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BIBLIOTECA VENEZUELA
SEP 1999

Editorial

As in many other countries, national statistics in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) underestimate the quantity and quality of the contribution of the informal sector, particularly, that made by rural women producers. In agriculture in particular, this has led to policies, which tend to be less sensitive to the special needs of rural women producers. As a result, their ability to benefit from the social, economic and political opportunities, which emerge from the development process has been greatly reduced.

In recognition of this deficiency, IICA's Rural Development Programme in T&T has been working to strengthen the level of organisation among small-scale rural producers. More recently, in collaboration with national, regional and other international organizations these efforts have supported the establishment of a Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP). The main purpose of this network is to promote the economic, organizational and social well-being of its members, as well as to facilitate their full integration into mainstream economic activity.

The T&T NRWP forms part of a wider Hemispheric thrust by IICA, specifically targeted to rural women. This initiative was conceptualised at the Sixth Conference of the Wives of Heads of States and Governments of the Americas. The results of research on the situation of rural women producers in eighteen (18) Latin American and Caribbean countries, undertaken by the IDB, were also shared with the conference participants.

This issue chronicles the establishment of the national Network of the Rural Women Producers in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, two initiatives aimed at creating an enabling environment, which will foster the further development of the network are presented. These are the national-based efforts towards the development of a gender-sensitive agricultural extension methodology and an IICA-hemispheric business development programme for rural women. Highlights of the activities of rural women in Suriname are also featured.

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Addressing the Double Burden of Rural Women

Marlene Antoine,
Rural Development Specialist, IICA, Trinidad and Tobago

According to Mrs. Oma Panday, wife of the Honourable Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, "...our rural women, in addition to their traditional duties as homemakers, are also engaged in supporting their families through subsistence farming and petty trading of produce and haberdashery. Where these activities are carried out as part of a family enterprise, the work of women often goes unpaid". Mrs. Panday recognised that this cultural tradition has placed a heavy double burden on most women, particularly rural women who "...continue to sacrifice their own self-development, preferring instead to fulfill the honourable objective of promoting the well being of their families".

In agriculture, in particular, this situation has resulted in a large proportion of rural women being viewed as uneconomic subsistence or backyard gardeners. In fact, a survey of 129 small-scale, female producers in T&T revealed that most respondents (36%) were typical backyard gardeners. These were described as *part-time producers* who worked approximately four hours a day, staggering or interrupting their working hours to complement household duties. The survey also revealed three other categories of small-scale rural



The double burden

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women producers:

- **seasonal producers** (22%) working on seasonal crops and in some cases spending most of the day in the field during peak periods such as harvest time in rice and sugar cane;
- **full-time producers** (17%) working six to eight hours a day. Of the full-time producers 68% received an income from the sale of produce while 32% engaged in production for home use;
- **occasional producers** (9%) who assisted on family plots which were situated some distance away from the home.

The other Sixteen percent were not actively engaged in agriculture at the time of the survey.

According to a review compiled by the secretariat *Pro Tempore* of the Conference of Wives of Heads of State and Government of the Americas in 1987, the large number of women producers in Latin America and the Caribbean contributes on average 20% of the Agricultural Sector GDP. They work approximately 14-18 hours a day, generating between 38%-66% of monetary and non-monetary family income.

In Trinidad and Tobago the average monthly earnings of employed women are estimated to be between TT \$300 - \$400 lower than that of their male counterpart. It is because of the extreme informal nature of small scale rural producers, that national statistics in Trinidad and Tobago have traditionally underestimated the economic role of women in general, and in agricultural production, in particular.



Ms. Panday, patron of the NRWP, gets a first hand look at the products produced by participants/members.

Mrs. Panday is a strong advocate for reducing the gender biases that have undervalued women's work over the years. She called for the removal of the constraints that prevent rural women producers from participating freely and equally in mainstream economic activities. These constraints are worsened by social and cultural factors, which:

- force women into the 'Unpaid Worker' category, including unpaid family labour, compared to men, women tend to dominate the 'Own Account' and 'Learner/Apprentice' categories;
- negatively impact their access to technical education and meaningful participation in training programmes, as well as access to support services, including technology transfer and credit needed to enhance their productivity or level of participation in agriculturally related businesses;
- deny rural women control of the most important factor of production in agriculture - land. The pattern of land ownership indicates that less than one quarter of the private land holders are female; and
- lead to the under representation of women in decision-making at the community and national level on issues affecting their lives.

