackle young women's issues have been largely successful – programmes such as the Women's Centre for Adolescent Mothers in Jamaica, which is among those highlighted in this issue.

We hope this year will see more being done for young women. Indeed, it holds double significance for them: It is the end of the UN Decade for Women and "young women" is one of the issues up for discussion at the World Conference to Appraise the Achievements of the Decade, in July; it is also International Youth Year, and national committees have been set up in several countries, including the Caribbean, to deal with the issues concerning youth.

During this year, then, there promises to be a lot of talk about youth. We must at least ensure that all the talk includes talk of young women, and that it is accompanied by action.

# WHITHER THE YOUNG CARIBBEAN WOMEN

by Merle Hodge

Today there is no clear-cut, fully approved model of womanhood for our daughters to follow: The young Caribbean woman is prey to a mass of conflicting messages regarding her role and image.

In the past, a young woman's choices were fairly cleanly carved out by class and by race. Broadly speaking, the young woman of the upper strata of society saw her life shaping up in terms of the official prescription – marriage, the patriarchal nuclear family setting, housewifery as a career – while the lower-class woman followed a different set of cultural expectations, including childbearing as a mark of womanhood (without reference to marriage, necessarily), the approved role of provider (a “male” function in the official prescription), and a high level of family responsibility.

Today education, social mobility, and objective economic conditions have blurred the prescriptions for all young women, of whatever race or class. Few young women see their mother's path through life as the one to follow, but neither does any single blueprint emerge for the woman of the late 20th century. The young woman is confronted by a range of codes which contradict and undermine each other.

A major dispenser of codes is the all-pervasive media, and one of the strongest messages that the young woman receives from the media is that her sexuality is her most important aspect. In the visual media the greatest quota of space devoted to the topic of woman is occupied by images of female “sexiness” or decorativeness. Even when a woman makes the news for something she has done, the photographic treatment given her face, body and clothes often overshadows the reporting of her deed, suggesting that in the final analysis a woman's looks are more important than anything she could ever do.

Traditional notions influencing the young woman's attitude to her sexuality are contradicted also by the hedonistic youth culture of metropolitan countries, channelled into our society through the media. If one examines their lyrics and visual presentation, many an American, European or Australian pop song is no less suggestive in its message than our home-grown calypso that gets taken off the air for “smut.”

What influence does calypso have on the young woman's self-concept, or, to what extent is it a reflection of the self-concept of the woman, received from the culture? Calypso is a popular medium in the region, and woman is a major theme of calypso. But the medium retains a strong element of misogyny, presenting to the woman a very negative image of herself to which she seemingly subscribes. Woman in calypso is the Jezebel, the vixen, the bitch, the slut: Everyman's punching bag.

At the opposite pole is another image of womanhood that our young women are soaking up – that of the near-swooning, pliant, waiting-to-be-conquered heroine of romantic fiction, swathed in the mystique of femininity, the Good Woman of Mills and Boon, perfume commercials, and (in Trinidad and Tobago) the Indian love film. The advertising industry of course projects whichever variant of womanhood it deems necessary to sell specific products.

These debilitating influences – the projection of the young woman as primarily the titillator of man; her immersion in the imported pop culture; the consumerist mania – are conspiring to deflect yet another generation of Caribbean women from full participation in the political life of their society, a generation which, by reason of their higher educational status, could have moved forward from the patterns set by their mothers.

Despite their longstanding participation in the economy and the authority which they exercise within the family, Caribbean women have so far participated only at ground level in politics. Fewer women than men vote in elections, and it is extremely difficult to persuade women to stand as candidates for election. Caribbean women, traditionally, have shied away from the exercise of political power.

There is little to suggest that the young Caribbean woman intends to change this trend. The pursuit of the Good Life as propagated by our foreign-dominated media makes many of the new generation of Caribbean women into distressingly apolitical creatures, not overly preoccupied with the business of national development.

In the area of formal education, girls also receive contradictory messages.

In the Caribbean, education is widely available to the female population, and the school population is half male and half female, all the way up to university level. Thus, the young woman is more literate, more articulate and potentially more independent than the woman of her mother's generation, and this the society seems to approve by making provision for her to be educated. The paradox is that the education she receives has built into it the traditional, limited view of women. Textbooks stereotype her into the old roles. Teachers' attitudes enforce artificial differentiations between boys and girls, channelling them into “masculine” and “feminine” pursuits, behaviours, aspirations.

Inevitably, the education system divides into two branches usually at post-primary level, preparing boys to be breadwinners and girls for a career of housewifery or its extension in nursing, teaching, catering,

secretarial work, and so on.

In Trinidad and Tobago, in that section of the education system which contains the greater part of the secondary school population, differentiation of careers sets in from the beginning.

At the junior secondary school level, industrial arts and home economics are time-tabled in simultaneous slots, so that the class has to be divided into two groups. The automatic principle of division is sex – boys to the workshop, girls to the kitchen. At the next level, the senior comprehensive school, where, in theory “Nobody stops the girls from doing what they want” (stock response to the charge of sex discrimination) the student moves inevitably into the area of training for which three years of junior secondary have prepared him or her, respectively.

There are also residential youth camps offering vocational training to out-of-school youth. Of these, four camps are for 17-21 year old boys only and offer the following skills: agriculture, welding, plumbing, masonry, auto mechanics, electrical installation, carpentry, cabinet-making, and tailoring. One camp is for girls only where young women between the ages of 14-19 can learn: agriculture, cookery, catering, beauty culture, garment construction, book-binding, and commercial studies.

At other institutions for technical education where the physical separation of young men and women does not obtain, girls have not significantly penetrated the “male” fields of endeavour; little wonder, when all through their school career they are so firmly pushed in a different direction.

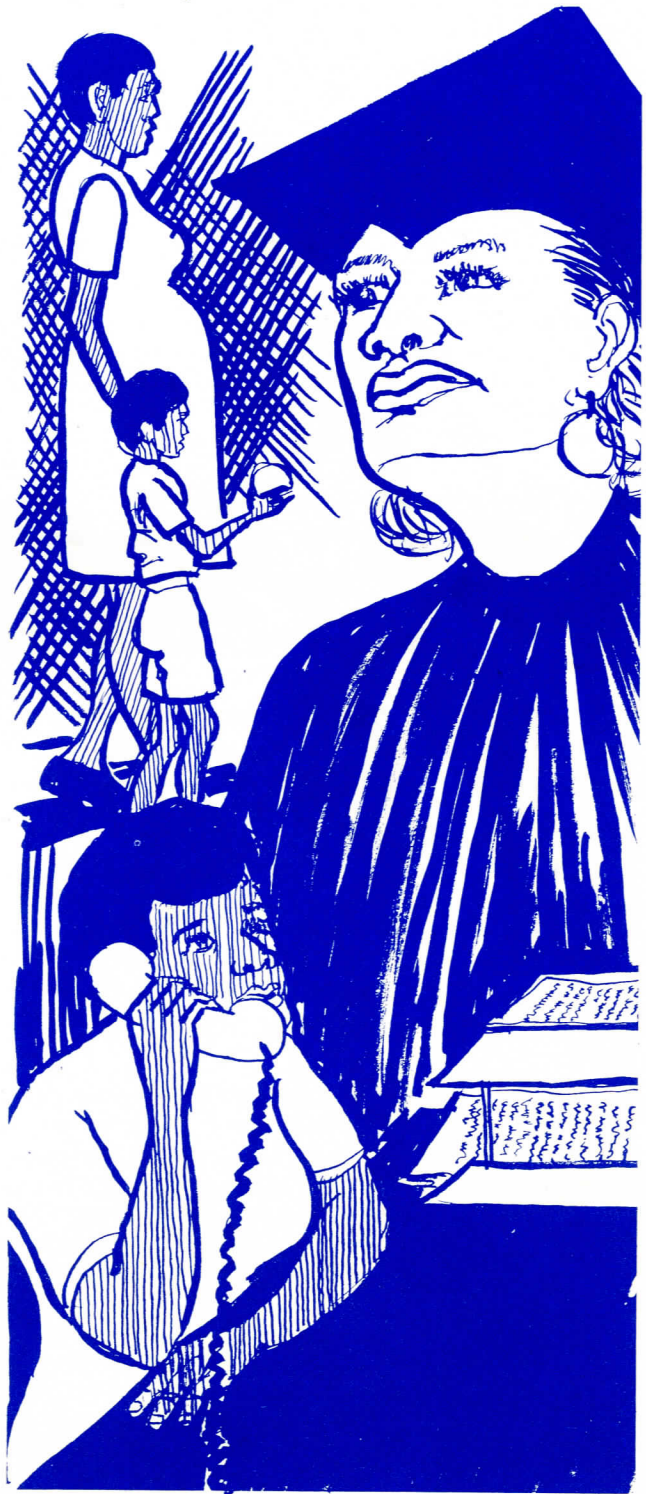
At university level, this manipulation of the young woman's future shows up in the enrolment statistics. Although half the total enrolment of students at the University of the West Indies in the academic year 1982/83 was female, one-third of the female students were in the Faculties of Arts and Education, considered “female” areas of study.

