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WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ANNUAL REPORT AUGUST 1996 - JULY 1997

Introduction

The English speaking Caribbean is characterised by small vulnerable economies that are tied into a global economic system over which they have no direct control. The demands of this global system have been changing over the years, from the period of colonisation, when mainly mono-crop agriculture provided the economic base for many of our countries, to the present. Very few Caribbean countries have natural resources other than land-based resources. Despite the recognition that we need to diversify our economies, the process of change has been slow since the infrastructure that has developed to support the extra-regional exportation of primary products has remained well developed compared with inter-regional trading systems.

The social investment of our national governments in education and health systems since the 1940s and 1950s has meant that our populations have become increasingly literate with high expectations of social advancement but these expectations have been compromised by 'constrained' economic advancement within the current development paradigm.

In efforts to address this reality, strategies for industrial development have been pursued but this development strategy has been aimed at encouraging industrial production, mainly through foreign investment that is also tied into the needs of the global economy. Local and regional investors have not benefitted from comparative incentives and opportunities.

Chronic unemployment and underemployment, along with persistent poverty, remain features of Caribbean reality that affects working class rural women, men and youth most severely. Unlike in previous eras, a sound and advanced education provides no guarantees. The sense of rising expectations which contrast with harsh economic realities are beginning to create more frustration and the search for innovative options.

Women have benefitted from social investment but gender socialisation has had an impact on the ways women and the wider society have accepted and internalised gender roles. This gender socialisation along with social class distinctions combine to limit the options and possibilities available to many women in our society. Although the process of change has started, the pace of change has not been rapid. The pragmatism that characterised the search for new horizons and the optimism of the 1960s and 1970s has been constrained by shifts in the global economy since those times. Debt and Structural Adjustment measures meted out by international monetary policy agencies have impacted negatively on the governments of many Caribbean countries in terms of resources now available for spending on social infrastructure. In addition, cutbacks in government spending are known to affect women even more so.

KINDLY RETURN TO
CENTRE FOR GENDER
AND DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES



Development agencies that have increasingly become part of the Caribbean reality and which have operated to support and promote grass roots development strategies and to promote self-awareness, self-reliance and collective social action for achieving transformation now face increasing difficulties in gaining financial support to sustain themselves and the goals to which they have been committed. At a time when governments' resources are reduced, these agencies are finding it difficult to carry on their roles as either complementary or alternative to government development strategies.

WAND's location within the University of the West Indies' School of Continuing Studies has meant that it has been able to work with the NGO and government sectors although the NGO relationship has been more significant. The sectors that WAND has identified in its' work as critical to improving the status of women in the Caribbean are the rural sector, health and youth. The rural sector because it is the most substantial and at the same time the most neglected. The rural areas have been and still are the food-crop producing areas that have earned the foreign exchange that has fed the development of the modern sector, but which have not benefitted to any significant extent from the resources that have been produced. The development and maintenance of rural infrastructure is often the most neglected, poverty is often hidden and access to resources and services limited.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY

Communities Organising for Self-Reliance (CORE)

La Pointe, St. Lucia

The La Pointe Development Committee (LPDC) was officially launched on November 24 after a three-day workshop (November 20-22) on "Conceptualising a Project, Writing the Proposal and Conducting the Feasibility Study".

Two major workshops, "Understanding and Dealing with Conflict" (May 14-15) and "Environmental Health and Waste Management" (July 25-26) were facilitated as part of the community development process.

The LPDC was also involved in the preparatory phase of identifying and planning for the implementation of an income generating project to address the need for employment creation in a banana growing community.

Fancy, St. Vincent

Here work focused on community research, social training and income generation. In addition to preparing a community profile, community members have collected and analysed baseline historical and social data which will assist in informing on work

strategies and project implementation. The research exercise also emphasized the importance of knowledge and ownership of information.

Our work also involved strengthening the organisational capacity of the Fancy Community Help Group through which the Unit links with the community. As well the community was assisted in identifying the most suitable project for employment creation and income generation.

The project decided on was an animal livestock rearing farm which also attracted the attention of the government's Women's Affairs Division which pledged financial support to the enterprise.

Rose Hall, St. Vincent

There was a new quality to WAND's work with the Rose Hall community. As such, work focused on encouraging young people to be part of the development process by taking greater responsibility for initiatives within the community and in identifying programmes and projects which address their needs and interests. The documentation of the community experience will be done in the form of a detailed case study.