To be productive, small-scale women producers should use time saving farm equipment and tools (eg. knap sack sprayers). In many instances, the design of these equipment and tools do not facilitate easy use by women. As a result, they are forced to either revert to manual techniques, which are time consuming and less efficient, or to depend on a male partner to undertake such tasks. In cases where the male partner is absent, they are forced to hire labour, which further reduces their income.

For all the above reasons, small-scale rural women producers, whether they are engaged in subsistence farming and petty trading of produce, or haberdashery activities, continue to be economically disadvantaged. However, despite the difficulties encountered and the lack of support services, many of these women have displayed great resilience and continue to persevere, often, against the odds. This resilience may be linked to the fact that the income earned from their small scale activities is absolutely vital to the well-being of their families and of the communities in which they live.

Finding the Missing Link

In contrast to the formal sector, which has seen the development and growth of business and professional women's associations, such as, the Caribbean Association of Women Entrepreneurs,

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there exists no such level of organisation among small-scale women producers in the informal sector. Hence the missing link. Groups of women and individuals in the informal rural sector, especially young women interested in starting a business, have little access to information and developmental support that would facilitate their integration into the formal business community.

This was one of the realities that IICA's Rural Development Programme in Trinidad and Tobago encountered in its efforts to improve the well-being, of small-scale rural producers. Over the years, IICA has been assisting a number of small farmers' groups to develop their value-added activities, organisational and business skills. Such assistance, usually, has taken the form of training; the transfer of appropriate technology, and enhancing access to credit. Improving the well-being of small-scale rural producers was considered integral to the goal of achieving a competitive and equitable agricultural sector. The experiences with such groups and individuals have strengthened IICA's resolve to create widespread awareness of the need explicitly to recognise the specific requirements of small-scale, female producers.

To this end, IICA has identified the need for specialized attention for women involved in the agriculture sector. Dr. Arlington Chesney, IICA Director, for the Caribbean region noted that "...they (rural women producers), *must also have a certain critical minimum mass to benefit from economies of scale and to have a voice that can be heard*" and must be capable "...of serving the needs of rural women producers". It was in recognition of this missing link, that IICA conceptualised and promoted the establishment of a **Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP)** in Trinidad and Tobago.

From Individuals to a Network of Producers: Step-by-Step

Defining the Strategy

The provision of support to a network, or association, rather than to individual producers, was seen as the most appropriate strategy for enhancing the participation of small-scale female producers in the rural and economic development process. The strategy also emphasised value-added and market-led activities as a means of increasing net incomes and improving well-being in rural areas. It is envisaged, that through the development of this network, small scale rural women producers will:

- (a) become competitive in all markets, including their own;
- (b) be able to adequately respond to the challenges and opportunities emerging from globalisation and trade liberalisation, and
- (c) be able to understand and be part of the ongoing information revolution.

Building Consensus

To bring this concept to a reality, in October 1997, the IICA T&T Rural Development Programme engaged in consultations with a number of women's groups, public sector institutions and non-governmental rural development workers. The objective of the meetings was to exchange experiences and develop a collaborative strategy of intervention aimed at enhancing the socio-economic conditions of rural women. The organizations represented at the initial meeting were:

- The Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)
- Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institutes
- Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago
- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, Trinidad and Tobago
- Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago
- Agricultural Development Bank
- Women Working for Progress
- Goldsborough Women's Group
- Paramin Women's Group
- Rose Foundation
- Small Business Development Corporation
- San Francique Sport, Education and Cultural Council

The outcome of this first collaborative meeting was the establishment of a Steering Committee with the specific responsibility of developing the terms of reference (TOR) and the draft constitution for the proposed female producers network. Subsequent meetings of the Steering Committee were spearheaded by IICA in order to finalise the TOR and Draft Constitution. Once this process was completed, the formal registration of members was initiated.

Defining the NRWP

The Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP) aims to achieve institutional strengthening, empowerment and advocacy for its members. The Network encourages participation of all female rural producers, with special emphasis on small-scale producers involved in agriculture and related industries, including processing and handicraft. It seeks to include all female producers and small entrepreneurs in the rural areas, particularly those interested in transforming their small-scale operation into a profitable business and those interested in promoting the well-being of female producers. Membership will be free during the inaugural phase of the Network.