At the other extreme, our young women are only slowly conquering the mental or other blocks which keep them out of the “male” field of engineering. Whereas well over 70 per cent of the enrolment in Arts and Education was female, only 15 per cent of Engineering students were women (although this represents an increase from the female enrolment of five years ago which was five per cent). In the other areas women are close to achieving parity in numbers, even slightly outnumbering men in Law and Social Sciences in 1982/83. In Natural Sciences, Agriculture and Medicine they were not too far behind (full-time enrolment: 44 per cent, 40 per cent, and 34 per cent respectively), the statistics in all these faculties showing a steady increase in female enrolment.

On the whole, it cannot be said that the career aspirations of young Caribbean women are moving dramatically towards diversification, but the great majority see themselves as inevitably (and willingly) taking up employment outside the home. On the one hand, difficult economic conditions make the role of full-time housewife less feasible than before. On the other hand there is no great soul-searching on the question “To work, or not to work?” for substantial numbers of young Caribbean women will have been reared by working mothers – one-third of all house-

holds in the Caribbean are headed by women.

The fact of having grown up in female-headed households can also influence the choices of young women in other ways. Girls may vow to get away from the **kind** of work their mother did – back-breaking, low paid, low status work: a good half of the female providers of the Caribbean are employed in service occupations (mainly domestic work) and agriculture. Again, girls whose mothers depend on the charity of male partners for the upkeep of the family, and who perceive this as a demeaning experience, often grow up with a fierce determination to ensure their own economic independence.



The upward social mobility that results from the increase of educational opportunity has brought more young women within the ambit of the official prescription regarding family.

In Trinidad and Tobago more young women have been going into marriage – but the divorce rate increases faster than the rate of marriage. Today's young woman is more inclined than her mother may have been to abandon marriage and take up an alternative lifestyle. Mating and family patterns such as visiting relationships, concubinage, serial polygamy, and single parenthood which have been the norm among the lower classes for generations are now seriously envisaged as options by the educated, higher-income woman. This is partly because these patterns have been gaining currency in the metropolitan countries.

Among the conservative influences upon the young women of the Caribbean is that of religion. The established Christian religions, however, are open to the winds of change and the Church can point to its own internal movement for the equality of women. But the fundamentalist religions bearing down upon us from North America, and singling out the youth as a special target, are a significant source of traditionalist attitudes regarding the role of women. One has to add here, since they involve younger women, peripheral religions such as the Black Muslim movement and Rastafarianism.

The Eastern religions, Islam and Hinduism, are minority religions in the Caribbean, being found mainly in Trinidad and Guyana where there are large East Indian populations. But one phenomenon can perhaps be cited as a dramatic expression of the conflict of codes facing the young Caribbean woman: the incidence of suicide among young Indian women (often school-girls) in Trinidad and Tobago, to be traced in part to confrontation between the aspirations of the young educated woman and the prescriptions for female conduct upheld by traditionalist Hindu or Moslem families.

The young Caribbean woman in this era is subject to influences which pull her in different directions at the same time. Most young women are aware that their traditional status is in question, but have no clear concept of what the new order might be. Out of such ambivalence can come no clear sense of direction for the new generation of Caribbean women. Our governments are male, and sprinkled with a few women who mostly claim "We are nothing to do with women's liberation." It will therefore be the task of a strong and coherent Caribbean **women's movement** to provide vision and leadership in charting the way forward.

*Ms. Hodge is a novelist and commentator on issues affecting Caribbean women.*

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## Soon To Be A Mother ... Yet Still A Child

by Lorna Gordon

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*"You helped prepare us to go back to school. You helped us when hope was dim. You helped us to hold up our heads and face the world. On behalf of all the students who came through this programme we pray that there will be more programmes in the years to come for girls like us."*

The speaker is a young woman who has recently given birth to her first child. She is 15 years old or less, has dropped out of high school or secondary school because of her pregnancy, and is one of six children who live in one room with their mother – an unskilled service worker. Her "baby father" is likely to be in his early 20s and probably has a better job than her mother.

But unlike the majority of young women in the Caribbean faced with a similar situation, this new mother's education has suffered only a temporary setback, not total disruption, for she has been a participant in the unique Women's Centre Programme for Adolescent Mothers in Jamaica.



The Women's Centre Programme was born out of a recognition of the gravity of the teenage pregnancy problem in Jamaica. The Churches Advisory Bureau brought their concerns on this matter to the attention of the Jamaican Bureau of Women's Affairs which pursued the cause until the first Centre was established in 1978, with funding assistance from the Pathfinder Fund, International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the Jamaican Government. Two years later, the project was taken over completely by the Jamaican Government.

The programme operates three centres: two in Kingston and one in the central rural town of Mandeville. The main Centre in Kingston and the one in Mandeville aim to provide, in the first instance, emotional support and class-room instruction to pregnant women aged 12 - 16 years. The Programme's second goal is to return these students to the formal school system following childbirth.

Up to December 1984, 1122 young women had passed through the Centre's Programme with a drop out rate of just over 14 per cent. "Walk-ins" (young women not eligible for the academic programme but assisted with counselling, etc.) totalled 588.

The Programme's third aim is to help the students delay the birth of a second child.

The third Centre opened in Kingston in September 1983. It caters to young women, mostly from the main Kingston Trafalgar Road Centre, who cannot return to school because of their age, or who are not academically inclined.

This Centre offers both academic instruction to CXC or "O" level examinations and vocational skills training, in addition to features inherent in the curriculum of all three Centres: pre-natal care, family life education, day nurseries and professional guidance counselling.

All three Centres are non-residential. It is felt that as most of the students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, it would be unfair and unrealistic to remove them for a period of time and then return them to face the difficulties. By having to go home each evening, they adjust to life as it is.

A young woman enters the Women's Centre Programme usually during the third trimester of her pregnancy, when she is just beginning to "show." She enters the Programme as a member of the induction group, joining about 39 other students in a similar condition.

At this time, the girls are usually quiet and shy, sullen, lethargic, self-conscious, and very confused. And all too often they are ignorant of sex and contraception, a problem reinforced by the inadequacy of the Jamaican school system in providing instruction in reproduction and sexuality.

To put them at ease with each other and with their pregnancy, the students in the induction group receive individual and group counselling. In addition, the Programme provides tutoring by qualified part-time teachers in basic academic subjects such as English language and mathematics. Pre-natal care is also provided, along with nutritional meals and snacks.

The effect of participating in this first term of the Programme is apparent in the visible change in the

manner and bearing of the young women.

By the time they begin the second, more academically-oriented term, most of them have had their babies. They are relaxed, cheerful, outspoken, and optimistic. Classes are vibrant, and the new mothers move with dignity and pride. They sit and walk with heads held high and discuss all subjects easily, even sex. The counselling, the educational motivation, the nutrition and, above all, the emotional support have played a vital role in their transformation.

One reason for the general atmosphere of ease which evolves among the young women is the knowledge that their babies are well cared for in the nursery, one of which is located on each Centre's premises. This service allows the students to attend classes while providing the important nutritional and emotional support of breast-feeding their babies. Mothers and babies attend a clinic for regular check-ups, as well as participate in physical education classes to restore their bodies to peak condition.

To minimize the cost of the meal programme, the students grow their own vegetables—callaloo, cabbage, escallion, among others. Since many of the students are from low-income families, these nutritious meals are important to their well-being and that of their babies.

By the end of the second term, the young mother is ready to return to school. The Centre's personnel have been busy all this time, securing a place for her in a school of the same standard as the one she left. However, most students do not return to the same school, because despite the pioneering work of the Programme, there still exists a cultural bias against accepting a new mother back in the same school.

Many of the students who enter the Women's Centre Programme come from "ghetto" areas or otherwise disadvantaged environments—91 per cent say they are poor, less than 30 per cent live with both parents, and 63 per cent live with their unemployed or under-employed mother and several siblings in one room.

Because of these conditions, the student returning to school faces several problems, most of them financial. Somehow she has to find money for uniform, shoes, and books. She has to feed herself and her baby, find busfares, and locate an affordable baby-sitter. The Programme therefore provides financial assistance to needy students returning to school.

One of the goals of the Programme—to prevent a second pregnancy—has been very successful.