Strengthening Women's Reproductive Health

The 10-module trainer of trainers *Women's Reproductive Health project* concluded with graduation exercises in Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Dominica between February and March.

In Grenada, 35 people graduated (February 13) and over 4,700 community members were reached; in St. Lucia, 28 people graduated (March 6) and over 6,000 people reached; in St. Vincent, (March 20) 27 graduated and over 9,000 reached; and in Dominica (March 13) 31 people received certificates and over 8,000 were reached.

The objective of the UNFPA-funded project was to empower women to take charge of their lives and to make healthy choices regarding their social and reproductive health. Women and men were trained to teach others in their communities about social and reproductive health and the importance of prevention in health care.

The intellectual outcomes, a HOW TO MANUAL and an academic article are in their initial stage of preparation.

Health Network Mail-Out

Between August and March, Health 'mail-outs' were published in the context of WAND's work in women's reproductive health and wellness. It is a service to individuals and groups for use in community-based work.

August: *A Woman's Cry - Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)*

September: *Disaster Preparedness: Be Alert, the Hurricane Season is Here*

October/December: *Eating Disorders Obesity and Anorexia*

January: *Breast Cancer*

February: *Prostate Cancer*

March: *Cervical Cancer*

The last issue of the 'mail-out' coincided with the end of the *Strengthening Women's Reproductive Health project* to which it was related.

Women Speaking to Women Radio Project

Equipment for the setting up of WAND's radio unit has been received from UNESCO. Plans are afoot to prepare a soundproof recording room and to organise training workshops in radio production for WAND staff and representatives from media houses and women's organisations. In this regard a radio production course has been written and a workshop planned to begin when the studio is completed. *Women Speaking to Women* is intended to create awareness on issues relating to women and to stimulate dialogue on gender issues. This project is a collaborative effort involving UNESCO, WAND, CANA Radio and the Radio Unit, University of the West Indies.

Sustainable Livelihoods in the OECS

After a taking off in July last year, this UNDP-funded project is again on hold until some outstanding management details can be worked out.

WORKSHOPS

Media Images of Women

A two-day workshop, "Media Images of Women", facilitated by Women's Media Watch, Jamaica, was held from November 27-28. Twenty-one participants from local media houses and women's organisations benefitted from presentations and discussions on the ways in which the media, which is all-pervasive, help to create distorted/negative social and self-images of women and to reinforce sex stereotypes. In the context of the socialisation process, key concepts in gender/class awareness and gender/class sensitivity training were introduced as women were encouraged to challenge stereotypes and myths and hence to insist on their positive portrayal in the media.

Gender, Spirituality and Communication

WAND in collaboration with the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) hosted a subregional workshop, "Gender, Spirituality and Communication", from May 29-31. This experience involved some 30 participants and resource persons from a number of faiths

including Christian (liberal and fundamentalist), Spiritual Baptist, Orisha, Rastafari, Bahai, Hindu and Buddhist. The purpose of this interfaith workshop was to explore the concept of "spirituality" and what it means to women in their particular faith; whether women and men experience their spirituality differently; and whether spirituality can be communicated in the same way that religion and religious beliefs can be imparted and disseminated. A highlight of the workshop was the celebration of spirituality in its many and varied expressions.

Women and the New Information Technology: Access and Use

As part of the continuing process of upgrading their skills, WAND staff was among the 15 women who participated in a training exercise under the theme, "Women and the New Information Technology: Access and Use" (July 15-16). In keeping with the Beijing Platform of Action, the workshop sought to provide women with the means of their empowerment through knowledge and understanding of the new information technology and its role in the process of globalisation. Training, therefore, centered on an introduction to and use of electronic mail and internet and the ways in which the internet can be used in their own interest to access relevant information and to create necessary links with other (women's) organisations involved in work similar to theirs.

Other women who benefitted from the theoretical and practical (hands-on) exercise were from the Caribbean Conference of Churches, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), Women and Development Studies Group (WDS), UWI, Caribbean Human Rights, Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), UWI, Women's Media Watch-Barbados and the local community. The youngest participant was 10 years old.

The workshop was organised by WAND in collaboration with Barbados External Telecommunications Ltd. (BET) and the Computer Centre, UWI with support from the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD).

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Planning Meeting

As a follow up to the 1996 HIVOS/UNIFEM evaluation of WAND, a strategic planning meeting was held to assist the Unit in reviewing its role and strategic direction in the changing institutional, regional and global environments. The exercise also guided WAND staff in a process of strategic thinking which involves bridging the gap between theory and practice, understanding and application.