The economic, organisational and social well-being of its direct beneficiaries and participating communities will be

Addressing the Double Burden of Rural Women cont'd



Hon. Reeza Mohammed addressing the official launch of the Network of Rural Women Producers

enhanced through:

- the establishment and maintenance of a data base on small scale rural producers
- the establishment and administration of a revolving credit scheme
- the establishment of a "clearing house" for the marketing of selected products produced by women, under a common label
- the identification and dissemination of market information
- the facilitation of communication links among national and regional groups and institutions
- the facilitation of access to training, outreach services and to appropriate research and development

It is anticipated that achievement of all the above will contribute significantly to the attainment of sustainable economic development, social well-being and the management of natural resources. In the initial developmental stages, IICA will serve as the Secretariat. IICA's main role, however, will be to provide technical and administrative support and to initiate the establishment of the proposed credit facility.

Drafting the Constitution

A crucial component of the process of establishing the Network was the series of public meetings which were held among community groups and individuals throughout the country, specifically:

- Point Fortin (encompassing Rancho Quemado, Palo Seco, Guapo and La Brea)
- Penal (San Francique and St. Mary's Village, Moruga)
- Guaracara (Maculay, Union village and Tortuga)
- Sangre Grande (St. Andrew County including Coal Mine, Brooklyn Village, El Reposo,

Caigual/Manzanilla, Valencia, La Guira and Matelot)

- Plum Mitán/Biche
- Bacolet (Scarborough, Mt. St. George, Moriah, Rockley Vale and Carnbee)
- Belle Garden (Goodwood, Glamorgan, Studley Park and Roxborough).

These meetings were held mainly to disseminate and validate the Terms of Reference and the Constitution for the proposed network. Contacts was established with the Federation of Women's Institutes, the Ministry of Community Development and the Extension Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, in addition to media advertisements to ensure widespread participation. Once the proposals were validated by the consensus, then the formal registration process was initiated.

The Launching



A cross-section of the attentive audience at the launch

The Network of Rural Women Producers was officially launched on October, 21 1998 at the Holiday Inn, Port of Spain, Trinidad. On that occasion, the Network was endorsed by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, the Director of the Women's Bureau, Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs and Mrs. Oma Panday, patron of the Network.

Executive Council Elections

In November, 1998 a meeting was held in Scarborough, Tobago to elect a representative from Tobago on the Executive Council. The meeting agreed that Tobago would be represented by two persons who would alternate attendance at the Executive Council meetings. The elected Executive Council includes members, as well as individuals and

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Members of the Network engaged in deliberations at the first General Meeting of the NRWP

institutions that have linkages with rural women. The thirteen persons who were elected to serve on the Executive Council are as follows:

•Coordinator	Folade Mutota	Development Worker, Women Working for Progress.
•Vice Coordinator	Nerle Roberston	Director, CNIRD
•Secretary	Marlene Antoine	IICA
•Finance Officer	Ayesha De Leon	Agricultural Development Bank
•Education Officer	Gia Gaspard-Taylor	Development Worker, Freelance
•Communication Officer	Susan GrangerTyler	Price Waterhouse and Coopers Farmer
•Research Officer	Petra Gomez	Farmer
•Social Affairs Officer	Rose Rajbansee	Farmer
•Outreach Officer	Sonia Hannibal	Secretary, Agricultural Society of Trinidad & Tobago
•Tobago Representatives	Helena Boucher	Agro Processor
	Anata Toussaint	Agro Processor
•Recording Secretary	Tricia De Gannes	IICA
•Trustee	Angela Gallai	Farmer
•Trustee	Veronica Romany	Agro processor

First General Meeting of the Network of Rural Women Producers

On December 8, 1998 the First General Meeting of the Network of Rural Women Producers was convened. Dr. Carlos Aquino, Director General of IICA, Dr. H. Arlington D. Chesney, Director Caribbean Regional Centre and Representative in Trinidad and Tobago and Mrs. Oma Panday, spouse of the Prime Minister, were in attendance at the meeting.

At this meeting, Dr. Carlos Aquino shared with the participants IICA's response "...to the needs of rural women by undertaking a number of

initiatives, including the development of a (hemispheric) programme to strengthen the integration of rural women into production and business chains". The establishment of national committees, comprising the wife of the head of state and public and private sector representatives, will seek to enhance the participation of rural women's institutions and organisations and raise awareness of gender issues. According to Dr. Aquino "...IICA will continue to actively support the Network during its embryonic and adolescent stages to become self-reliant and sustainable."