The second pregnancy rate for the age group is very high nationally and in other countries: at the largest Maternity Hospital in Jamaica, during 1976, 28.6 per cent of the 15-19 year olds were having their second, third and even fourth child. However, of the 234 students who participated in the Programme from April, 1978 to December, 1979, 92 per cent had not become pregnant again as of December, 1981.

Through the Programme, the chain of repeated pregnancies has been broken, a chain which usually leads a teenage mother to join the ever-swelling ranks of the unemployed and unskilled.

Programme participants become highly motivated to continuing their education, and take very seriously

their decision not to have another child before their 20s. The Programme provides intensive family life education counselling and medical advice, and encourages the students to consider some form of contraception.

The Centre has also developed outreach programmes for "baby fathers." Over 80 per cent of the fathers are 17 - 23 years old, with 58 per cent employed as mechanics, soldiers, policemen, gardeners, accountants and teachers. As is typical of the Caribbean situation, the fathers are not always responsible or supportive. However, the Centres have had considerable success in involving them in programmes and motivating them to support the young mother and child in whatever way they can.

As a group, the "baby fathers" meet for rap sessions at the Centres, and assist with the vegetable garden and other chores. Some have themselves sought counselling from Centre personnel. The result is fathers who maintain a viable presence in their child's life, although only 53 per cent of those surveyed were actually able to financially support their babies. Nevertheless, those children will have a valuable relationship with their fathers.

A clear result of the Women's Centre Programme is its success in returning students to the school system and in helping them to exercise a measure of control over their lives.

But the Programme has had even farther-reaching effects.

Since its inception in 1978, the Jamaican YWCA and the Jamaican Federation of Women have also begun educational programmes for adolescents on sexuality and family planning. The Programme has also impacted upon societal attitudes towards the readmittance of young mothers into school, and indeed upon school-based programmes aimed at preventing that first pregnancy.

Internationally, the Programme has been recognized as a successful model which can be implemented in other Third World countries. Recently, a similar programme was initiated in the Bahamas with assistance from the Jamaica Centre.

In 1984, a team from the Pathfinder Fund, including Dr. Ayo Ajayi of Kenya, visited the Jamaica Centre prior to the implementation of Women's Centre programmes in Kenya and Sierra Leone.

In addition, requests for information relevant to the setting up of centres have come from other African states and Malaysia.

The Women's Centre Programme in Jamaica has demonstrated that sensitivity and reassurance, coupled with quality basic education, can dramatically improve the prospects for the lives of those young women who come through the programme. —(CWFS)

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*Ms. Gordon is a development communications consultant. This feature was first published by the Caribbean Women's Features Syndicate.*

## BUREAU Focuses on Young Women

The Jamaica Bureau of Women's Affairs has been particularly concerned with unemployment among young women. The situation — where 65 per cent of the young women (14-25 years) are unemployed but desirous of a job — has been an ongoing problem.

In an effort to address this problem, the Bureau initiated several income-generating pilot projects in 1978 aimed at rural young women. At present there are five pilot projects in all, and eight at the proposal stage based on the success of the pilot projects.

Two projects are agricultural — pig and goat-rearing; one is a cottage-based agro-industry — making bammy, (cassava bread); one is a surface salt-mining project; and one a network of craft projects.

The craft projects use the unique training method called "Elders and Youth." Through this method older members of several communities are selected to teach the youth (primarily girls) skills which are marketable, but for one reason or another are becoming extinct in the area — such as drawn-thread, harbinger and machine-embroidery, belt-weaving, and cottage-scale metal work, tatting, dressmaking and screen-printing.

Jobs for young people, and young women in particular, are hard to find. It is therefore necessary to consider the alternative of creating employment, and skill training is one step in that direction. Of the problems still to be overcome, the issue of profitable marketing is the most difficult.

However, all the participants have shown an enthusiasm for the development of the projects. The participants in the pig-rearing project are eager to build an open pit on which pork can be jerked — jerked-pork being a popular food in the island. One Elders and Youth group has already linked with a dressmaker to embroider pattern pieces (pockets, sleeves, collars) on request, as an additional form of income to their traditional napkins, tablecloths, etc.

The Bureau's aim is not to become a women's employment agency, but to demonstrate to the country and (more importantly) to the women themselves that women can acquire income-earning skills and develop profitable enterprises. In addition to the particular skills taught, the women are exposed to training in women in development, family life education, basic business skills, co-operative development, and leadership skills.

The promise from these pilot programmes holds much for Jamaican young women.

The spirit of self-reliance, dignity, and pride which the projects aimed to instill in the participants is evident. The publicity the Bureau has drawn to their

work has also encouraged the women in difficult economic times.

As the decade and associated funding draw to a close, the women are planning in their committee meetings possibilities of forming co-operatives and secondary activities to accumulate additional funds. The success and rising market for machine embroidery has interested the Jamaica Government who has expanded this project in its Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART) Trust programme.

Indeed, HEART complements the work of the Bureau aimed as it is at providing skill training to youth. The programme caters to both boys and girls although girls are still mainly being trained in traditionally female areas – cosmetology, sewn products, commercial skills, and craft.

Qualified school leavers can join a programme designed especially for them. After initial training they are placed in temporary jobs and continue academic training one day a week. If at the end of the work-study period they are not permanently employed, they are given continuing education qualifying them for the tertiary institutions. Throughout the period of training all trainees receive subsistence allowance. Many young women have benefitted considerably from these training opportunities.

Trainees (both male and female) on the School Leavers Summer Programme have been frequent visitors to the Bureau of Women's Affairs, preparing for debate topics such as "Is Jamaican society dominated by women" and "Should the age of consent be changed."

With 1985 designated International Youth Year much activity has recently been focussed on youth. At a Retreat preparing for Youth Year the Minister of

State in the Ministry of Youth and Community Development, Mr. Kingsley Sangster, expressed particular concern for unemployment among young women, as well as for unwanted teenage pregnancies, and called for a "frank look at abortion."

In the employment workshop at the Retreat, Bureau representatives identified high birth rates, unemployment of women in urban and rural areas, teenage pregnancy, and sex education as problems needing particular attention in the issue of youth welfare. One of the suggestions made was that stronger measures be taken for legal action against individuals committing sexual abuse.

Among strategies to reduce unemployment were the following:

- Training programmes should involve twice as many young women as men, due to the higher level of unemployment among young women;

- More women should be given training and opportunities should be provided for self-employment;

- Government should explore the possibility of including young women in the overseas employment programme.

These recommendations, and the government's concern for young women along with the continuous work of the Bureau of Women's Affairs, promise for an appreciation of the female component in "Youth" and augur well for Jamaica's young women.

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*Prepared by Carmen Lazarus, Research Officer,  
Bureau of Women's Affairs, Jamaica.*

# PROJECT RESHAPES YOUNG LIVES

*by Nesha Z. Haniff*

In the Caribbean, the teaching of family life education often takes the traditional teaching format: The child is lectured to and shown slides or films, often followed by discussion; the brave ones ask questions and usually lots of giggling and laughter goes on. What is important here is that the information and education process has been initiated.

The problem is the internalization of this information and its effect on behaviour. This has not quite been measured, and until then one can only guess at the effectiveness of such education programmes.

What we do know, is that the population structure of many of the Caribbean islands is young. It is surmised that the percentage of young people ranging from Guyana to the Virgin Islands is between 40 and 60 per cent of the total population. Clearly then there is a need for more youth programmes, particularly for young women.

Teenage pregnancy is the largest problem affecting this age group and innovative, creative ways must be found to deal with it.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is currently funding one such programme in St. Kitts. It is a pilot programme which essentially worked in groups. Approximately six groups with eight to 12 people are organized at strategic areas in the country. Some groups are all-female, some mixed, and some all-male – but each group has a leader who conducts the meetings and, with the group, sets the rules for that group. The ages range from 13 to 18; some groups are junior, 13 - 15, and some are senior, 16 - 18.

Their first order of business is to identify the most salient problems that teenagers face, and after discussion and education sessions on these problems they write skits, scripts, songs, or any form of drama about one or two of these problems with their possible solu-

tions. These are then performed within groups, and the winners from the different groups perform nationally.

Out of this process the teenagers analyse and examine in depth the relationship of contraception to their other problems. They think, discuss, and write about it. Thus, they themselves become teachers about their problems and are therefore reinforced to act on the solution (contraceptive use).

In addition, the teenagers themselves can become educators for other groups in the community as well-informed influencers of the people in their own social network. Some of the scripts can also be used for teaching in the region as well as in St. Kitts.

Once the group is structured, it may change its focus and deal with other issues like unemployment, drugs, and so on. In this way, it can continue beyond PAHO.