The meeting which saw the full participation of WAND's partners in the UWI and the non-governmental sector, funders and community members was held between June 18 and 20 in Barbados. It was facilitated by Organisational Development Specialist, Marion Bernard from Jamaica.

The organisations represented at this meeting were: La Pointe Development Committee (St. Lucia); Rose Hall Working Group (St. Vincent); Small Projects Assistance Team (SPAT - Dominica); Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA - Trinidad and Tobago); CARICOM Women's Desk (Guyana); Caribbean Peoples Development Agency (CARIPEDA-St. Vincent), Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC- Barbados); UNIFEM; and the UWI School of Continuing Studies.

The strategic plan, the output of the meeting, provides an opportunity for WAND to refocus and identify the way(s) in which the Unit and its partners can utilise the energies, lessons and interests more effectively in order to influence more directly women's development, women's education and leadership and contribute to the body of knowledge emerging in the region on Caribbean feminism.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

ACADEMIC

Cooperation within the University of the West Indies

Social Welfare Training Centre

WAND continued to provide support for the module on gender sensitisation in the four-month social work course, "Principles and Practices of Social Work" run by the UWI's Social Welfare Training Centre (Jamaica). For this course, WAND provided two consultants to conduct workshops on gender training.

Centre for Gender and Development Studies

WAND continues to be a member of the Board of Studies of the Centre and WAND staff has been involved in teaching in the certificate course offered by the Centre. WAND is now represented on the Centre's Editorial Committee for the newly introduced *Working Paper Series*.

Women and Development Studies Group, UWI

In the spirit of cooperation, WAND agreed to house Women's Media Watch - Barbados (WMWB) until the organisation can secure permanent offices. WMWB is concerned with the content of news, features and advertising in the media and seeks to influence journalists and media managers to produce gender sensitive content in their publications and programmes.

Collaboration with other Universities

Community Partnerships and Women's Studies Project

The Community Partnerships and Women's Studies project is a collaborative effort involving the University of Guyana, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, the University of Indonesia, the four Canadian Atlantic universities of Mount St. Vincent, Dalhousie, Memorial and St. Mary's, and the Centre for Gender and Development Studies and WAND, UWI.

The objective of the project is to design, through a series of workshops and field-based activities, curriculum, materials and methods to train women's studies specialists (within the university and the community) to conduct community-based activities and research. The expected outputs of the project are (a) a comprehensive curriculum to provide students with both knowledge and practice in the skills required for working with women in local communities in research and community development projects; (b) training for faculty; and (c) an expansion of the capacity of women's studies units in the universities involved to be responsive to their local communities.

WAND's contribution to this project is the documentation of the CORE experiences in the form of detailed case studies.

A unique feature of this project is its comparative nature and therefore the methodological and collaborative lessons will be documented for use as a model for a comparative cooperative process.

Caribbean Religions Project, York University, Canada

WAND is a partner in the *Caribbean Religions Project*, (CRP) an interdisciplinary collaborative research project designed to identify and analyse Caribbean religious expressions from a Caribbean perspective.

The CRP which involves practitioners and scholars of Caribbean religions is being coordinated through the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC), York University, Canada.

WAND's Tutor/Coordinator, Judith Soares, is a co-editor for the *Encyclopedia of Caribbean Religions*, the project's end product.

Bucknell University

Bucknell University student, Gail Newfield, an anthropology major, interned with WAND and CARICAD between January and May. She researched administrative systems in the Caribbean to see ways in which they could be adapted to women's organisations.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Caribbean Regional Gender Initiative (CRGI)

WAND is a member of the Steering Committee of the CRGI which involves women's organisations and developmental NGOs in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Belize, the Eastern Caribbean and Trinidad and Tobago. WAND along with CNIRD, CAFRA, CARIPEDA and GRENCODA comprise the Management Committee of the project's subregion of Trinidad and Tobago, the Eastern Caribbean and Belize (Southern /Eastern Caribbean and Belize).

The CRGI seeks to understand and strengthen organising strategies of Caribbean

women through a process of research, education and exchange. Its objectives are to strengthen the organisational capacities of women; support activities that develop strategies for positive change in the status and condition of regional women; promote gender training in the region; and influence public policy (from a gender perspective) of regional governments.

For the Eastern/Southern Caribbean and Belize region the main research conducted in the period under review was "Coping Strategies of Women under Structural Adjustment in Dominica, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago".