The participants at the First General Meeting highlighted their aspirations for the Network and proceeded to develop an outline for a programme of work for 1999. To this end, January 12, 1999 was scheduled as the date for the First

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Ms Panday engages the attention of (from L to R) Dr Carlos Aquino, IICA's Director General, Ms Sonia Hannibal, Network member and Dr H. Arlington D. Chesney, Director, CaRC and Rep in Trinidad & Tobago

Initiatives Toward the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Small-Scale Female Producers

Marlene Antoine,

Rural Development Specialist, IICA, Trinidad and Tobago

Increased Gender-Sensitivity in Agricultural Extension

Background

Based on investigations undertaken by the Extension Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) of Trinidad and Tobago, it was revealed that female producers were not receiving enough attention by the Division, and that generally, fewer women on average, participated in agricultural extension programmes. This situation may have resulted partially from the lack of an explicit policy aimed at increasing the participation of women in the development process. In this regard, there was consensus that a gender sensitive agricultural extension approach was required in order to redress the situation.

Over the past 20 years, there have been numerous developmental projects targeting rural women, which provided training in traditional, female skills (such as sewing, cooking and child care). Within recent times, these projects have included credit programmes for micro-entrepreneurs and income-generating activities. However, integrated interventions to develop and provide agricultural technologies, credit, extension services and the redistribution of land in favour of women or rural development schemes designed to increase the demand for women's paid labour in terms of the development of value-added activities, were notably absent.

It is accepted that any approach to balanced development, including a gender-based approach, should be multi-faceted and multi-sectoral, which explicitly recognises and appreciates the value of women's work. Within the agricultural sector, balanced development may be facilitated through the adoption of a gender sensitive extension methodology. This gender sensitive agricultural extension methodology is two-fold: on the one hand, it trains the extension officer in

gender awareness and gender analysis, which will facilitate the effective design and delivery of assistance; and on the other hand, it provides technical cooperation services specifically designed to meet the needs of rural women producers.

Methodology for Developing a Gender-Sensitive Agricultural Extension Approach

Given the gender-related constraints faced by women producers, gender sensitive activities are designed to improve the productive potential of the target beneficiaries. Antrobus and Bell (1990) have noted that "...working with rural women to empower them with the skills, consciousness, confidence and access to resources was a more effective way..." to impact upon the target group "than working to sensitise extension staff". However, they added that "it was still necessary to work at both levels - with women, as well as, with the staff of the Ministries". Accordingly, the following areas may be regarded as a general framework for defining a gender-sensitive extension approach:

- increasing women's participation in the formal and informal labour force and expanding women's options in agriculture through training and the development of income generating, micro projects;
- providing financial services to women to enhance access to productive resources such as high to medium level assets;
- improving the delivery of appropriate extension messages to women as separate clientele; and
- training in gender analysis and methodology.

These were the guiding principles which formed the basis for developing IICA's national project on "Enhancing the Participation of Women in the Rural Development Process in Trinidad and Tobago through Institutional Strengthening". This project, initiated in

The vision for small scale, female producers is that they will become empowered through technical, managerial and gender training within a framework of supportive, gender-sensitive action, the application of appropriate research and extension and the stimulation of new marketing opportunities. The aim is for agricultural extension to enhance the participation of women in the adoption and use of technology and in the processing and marketing of agricultural products

1992, aimed to improve the quality of life of the rural families, with specific reference to women. Identification of the opportunities and constraints facing female, small-scale agricultural producers was undertaken using a gender approach.

Primary Beneficiaries

The project's beneficiaries comprised members of the following groups:

1. Paramin Women's Group
2. St. Helena/Matlot Women's Group
3. St. Mary's Creative Women's Group
4. San Francique Sports, Educational and Cultural Council Ladies Group (SANSECC)
5. Shiv Harijan Women's Group
6. Women In Rice (WINRE)
7. Southern Women Cooperative

Each group was treated as an individual unit within the overall project and the field activities were designed to suit the expressed needs of the members. However, taken as a discrete activity, the overall work programme of the project comprised:

- needs assessments
- participatory design of income generating micro-projects and scheduling of training events
- training in the areas of small

Initiatives cont'd

- business management, food preservation, agronomy,
- training in gender analysis
- development of pre-feasibility studies
- improving access to finance
- contracting short-term specialists to facilitate the groups activities
- organisational strengthening of groups

Secondary Beneficiaries

Staff at the various levels of the Extension Training and Information Services division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources were sensitised, through workshops, to the importance of analysing their programmes and policies within a gender framework. These workshops introduced the basic concepts of Gender Analysis and demonstrated the utilization of an Analytical Framework. The historical and contemporary roles of Women in Agriculture and methodological tools aimed at reaching women were also covered. Field exercises followed the workshops particularly in the counties of St. Patrick and Victoria, South Trinidad.