The response so far has been encouraging, although male participation in the project has not been as great as female participation, and some groups are more successful than others.

But, what is happening to the young women is exciting, for the problem of teenage pregnancy affects the life of the young woman more radically than it does the male. It is her life which is interrupted, her employability reduced, and her dependency increased. Like most women, these teenage girls do not feel they are important without a male in their lives, even if it means they become pregnant and have to leave school.

The female self-esteem and self-importance must be bolstered. Studies have shown that traditional socialization of females is related to teenage pregnancy. Mother, wife, nurse, etc., are helping/giving professions where one is asked to put oneself second. As a result, the female teenager is encouraged to place herself second, including placing herself second to her education and to the man in her life.

The following brief profile of two members of the groups gives an idea of the kinds of teenagers involved and their thinking.

Jenny 19, became pregnant at 15 and dropped out of school. She is now at home raising the baby and living with her boyfriend. He and her grandmother support her.

She says, "I would like to find a job with a good person to mind my child."

How does she feel about not finishing school?

"I feel bad about not finishing school, I would have like to be a nurse."

Does she think she can still be a nurse?

"No, not really, because I does study (consider) my child."

Sherry, who is 17, left school and went to work in the factory because it was what her friends were doing, and because her father was not supporting her mother who had no money.

"Now that I think about it, it was a stupid thing to do to leave school to work in a factory," she admits. "I had wanted to be a police, but now I don't know what I want to be."

What is her biggest problem?

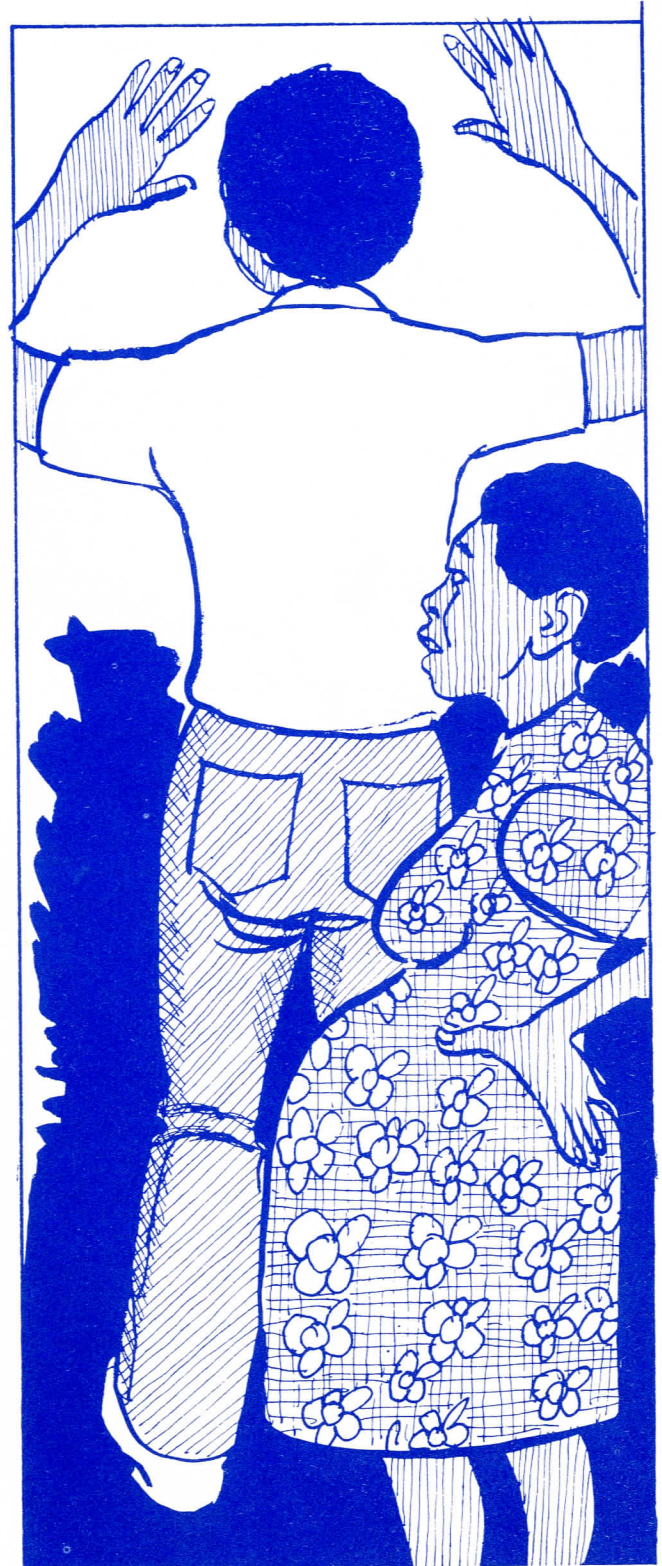
"Me and my mother, we don't get along and my

boyfriend have a load o' woman."

These young women provide only a glimpse of the problems the teenagers wrestle with in the groups. More important is their perception of what they can get out of this process.

Sherry summarizes it well: "It will help me to see myself as important, and it will help me to be an independent person."

*Dr. Haniff is a free-lance consultant.*



# POEMS

*The poems on this page are the work of 26-year old Barbadian, Cheryl Simpson, and have been selected from her (as yet) unpublished collection.*

Constantly I have heard the saying  
Young people don't like the old people  
They don't have no kind of respect  
But one day they are going to get old too  
Complaining, you should try getting them off guard  
The conversation would make you smile  
Hear them, you people don't know what is dancing  
You all jump from place to place like mad people  
We had to hide to get a kiss, we couldn't let we mother know  
If she ever get to find out she would roast we behinds  
But you young people, you all bold.  
Why they fuss and fret, when the difference is  
We don't have to hide to do the things they did  
Of course, that makes us more honest.

Brother man what the hell you think it is?  
Laying hands on my sister every chance you get  
Tell me the truth you really care?  
Or it's only when she does your shirts  
Or shouts from the kitchen "honey dinner is ready!"  
That you for a moment feel some kind of passion?  
What's wrong with helping in any way possible  
Or paying a compliment where it is due?  
Coming home all hours expecting her  
To believe you work late?  
As some other woman's perfume stands out in the night air  
Oh brother! it's time you realize  
You are not so smart and we would not be fooled by your charms  
Standing out tall in any crowd  
It shows, your words are cheap, your touch is rough  
Your love is unreal in short you don't care.  
Sister dear he is cruel, he turns up his nose at your toast  
And the only time he says he love you  
Is when he makes love to you  
Tell me does he really love you or your body?

Stepping out into the demanding world  
Seeking employment? Sorry you haven't any experience.  
Soon the light within dims  
Leaving you with shattered dreams.  
Eventually, someone comes along  
And things are never the same.  
Putting the pieces together  
It's a different day, you rejoice when you meet with success  
And start all over when you fail.  
Realizing in life there are many hurdles  
Brand new dreams start once more.  
Now hopeful with an idea  
You reach for higher grounds  
And refuse to be disheartened.  
When all seems lost.

Alone in the stillness of the night  
Softly but bitterly I cried  
Wished the morning light I never see  
I fall asleep hoping my wish comes true  
But the moment I fear most is here  
Awakened by the alarming of the clock  
Looking into the mirror I am alive  
And slowly the frustration of yesterday  
And the day before starts once more  
Breaking into pieces I reach for someone  
But not a single soul is around  
And I wonder is life really worth living

# YOUTH ON THE MOVE

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

The United Nations has designated 1985 as International Youth Year with the themes: Participation, Development, and Peace.

The object is to bring about widespread awareness of the situation of youth, their problems and aspirations, so as to engage young people in the development process. The UN defines persons aged 15 to 24 years as youth, without prejudice to other definitions by member states.

Among the priorities so far identified for action during the year are: expansion of youth participation in national development; increased employment opportunities and an end to job discrimination against young workers; greater access to education and to

technical and vocational training; promotion of youth participation in community activities to improve health education, family life education, sanitation, and nutrition.

Regional action plans are being developed through meetings held in consultation with UN regional commissions.

The responsible UN Secretariat is the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna. For further information on the Year, write to: Mr. Mohammed Sharif, Executive Secretary, International Youth Year, P.O. Box 500, Vienna International Centre, A-1400 Vienna, Austria.

## YOUTH AND CRIME

*by Keron Griffith*

Recently, in Barbados, there has been a spate of serious crimes ranging from breaking and entering to murder. The alarming thing is that most of these crimes were committed by young people between ages 12 and 30. Three young men alone had a total of 24 charges each.

It has been stated that most of the youths involved in crime come from broken homes, or homes which lack parental guidance.