Caribbean Peoples Development Agency

The Institute of Human Resource Development (IHRD)

The IHRD, a joint project between CARIPEDA, WAND, the Caribbean Federation of Youth (CFY) and the UWI School of Continuing Studies, is to provide training opportunities for community leaders and young adults in the areas of management, entrepreneurship, computer literacy and information and communication technology as well as in community and social development.

Associated with this is a community-based apprenticeship programme for adolescents aged 13 to 17 years. The project will start in St. Vincent and Belize.

So far WAND has assisted in the development of curricula.

Media Images of Women

WAND joined with CARIPEDA to host a regional workshop on "Media Images of Women" in Trinidad and Tobago. This was aimed at sharing information on the images of women in the media, their significance in shaping one's identity and how women saw themselves. It was intended to create sensitivity on the need for the establishment of national policy within the various territories of the Caribbean.

Annual Workers Development Course

Tutor/Coordinator, Judith Soares, and part-time worker, Mark Lee, were instructors for the CARIPEDA sponsored *Annual Workers Development Course*. Judith Soares taught the module, "Development Theories, Issues and Strategies in the Caribbean", (July 17-19) and Mark Lee, the module "Mass Communication and Public Relations"(July 14-15). The Course was held at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago from July 14 to August 1.

International Women's Day (IWD) Activities

WAND collaborated with Women's Bureaux and community organisations in implementing community-based activities in Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to observe International Women's Day (March 8).

In Barbados, the Unit collaborated with the Bureau of Women's Affairs to host a skit and panel discussion on "Violence Against Women"; and supported the Women's World

Day of Prayer Committee's annual *World Day of Prayer*.

In St. Lucia, the collaboration with the Women's Desk, Ministry of Women's Affairs, took the form of a one-day consultation on "Women, Poverty Alleviation and Community Health" for women in the island's *Region 7*.

In St. Vincent, the activity was a workshop on "Adolescent Sexuality, Contraception and Reproductive Health" for young people in four of the island's northern communities.

The activities were supported with funds from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

International Women's Day Message

For IWD, the Tutor/Coordinator issued a message which reaffirmed WAND's commitment to promoting and supporting initiatives in the interest of the region's women.

Marion House, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

WAND supported *Marion House* in its continuing work among young people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, by providing assistance to the *Young Parents Empowerment Programme*. This programme assisted young adults and teenagers in developing parenting skills.

PUBLICATIONS

WAND Notes

In March, WAND published the first issue of its quarterly, *WAND Notes* which is intended to be an organic link with WAND's colleagues in the School of Continuing Studies and the wider University community, NGO partners, funders and community members. The *newsletter* updates on WAND's programme and internal activities.

Occasional Papers

In the spirit of cooperation, WAND decided to discontinue its publication of the *Occasional Papers Series* to accommodate the publication of the *CGDS Working Paper Series*. Cooperation is necessary to avoid competition in this academic area and allows for an approach which combines the strengths of the two units in the production of quality work. This has also allowed WAND to focus more on 'popular' publications which are more useful to its target audience.

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

WAND continued to operate without the services of a documentalist. This has meant that the cataloguing on new material remains problematic. It has also meant that only limited services have been available to users.

However, library training for a staff member was identified and this has assisted in meeting some of the needs of the Centre.

MISCELLANEOUS

World Population Awareness Week

WAND was a cosponsor of the 1996 World Population Awareness Week (WPAW). This activity was sponsored by 365 U.S. and international organisations and was marked by some 3,000 events.

FUNDING

The work of the Unit was supported by grants from HIVOS, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNESCO, Ford Foundation and World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). In the new period, WAND will continue its efforts to diversify its funding and to achieve financial sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Despite funding constraints, the Unit managed to hold together its programme of activities as it concentrated more on quality and less on quantity.

WAND was able to reemploy its Programme Coordinator, Jeanette Bell, who completed an M.A. *in Women and Development Studies* at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands. This meant that WAND's outreach work benefitted from her expertise and her knowledge of community development.

Essentially, WAND continued to play a leading role in the regional NGO sector.