Some responsibility can be attributed to the upbringing of those involved, but when there is no money one would do almost anything to obtain some, no matter how much parental guidance one has had.

Most parents today are single parents and have to take the role of father and mother. The parents have to work to support their children. Work then takes priority over parental guidance which has to be provided by the grandmother or a close relative. But the youth of today are not like those of before; they are easily led astray, whether by others or by a desire to possess material things. With these kind of competitors, the grandmother's job will be rough.



Next in line to the grandmother is the teacher, because most of the child's time outside the home is spent in the classroom.

It is not only the teacher's job to assist in academic qualification, but to instill qualities such as the knowledge of right from wrong. The teachers often try their best, but the attitudes of the students and those same parents often dissuade them.

After leaving the secure world of the classroom to join the outside world, one realizes that there is a lot of unemployment in Barbados. The youth then find themselves with nothing to do, and a lot of free time on their hands. This time they spend in groups under trees, or in each other's homes, where they discuss their wants and needs and ways of achieving them.

I don't think most of the youths involved in crimes wilfully set out to do them. Most of them are just frustrated: they need money and cannot find work, but when work is found experience is required. These combinations can be so potent, that the youths look for the easier way of obtaining money, that is, by stealing.

To control the rising crime rate, government should set up a training board, made up of specialists in various fields – something like career guidance but where one can gain experience in one's chosen field. Alternatively, government could create jobs where experience is not required, but common sense.

There are many youths out there, full of ideas and waiting for an opportunity to put them forward.

I hope that government will do something about the situation as soon as possible, or it will only get worse.

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*Keron, 19, wants to be a journalist. In the meantime, she is part of the **People of Tomorrow** team.*

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## CALLS ON YOUNG WOMEN

In celebration of IYY, the Commonwealth Youth Programme: Caribbean Centre sends the following message to young women throughout the region:

"The CYP Caribbean Centre hails young women of the region.

"The Centre has been very pleased to present training programmes in leadership and management of youth work, and the sharing of skills in appropriate technology as some of its activities for IYY.

"We share the deep concern of young women all over the world who are striving to become responsible and productive citizens. We are encouraging you to make maximum use of the opportunities afforded you for training, so that you will be adequately equipped to play meaningful roles in your communities."

In the meantime, the Caribbean Centre is planning a sub-regional skills training programme focussing mainly on young women, to be held later this year in Anguilla. The programme is part of the Centre's activities for IYY.

Other activities include:

- a youth exchange programme for unemployed, under-employed, or low-income youth between ages 15 - 24 who have never travelled outside their countries, and who are involved in youth, community, or sporting activities;

- a survey on unemployment and the occupational preferences of Caribbean youth;

- a literary competition among youth of Commonwealth Caribbean countries, with awards of bursaries to enable the winners to study youth activities in other Caribbean countries;

- regional observance of September 30, 1985 as Caribbean IYY Day;

- intensified youth leadership training programmes to promote social development, with emphasis on personal development, health, and family life education, interpersonal relationships, and cultural activities; and work-related skills training to promote economic development, along with technical and financial assistance to youth to develop self-employment projects.

## Barbados – Creativity in the Countryside

The St. Joseph Community Action Group is providing an outlet for the energy and creativity of 20 rural young women in Barbados.

At the St. Joseph Constituency branch of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in Church Village, these young women learn to knit, crochet, embroider by hand, and do patchwork. They are also taught dressmaking, cake-icing, and food preservation.

The Group was started in June 1984 by community worker, Maisie Welch, who saw the need for such a project in the rural areas of Barbados.

Mrs. Welch, who is also chair of the Democratic League of Women (the DLP women's arm), recalls, "I found nothing much was happening in the way of involving rural women. If rural women wanted to do things like this, they had to go into town. Although Barbados is a very small place, there is a big difference between rural and urban, and rural women have not been given a chance."

For Laureen Mapp, 30, and 21-year-old Susan Grogan, the Group has filled a gap in their lives. Laureen is now secretary of the Group, while Susan is its treasurer.

Says Susan, "I wasn't doing anything, then at the project I learnt how to do the work. I am now able to do things for myself instead of paying somebody. You also get exposure, you are meeting people, talking to people."

Laureen agrees that the project has made a difference in their lives. "Before," she says, "you finished school and just hung around the place, but now you know you've got something to do, to get involved in."

The mother of two girls, ages 11 and one year and four months, Laureen leaves them in her mother's care while she attends classes. She is also enrolled in a course in small business management at the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity where, twice a week, she studies marketing, costing and financial management.

Her attendance at these classes is sponsored by the Group, but she studies shorthand and typing on her own initiative.

Susan, too, has developed interests outside of the Group – her main one being singing. She's been singing since childhood, at church – she's a member of St. Joseph's choir – in school and at concerts, and has recently appeared at certain hotels.

Nevertheless, she does not intend making singing her career. "I want to be self-employed, making clothes," she says firmly.

Laureen also wants to be her own boss. Her goal is to design clothes, and she sees the project as providing her with a start although she acknowledges she still has a long way to go.

The Group has already gained public recognition of its work, notably at the 1984 National Independence Festival of Creative Arts where it won two gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

Mrs. Welch teaches all of the hand work in the project, while one of its graduates, Earline Holder, conducts the recently set up food preservation classes. A planning committee is responsible for making the Group's decisions after consultation with members.

The Group is also involved in community outreach, and plans for future activities include: a luncheon for old age pensioners; a programme for children; square dancing; netball; and keep-fit classes. These will be open to participants in the community, both women and men.

Funds for the Group's activities have come from the sale of its work and from the proceeds of a dance, cake sales, and stalls at community events. Donations are solicited, such as the stove received from Gulfstream Industries last Christmas.

Recently, the Group received Bds.\$3,000 from the Partners of the Americas agency to purchase sewing machines and other equipment.

Mrs. Welch says the Group is trying to find a Barbadian market for its work, preferably in the smaller outlets such as boutiques.

## FORWARD WITH THE Y

YWCAs in the Caribbean are organizing a programme among schools in the region to link students with each other, while broadening their knowledge on various issues.

The programme, "Hi! Neighbour," is being carried out in primary and secondary schools in those islands with YWCA branches. It is part of the IYY programme of the Caribbean Area of the World YWCA.

Each YWCA will select schools in their respective countries, then choose one class from each school. Packets of material on the five themes identified as priorities by the World YWCA will be sent to these classes by the local Ys, with instructions to teachers on how to use the material to stimulate discussion and projects among the students.

The first set of packets will focus on peace. The other themes are: health; human rights; refugees and migrants; and energy and environment. The teachers are expected to feed back to their local Y which will pass on the information to the Caribbean Area Secretary, Elaine Rainford, in Jamaica.

Ms. Rainford will then circulate the information from one Y to the next throughout the Caribbean,

and thus back to the various schools. At the end of the year, an evaluation of the project will be carried out to assess how the students have benefitted.

Meanwhile, representatives of Caribbean Ys are preparing for a Regional Youth Conference on Peace Awareness, to be held by the Caribbean Area YWCA from May 27 - June 9 in Jamaica.

Delegates will be exposed to various issues related to peace. Representatives of Ys from troubled regions of the world – Central America, French-speaking Caribbean, Southern Africa, the Middle East – as well as from North America and Japan, are expected to attend.

One of the highlights of the conference will be an address on the New International Economic Order by Michael Manley, leader of the People's National Party in Jamaica.

The Caribbean Y is hoping that at the end of the conference, delegates will have drawn up a plan of action for the introduction of peace awareness ideas in their respective countries.

## BARBADOS-Y SEMINAR

"Moving Forward With Young Women" is the theme of a one-day youth seminar to be held in May by the Barbados YWCA.

The seminar will be open to young women and men from the island's youth groups and schools.

Presentations will be made on topics such as: drug abuse and juvenile delinquency; child abuse; family planning – with special reference to teenage pregnancies; development of a small business; and peace awareness. These topics will also be raised in group discussions, and recommendations forwarded to the Y.

The organization is hoping that the recommendations will direct its work into areas which will be of utmost benefit to its members and to youth in general.

Contact: YWCA, "Bradfield", Country Rd., St. Michael, Barbados.

## Antigua – Young Women to the Fore

"The young women of Antigua and Barbuda have shown that they are eager to improve their status in society. . . (and) are not satisfied with the traditional skills which the older women have absorbed."

So says Millicent Percival, a vice-president of the Caribbean Women's Association (CARIWA) and president of the Women's Action Group in Antigua.

In a report on the activities of young women in her country, Ms. Percival stated that 40 per cent of the employees in the civil service were young women. In the industrial sector young women comprised 70 per cent of the work-force; in the private sector, the banks, and the restaurants – 60 per cent each; and in the hotel industry – 80 per cent.

Young women also accounted for five per cent of the self-employed, Ms. Percival observed.

In education, she noted that seven young Antiguan women were enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UWI, and two in the Faculty of Law. In addition, mostly young women were registered in classes held at the University Centre in Antigua, in such subjects as typing/shorthand, English, mathematics, and history.

Young women were also active in various community groups, service organizations, and political groups, Ms. Percival stated.

## Barbados – People of Tomorrow

Youth in Barbados now have a radio programme through which they can voice their hopes and aspirations. The call-in programme, **People of Tomorrow**, is produced by Women and Development Unit (WAND) in collaboration with local radio station, Voice of Barbados (VOB).

The programme is designed primarily to help youth feel responsible for creating opportunities for their lives; to discover and develop their talents and skills;

and to channel them into practical and useful activities.

It is the brainchild of WAND Communication Consultant, Joyce Bynoe, and is run by a core of young people – women and men – who generate discussion and dialogue on the air. Ms. Bynoe assists them by pulling information and ideas out of callers and offering suggestions for follow up. VOB announcer Alyson Leacock, links callers to the resource persons available.

Businesses and members of the community invited to contribute to the programme in various ways. For example: offering employment to a young person; donating money to a WAND/VOB scholarship fund; wholly or partly financing a specific training programme; or simply sharing information which may be of interest to youth.

Callers on the opening programme painted a grey picture of the frustrations of job-hunting: their applications rejected, or "put on file", or not answered. Many callers expressed an attitude to work which meant, as one put it, "more than just money" – rather a state of mind which employs the individual's need for recognition, a sense of "social worth."

WAND hopes that **People of Tomorrow** will be a model for similar programmes in other Caribbean countries.

Contact: People of Tomorrow, Women and Development Unit, Extra-Mural Dept. UWI, Pinelands, St. Michael, Barbados.

## Dominica – Training for Youth

The Dominica Government has created a skills training programme which is helping unemployed youths find jobs.

The programme aims to give the youth employable skills and proper work attitudes so that they can become gainfully employed. It is open to both young men and women, at the same time providing an opportunity for young women to be trained in occupations traditionally reserved for men.

Youth unemployment in Dominica is estimated to be at least 25 per cent.

The programme sets out to recruit and train entry level workers in industry, agriculture, commerce, construction and service occupations; plan training programmes to suit employers' specific needs and timing; and provide follow-up training or assistance where necessary.

Training has already started in areas such as care of the elderly or invalid; home/hotel/restaurant assistance; and home help.

The programme is funded by the Dominica Government, the Organization of American States, and the United States Agency for International Development.

For further information, contact: Skills Training Programme, Youth Development Division, Ministry of Education, 22 Bath Rd., Roseau, Dominica.

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## YOUTH FESTIVAL

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Youth from CARICOM countries will be among the 40,000 young people expected to attend the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students taking place in Moscow, USSR, from July 27 - August 3 this year.

The festival, which is being held to demonstrate solidarity and friendship among the young people of the world, will focus on sports, cultural activities, political solidarity, peace and disarmament, tourism, and economics.

It is being co-ordinated by an International Preparatory Committee which is based in Czechoslovakia. The last World Festival was held in Cuba in 1978.

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# Grenada – Women Break New Ground

The St. Andrew's Woodwork Project in Grenada has afforded young women the opportunity to break into the traditionally male field of carpentry.

Since its inception in August 1980, the Project has produced mainly school furniture. Sponsored by CANSAVE, it was set up in response to a need for pre-school furniture and toys, coupled with a shortage of local persons skilled in woodwork to provide them.

Originally 14 young men and women were involved in the Project; of these, five young women remain today to continue the work. They plan to carry on manufacturing school furniture and to seek government contracts for this.

Based on a feasibility study on the Project, the workers plan to diversify their production through the manufacture of household articles. They also intend to stage an exhibition of their products, possibly in June this year.

The objectives of the Project are to: develop a co-operative, and viable economic venture aimed at mak-

ing the participants self-supporting; provide opportunities for the total development of the participants, by helping them to examine basic attitudes and values, and develop more positive self-images; and to recognize the contribution they could make to the wider community.

The Project has proven that, given the opportunity and skills, young women can play a more significant role in the development of their society.

Throughout much attention has been paid not only to developing technical skills, but also to personal and group development. As a result of the latter, the workers developed a wide range of interpersonal skills which helped them to cope with problems on the job.

Sessions in personal and group development have been conducted jointly by CANSAVE Grenada (now GRENSAVE) and WAND, while skills training was provided by the Grenada Technical Institute, and assistance in setting up the co-operative by the National Co-operatives Development Agency.

# Guyana – WPA Keeps School

The Working People's Alliance (WPA) in Guyana is teaching reading, writing and mathematics to a group of girls and young women, through its project "Education for Literacy and Numeracy."

The classes which started 20 months ago, comprise 50-60 male and female students, but the young women

are treated as a special responsibility of the WPA's Women's Section, whose members do the teaching.

Classes are held for approximately 12 hours a week.

Contact: WPA Women's Section, 3A Queen and Holmes Streets, Georgetown, Guyana

# Photo Contest

"The special problems of young women in male-run societies" is one of many issues expected to be treated in an international photo competition, organized for International Youth Year.

The contest, which is open to all young people between the ages of 15 and 24, is being sponsored by **Development Forum**, a UN publication.

Photos should illustrate, illuminate, or comment upon one or more of the three basic themes of IYY – Development, Participation, and Peace. In addition to the issue of young women, photo themes can treat any issue affecting the lives of young people today in all parts of the world.

Some of these issues could be, for example: employment/unemployment, education/training, participation in government, community affairs and all aspects of national development; youth ideals, voluntary work at home and abroad, and service to society – aid to the disabled, minorities, the aged, children, nature and animals, the environment and conservation, refugees, fund raising, etc.; international understanding and the globalist vision of One World, human longing for permanent world peace with justice and equity; the world of the spirit; the joy of friendship and co-operation, leisure activities and sport achievement; health care and disease prevention, drug abuse, and treatment; participation in and promotion of the national heritage and culture; and the many forms of individual and group self-expression. This list is not exhaustive.

The top 20 photographers will be awarded certificates of merit, and have their photos printed in **Development Forum**. The top three, in addition, will receive a gift of a UN publication.

Photos should not exceed 8" by 10" (20.2cm by 25.5 cm) and should be in black and white to ensure quality reproduction of winning photos in **Development Forum**. Nevertheless, colour will be accepted.

The name, address, and age of photographers should appear clearly on the back of each photo submitted, and photos sent to: **Development Forum**, (IYY Photo Contest), UN Room DC1-559, United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

Closing date for entry of photos is July 31, 1985.

*Development Forum* is the single regular publication of the UN system in the field of economic and social development, and is co-published by the UN Division for Economic and Social Information (New York) and the United Nations University (Tokyo).

## St. Vincent – The Young Women of Clare Valley

In the small, coastal village of Clare Valley, in St. Vincent, a group of young women is implementing a family life education project to help improve the community.

The group, consisting of young women between ages 10 and 27, is headed by a president, Matilda Slater; secretary, Henrietta Roberts; and public relations officer, Lorna Patterson.

At previous family life education sessions, areas covered included personal development, understanding self, and relationships with each other. The project also focuses on leadership training and skills training.

The project was started by the Clare Valley Community Development Organisation, an offshoot of the National Council of Women of St. Vincent.

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

## Barbados – Concern For Peace

Young women, especially young mothers, account for the bulk of participants in the programme of the Barbados peace and disarmament group, Ploughshares for Life.

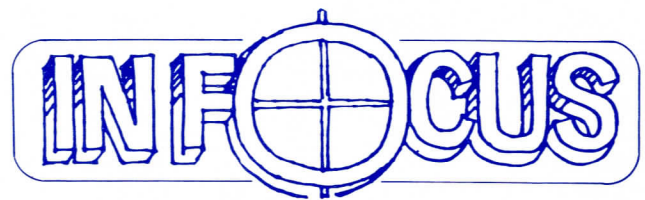
So claims Ploughshares chairman, Eddie DaSilva, who says young women seem more interested in survival than young men.

"Young men are interested in the specifications of weapons systems, but young women are more passionate about our existence and (about) human life continuing," he says.

Mr. DaSilva notes that young people generally ask more searching questions than do older people about the whole issue of peace. The reason for this, he says, is that young people have their future in front of them.

Ploughshares solicits invitations from schools where members can go and hold discussions with, and show films on the theme of peace and related issues to fifth and sixth form students. Sometimes other issues, such as women's participation in society, are highlighted.