VISITORS

Sir Alister McIntyre	UWI	Jamaica
Joycelyne Josiah	UNESCO	Jamaica
Maxine Olsen	UNIFEM	New York
Joycelin Massiah	UNIFEM	Barbados
Glenroy Browne	CARIPEDA	St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Regina Dumas		Trinidad and Tobago
Joy Workman		Barbados
Audrey Rodriques	University of Guyana	Guyana
Barbara Thomas	University of Guyana	Guyana
Sheva Medjuck	Mount St. Vincent University	Canada
Marilyn Porter	Memorial University	Canada
Linda Christiansen- Ruffman	St. Mary's University	Canada
Jennifer Jarman	Dalhousie University	Canada
Norma Knuckle	CUSO	St. Lucia
Pat Rorick	CUSO/CPDC	Barbados
Luna Ramkhalawansingh	CPDC	Barbados
Mary Beckles	CCC	Barbados
P.I. Gomes	CARICAD	Barbados
Audrey Mullings	CDERA	Barbados
Stephen Burgess	Hosftra University	U.S.A
Janet Beilstein	U.N Division of the Advancement of Women	U.S.A
Miriam Sutherland- Portillo	HIVOS	Holland
Jacqueline Banfield	NOW	Barbados
Herman King	BBM	Barbados

E. Kamphius		The Netherlands
Sheila Stuart		Barbados
Rosalie O'Meally	UWI	Jamaica

BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

Caribbean Network for Rural Development (CNIRD) Trinidad and Tobago

Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) Chairperson, Barbados

Global Environmental Facility/Small Grants Programme, United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (GEF/SGP) Barbados

Regional Advisory Board and Editorial Committee, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Barbados

Editorial Board, Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) Barbados

ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIPS

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)

World Association of Christian Communication (WACC)

Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA)

Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC)

**MEETINGS/CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY DR. JUDITH SOARES - WAND
FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST 1996 - JULY 31, 1997**

Meeting/Conference	Place	Date	Status
International conference "A New Global Human Order"	Guyana	August 2-4, 1996	Paper presented
Assembly of Caribbean Youth	Trinidad & Tobago	August 17-20, 1996	Chairperson-Process Committee
PAHO Cervical Cancer Control Meeting "Cervical Cancer in the Caribbean - Opportunity Knocks"	Barbados	October 14, 1996	Presentation: "The Role of NGOs in Cervical Cancer Screening"
C'bean Broadcasting Corporation Programme "Poverty Eradication and Women"	Barbados	October 14, 1996	Panelist
CALACS Conference York University	Canada	Oct. 31- Nov. 3, 1996	Presentation: "Women and Religion" "The Community as a Centre of Change"
Management Committee Meeting Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development	Trinidad & Tobago	November 25-26, 1996	Member
The Change Centre "Towards Change in Human and Social Relations"	Nevis	November 30, 1996	Presented Keynote Address
Seminar on "Gender and Family Relations", ISER, UWI	Jamaica	March 5-6, 1997	Presentation: "Why Women Mother"

Penal Reform International, "Alternatives to Custody"	Trinidad & Tobago	April 10 -11, 1997	Participant
Assembly- Caribbean Policy Development Centre	Barbados	April 12, 1997	Member
Annual General Meeting-Soroptomist Int. Bds	Barbados	April 23, 1997	Guest Speaker
Assembly, Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Economicas y Sociales	Panama City	May 2-3, 1997	Participant
Disaster Management Training, Caribbean People's Development Agency	Grenada	May 20-22, 1997	Participant
Management Committee, Caribbean Regional Gender Initiative, CRGI	Trinidad & Tobago	July 5, 1997	Member
Regional Workshop on Gender Training Evaluation	Trinidad & Tobago	July 1-4, 1997	Participant
"Gender Awareness Seminar" Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI	Jamaica	July 14-16, 1997	Participant
CARIPEDA Annual Development Workers' Course	Trinidad & Tobago	July 17-18, 1997	Taught module: "Developmental Theories, Issues and Strategies in the Caribbean"
International Symposium "The Caribbean Towards 2000" Creative Arts Centre, UWI	Trinidad & Tobago	August 4-7, 1997	Presented: "The Role of Religion in the Caribbean Education System: Intent and Impact

Management Meeting, Caribbean
Network for Integrated Rural Development

Trinidad & Tobago August 8, 1997 Member

**MEETINGS/CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY JEANETTE BELL - WAND
FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST 1996 - JULY 31, 1997**

Meeting/Conference	Place	Date	Status
CPDC General Assembly	Barbados	April 9-12, 1997	Participant
Sub-Committee Blind and Visually Impaired Women "Networking with Women's Organisations"	Barbados	April 22, 1997	Resource Person
Panel Discussion: Women's Contribution/ Involvement in the Fishing Industry	Barbados	June 24, 1997	Panellist
UNIFEM/BDDC Project Design Workshop	Barbados	June 25-26, 1997	Participant
ECLAC/UNIFEM/CARICOM Post-Beijing Follow-up Meeting	Guyana	August 6-8, 1997	Participant