The group was formed in December 1983 to educate people about the dangers and effects of nuclear war.



## Caribbean Women Celebrate

Women from all over the Caribbean and from overseas converged on Barbados at the end of March for a "Caribbean Celebration."

This regional event – sponsored by WAND, CARIWA, the CARICOM Secretariat, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean – was held to mark the end of the UN Decade for Women.

The three-day celebration allowed participants to:

- share in some of the projects, programmes and activities which have happened in the Caribbean during the Decade;

- identify the "gaps" which have not been adequately dealt with or emphasized;
- suggest strategies for moving ahead.

Participants included women who have been involved in exciting and outstanding projects. These women shared their experiences and successes at the Workshop Forum and the Festival Exhibition - the two activities on which the Celebration was based.

The Workshop sessions focused on three major themes: women as productive workers; women in social development; and women in the process of change - and related issues.

The Festival was a live presentation of what Caribbean women have been doing over the Decade. Displays of women's work and activities were set up in an exhibition centre representing different fields. An art and photo gallery and an audio-visual section were also available for participants to display their work in the relevant media.

*The next issue of **WOMAN SPEAK!** will feature highlights from this Celebration.*

## New Head For ALACEM

The new secretary-general of the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Studies Association (ALACEM) is Costa Rican painter, Carmen Naranjo.

Ms. Naranjo was also recently appointed Director of the Central American Universities Editorial, organ of the Federation of Central American Universities. Her work as Secretary-General of ALACEM will have the support of two Costa Rican universities: the National University and the University of Costa Rica.

She will also be supported by a number of women's organizations which have offered personnel to form an active working group to further ALACEM's objectives and activities. They are: Costa Rican Association of Women's Studies; Alliance of Costa Rican Women; Latin American Association of Women in Action; Group "Ventana"; Action-Now Foundation; and International League of Women for Peace and Liberty.

ALACEM was formally inaugurated in October 1983, in Mexico City. Its major objective is to try to bridge the gulf between women of the English-speaking Caribbean who are engaged in women's studies and their Latin American counterparts.

## Jamaica - SISTREN Against Violence

"NO! to Sexual Violence" is the title of a booklet recently published by the Jamaican SISTREN Theatre Collective, and Friends of SISTREN.

The booklet focuses on the crime of sexual violence, attempting to show how serious an offence it is and suggesting ways of tackling it.

The 29-page publication is based on the evidence of women who have been victims of, or witnesses to rape. Experience and data from professionals, whose work brings them into contact with victims, also contributed to the making of this booklet.

As stated in the introduction, the booklet is "in defence of every woman's right to say 'NO', if she doesn't feel like it, and to say 'yes' today and 'no' tomorrow if that is the way she feels. It is an attempt to make voices of women heard as they say: NO sexual violence!"

Contact: SISTREN Theatre Collective, 100 Hope Rd., Kingston 6, Jamaica.

## St. Lucia - Focus On Pre-Schoolers

In St. Lucia, the Women's Organisation for the development of Laborie is working hard to provide a quality education for pre-schoolers.

The result of their efforts is the two-year-old Laborie Community Pre-School which now has a roll of 36 children and three teachers. The school is financed by parents' monthly fees which range from EC\$15 - \$60 and more. Parents also assist in the administrative tasks of the school.

The Women's Organisation adheres to four key principles in its drive to develop the pre-school. These are:

- a low teacher/student ratio;
- teachers should be trained, and should work according to systematic planned objectives and methods of evaluation;
- parents should participate actively.

Among the other projects which the Organisation would like to start in the community are: the expansion of the pre-school to a fully-fledged, quality day-care centre; and the construction of a home for the aged.

The women are hoping to start a business soon, the profits from which would be used to carry out their proposed projects.

The Women's Organisation is run by a board comprising pre-school parents and other members of the community. Director of the organization is Rosamunde Renard. Other board members are: Dorothy Lawrence, Agatha JnPanel, Ann Selma John, Elsa Joyeux, Ann Selma Johnny, Leota Maxwell, and Geraldine Oscar.

*Contact: Women's Organisation for the development of Laborie, Laborie Community Pre-School, Laborie, St. Lucia.*

## Jamaica Youth Workers For Change

The Jamaica branch of the Commonwealth Caribbean Youth and Community Workers Association is studying the laws relating to incest and rape in that country, with a view to amending the law.

The Association hopes to provide for better security for the lives of victims of these crimes, and points out that victims are often afraid to report cases of rape because of face to face identification of the offenders.

In the case of incest, the Association says more cases could be dealt with or reported, if more privacy was offered in hearing these cases. At present, incest cases are heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court which is open to the public, but not in the Family Court where proceedings are conducted in privacy.

Meanwhile, the Association is hoping that June 3-9 will be declared Commonwealth Youth Workers Week. It celebrated the week in 1984 to commemorate the establishment of a Regional Association in June 1982.

The Association has also been active in setting up guidance and welfare centres in as many parishes in Jamaica as possible. These centres will provide professional guidance and counselling; and financial, material, or other assistance to extremely needy persons.

*Contact: CCYCWA, Jamaica Branch, 4½ Miranar Drive, Morant Bay P.O., St. Thomas, Jamaica.*

## Regional Project Ends

The Project for the Development of Caribbean Women in Trade Unions has ended.

The seventh and final regional seminar in the Project took place in Barbados towards the end of November last year, marking the end of a process which brought together participants from across the region.

The Project began with a regional seminar in Jamaica in 1982. Since then, a series of regional seminars have been held in the Bahamas, St. Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and St. Lucia - all concerned with upgrading the participants' skills.

National and local seminars - conducted by the participants and aimed at extending trade union leadership training to a target group of 2,000 women - have also taken place.

The three-year Project was sponsored by the Inter-American Foundation in co-operation with the Trade Union Education Institute of the UWI.

Contributing to the programme were consultants and other resource persons in the fields of human resource, development planning, organization, communication, and women and development. The International Labour Organisation, Caribbean Congress of Labour, and trade unions throughout the region also supported the venture.

*Edited from the Newsletter of the Project for the Development of Caribbean Women in Trade Unions, Vol. 3 No. 1, Nov. 1984.*

## Belize - New Director

New executive director of Belize's BIB League, Eva Middleton, started her term of office earlier this year.

Mrs. Middleton has worked with the League for the past three years, and was formerly its treasurer. She has also been a teacher and a community development worker.

Meanwhile, the League has received a grant from UNICEF to provide breast-feeding packets to all health centres in Belize.

And, in conjunction with the Public and Rural Health Nurses country-wide, the League is awarding certificates to each mother who totally breast-feeds her baby for four months and regularly attends the health clinics.

*Contact: BIB League, 44 Gabourel Lane, P.O. Box 1203, Belize City, Belize.*

# NEWS FROM WAND

## EXCHANGE VISITOR

WAND participated for the first time in the ISIS Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange, when the Unit played host to a sister from Peru, Marisa Godinez Velarde.

Marisa came to WAND from the Peruvian feminist group, Flora Tristan, for a period of three months in November 1984. During her stay, she used her skill as a graphic artist to design a promotional brochure for the "Caribbean Celebration" (see IN FOCUS), as well as a poster; assisted in mounting a display at the UWI's Open Day; and developed ideas for visual material to support WAND's activities.

She also spent three days in St. Lucia, meeting and discussing strategies with various community groups.

Communications consultant to WAND, Joyce Bynoe, who worked closely with Marisa, said of her: "She came at a time when we were trying to develop material that would be low-cost, easy to produce, understandable, and multi-purposed, and she lent herself readily to using her skills.

"She's an excellent graphics person, as well as being very conscious of women's issues. Because of her work with a feminist group it was easy for her to work with WAND, although the two groups are very different."

Flora Tristan works directly with community groups in the areas of research, consciousness-raising and legal counselling, and runs workshops. It also has a documentation centre.

The exchange programme in which Marisa took part was initiated in 1983 by the ISIS International Women's Information and Communication Service, based in Geneva, Switzerland and Rome, Italy. It is aimed at giving women active in women's groups and projects, the opportunity to learn and share their skills and experiences in another cultural context with a group working in a similar field.

The purpose is to strengthen women's networks world-wide and to help women develop their own positive alternatives.

Further information about the programme is available from: ISIS-WICCE, C.P. 50, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland.

## VOLUNTEER AT WAND

Another new face around WAND during the past three months was that of Esmee Benjamin, a volunteer on assignment to WAND.

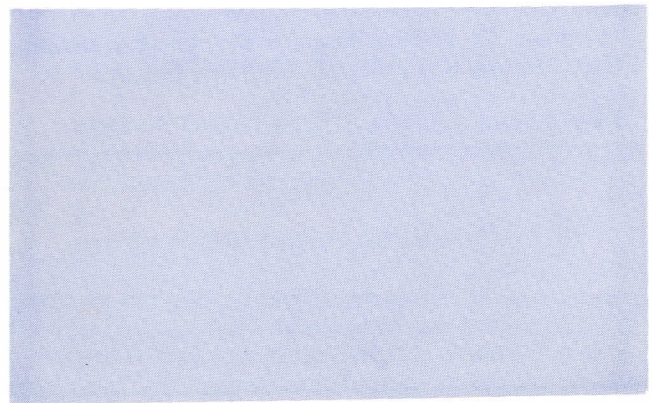
Esmee is an International Voluntary Services (IVS) volunteer who will be assisting in WAND's field Programme. She is now in Antigua where she will be based, although continuing to work within WAND's programme.

In Antigua she will deal with organizations with which WAND works – the Family Planning Association, the Women's Desk, the University Centre – in the area of counselling and group development. She will also represent WAND on the Regional Advisory Committee of the Antigua-based Christian Children's Fund.

Esmee's assignment is for two years.

The organization which sent her, IVS, is a U.S.-based, private, non-profit, independent development agency which responds to requests from both governments and private organizations in developing countries.

Volunteers work with their local host organizations in such fields as: agriculture, women's income-generation; food production; renewable energy; health and nutrition; small business enterprises; co-operative development; and marketing, accounting and business management.



## BOOK NOOK



**Teenage Pregnancy in the Caribbean** by Tirbani Jagdeo, 1984. "The cries of children bearing children – that is the problem of teenage pregnancy." These are the opening words of this comprehensive study. A resource volume for teachers of sex education, Dr. Jagdeo's findings are an argument for the presence of sex education on the school curriculum. It is also an eloquent exposition of the plight of the Caribbean teenager. **Published by IPPF, 18-20 Lower Regent Street, London, SW1Y 4PW, England.**

"Young women and the development of stable family life in the Caribbean", by Merle Hodge in **Savacou**, Vol. 13, 1977. Re-evaluates the concept of instability of the Caribbean family, in the light of the many positive kinship relationships that exist. Criticizes the fact that marriage and childbearing are often perceived as the only means of fulfillment for a young woman. Indicates the need for men and women to develop more positive attitudes towards childlessness, and the human right of a woman to seek the development of other talents and self-fulfillment without incurring societal scorn. **Available from the Main Library, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, St. Michael, Barbados.**

"Attitudes and perceptions expressed by female students at the Barbados Community College" by Wendy Donawa. Unpublished research paper for the Diploma of Education, UWI, 1976. A survey of 57 female students at the Barbados Community College which examines factors relating to their goals and self concepts. Findings indicate a relationship between society's sex role requirements and the students' aspirations, as well as an ambivalence in their own perception of women's role. Implications of the study are the need for changes in syllabus options for girls; the need for a greater awareness among teachers of their responsibility to create self-confidence, and to stimulate greater achievement/motivation in the girls. **Available from the School of Education, UWI, Cave Hill, St. Michael, Barbados.**

**Girls are Powerful: young women's writings from Spare Rib**, ed. Susan Hemmings, 1982. A collection of articles, photos and cartoons by young women from ages seven to 22. (Most pieces were previously published in **Spare Rib**, a British monthly feminist magazine.) The book is divided into six sections, covering: looks and appearance; school; home and family life; waged work, unemployment, and housework; friendship and sexuality. Includes pieces on young women's groups in schools and youth clubs, and young Asian women's experiences of racism. Charts the experiences of a wide range of young women, including working and middle-class; white; Asian, Afro-Caribbean; and students. Published by Sheba Feminist Publishers, London.

## IT'S A FACT.....

More than 38.6% of girls age 15-19 in developing countries are illiterate, among them: in Africa, 51%; in West Africa, 70.3%; in 7 countries of Africa and Asia, more than 90%.

(Source: "Literacy for women: a development priority" in **Convergence**, International Council for Adult Education, Vol. XVI, No. 3, 1983.)

Most unemployed women (in Barbados) are 15-24 years old. . . . Girls have equal enrolment with boys in almost all levels of education; but very few women get skilled training in the jobs where there is a shortage of skilled workers.

(Source: "Facts About Women", Bureau of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Information and Culture, Barbados, 1984.)

More than two-thirds of females under the age of 20 (in Dominica) were unemployed with the figure being 30 per cent in the 20-24 age group; the corresponding ratios for males were 50 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

(In Dominica). . . in the urban areas, women tend to begin working at about the age of 18; those who attend primary school leave at the age of 15 and then seek to obtain vocational training before entering the labour force. In the rural areas, women tend to start working at an earlier age since the majority only reach as far as primary school and many of them do not get the opportunity to attend vocational schools. . . many young women. . . migrate to urban areas to work mainly as sales clerks and in the services sector.

(Source: **Employment of Women in Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago**, Myrtle D. Bishop, CARICOM Secretariat, Nov. 1984.)

In Indonesia 41 per cent of women have their first baby before they are 17;

In Panama, births to women aged between 15 and 19 account for about a fifth of all births in the country;

In the United States more than a million teenage girls become pregnant every year, about 30,000 of them under 15.

(Source: "The health risks of teenage sex", Jennifer McKay in **People**, Vol. 12 No. 1, 1985, International Planned Parenthood Federation, London.)

...recent data for Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent show that among 15 to 29-year-old women in union, 12 per cent were married, 24 per cent were in common law unions and 64 per cent in visiting relationships.

(In the Caribbean) The average adolescent girl begins her sexual life at 14-15 and many become pregnant before their seventeenth year. Indeed, nearly 60 per cent of all first-born babies in the region have adolescent mothers and one half of these are 17 and younger.

(Source: "Caribbean teenagers – their shortcomings are society's", Tirbani Jagdeo in **People**, Vol. 12 No. 1, 1985, International Planned Parenthood Federation, London.)

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# MILESTONES

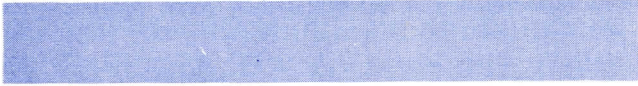
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## UN Committee Chair

Guyanese judge, Desiree Barnard, has been elected chair of the UN Committee to Monitor the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

Justice Barnard, who will serve for two years, will also represent the Committee and present a report at the UN World Conference to End the Decade for Women, in Nairobi in July.



## FEED BACK

**WOMAN SPEAK!** is an excellent magazine. The issue on Women and Disability was particularly good even if there was too much of a slant towards Jamaican disabled women.

I am pleased with the layout, the content, the range of coverage. It was informative and very engaging. I was particularly pleased with the focus because of my past and continuing work with the disabled.

Carlyle McKenzie  
Coordinator  
Association of Development Agencies  
Jamaica

I'm sure you don't mean it this way, but when you look at the (illustration on page 25 of) issue No. 14 of **WOMAN SPEAK!** there is the inescapable conclusion that stereotypes are not going to be discouraged for a long time. As usual, there is the service career for woman – the nurse, and the prestige career for men – the doctor and while there is one woman working to three men, it is also noticeable that the stereotypes extend to race as well. Who is black? The sportsman,

the policeman and the nurse. Who is white? The doctor. Which is the status job?

That apart, the issue was welcomed – especially the profile on Ruth Nita Barrow. I particularly wanted to congratulate you on issue No. 15 – on the disabled. The articles were particularly well written and the information on centres for help very useful.

Diana Mahabir  
Trinidad

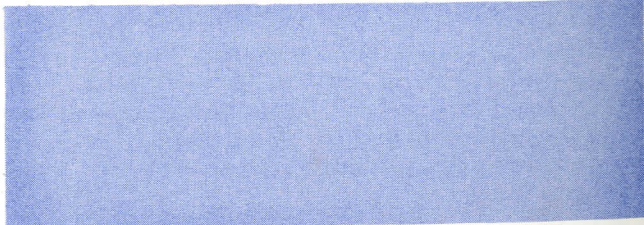
Thanks for the newsletter. . . . We use your articles for our discussions and meetings.

Reido Gaicazanwa  
Dept. of Sociology  
University of Zimbabwe



## NEXT ISSUE

The curtain comes down on the UN Decade for Women, in July this year. Women from all over the world will meet in Nairobi from July 15-26 to review the achievements of the Decade. Even before then, at the end of March, Caribbean women reviewed their achievements at a "Celebration." **WOMAN SPEAK!** No. 18 will highlight the programmes, projects, activities and cultural events which were showcased at this celebration of women. Expected date of publication is June, 1985.



# NOTES

CARIBBEAN



1976-85