Evaluation

An impact assessment surveyed the primary beneficiaries to determine whether the introduction of women-focussed, extension activities impacted positively and significantly upon the project beneficiaries. Chi-square tests of the population distributions were conducted. The quantitative indicators for the evaluation were changes in the levels of income, saving and level of participation in group activities and in extension programmes. The qualitative indicators were, the development of a sense of community spirit, the acquisition of practical skills and the building of self confidence among the primary beneficiaries.

Major Findings

Income

Skills acquired through the project modestly increased weekly saving (under \$100) among 47% of the participants, and also accounted for

increased individual income among 20%. As a result of group activities, 14% recorded increases in income. The aggregate income from group activity tended to be re-invested in the group which was reflected in an increased ownership of capital assets.

Group Activity

Individual attendance, frequency of group meetings and average weekly hours spent on group activities were increased, while individual's participation and awareness of extension activities also increased.

Qualitative Assessment

Fifty-two percent of the participants noted that they felt that they had achieved their objectives with respect to the development of the groups. Forty-two percent identified 'increased skills' as one of the major benefits. Thirty-two percent reported that they had developed a 'sense of community spirit' while 26% reported 'increased self-confidence'. The training component in Food Preservation was identified by 59% as the most useful with 76 percent reporting that they would utilize the skills they acquired.

The Gender Sensitive Agricultural Extension Methodology (GSAEM) embodied within the project combined Women in Development (WID) activities in the field and a Gender and Development (GAD) approach at the institutional level within the Ministry. As such, these women-focussed activities differed from the strictly welfare approach since it promoted commercialisation and built upon the training needs as identified by the beneficiaries.

Policy Guidelines

The policy guidelines put forward by the project were that the Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources should:

- valorise the contribution of female producers;
- improve the extension delivery service by refocusing emphasis away from primary production and the promotion of labour-intensive activities to that of

labour-saving, agro-industrial technologies appropriate to rural women;

- develop educational training materials on subject matters that are demanded by women and the introduction of technical subject matter which is suited to the educational background and circumstances of the participants. In addition, this should involve the utilisation of training locations near to the households; training sessions of short (1-2hours) duration, well timed to fit the scheduled of daily household chores;
- emphasize market development of products associated with women and small-scale producers;
- provide information on a wide range of outreach services, such as, transport and child care facilities, with Community Based Organizations (CBO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and other governmental and agencies;
- promote improved farm efficiency and income by encouraging entrepreneurship;
- actively encourage women to apply for land and credit; and
- stimulate dialogue on social issues

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Women key to the Traditional Subsistence Farming and Household Food Security in Suriname's Hinterland

George Buckmire,
IICA Representative (a.i.), Suriname

Introduction

Suriname, situated at the North Eastern front of South America is a country of 163,000 Km² and a population estimated in 1992 at 400,000. The hinterland is the traditional home of two distinct ethnic groups, the Afro-Surinamese (historically and commonly referred to as the Bush Negro or Maroon) and the indigenous Amerindians comprising a population of approximately 40,000 - Afro-Surinamese 33,500 and Amerindians 6,500.

Considering the physical geography of Suriname, the hinterland defines the east, largely forested and sparsely populated region of the country, south of the 5° latitude and occupying over 134 million hectares or approximately 80 percent of the total land mass. The hinterland is often used to define the collection of the various village-communities occupied by the indigenous peoples, specifically Amerindians and Afro-Surinamese. In-so-far as a number of these communities, occupied especially by Amerindians, are located in the coastal area, such communities are usually included in the collective hinterland community definition.

Land Tenure

The Maroon (Bush Negro) is a matriarchal society that provides a woman on becoming married with a plot of land (goon). Land is communally owned and a married woman is given land use rights by the family for cultivation. Typically a married woman cultivates a small plot of land less than 0.25 ha. However, due to the poor soil and fragile environmental conditions she has to abandon the plot, shifting to another, thus engaging in shifting cultivation which often involves simultaneous cultivation of several plots.

Farming System

In the Upper Suriname River Community, rice is the most important staple crop consumed by all families, supplemented with cassava, banana (plantain) and tania (taya). The upland rice is traditionally sown by broadcasting which necessitates the burning of land, freeing it from all small branches, leaves and other weeds; the larger partially burnt tree trunks and branches remain scattered over the plot when the rice seeds are broadcast. Cutting of the primary or secondary forestland is done with the use of an axe

(matjaw) or matchette (ofangi), although progressively chainsaws are used in some village-communities. This task is carried out during the dry season, in preparation for the planting season at the commencement of the rains. The fallen trees are left *in situ* where they are burnt.

Burning the cleared vegetation on these generally poor, sandy soil provides some nutrients mainly, residual phosphates. However, there is very little lasting benefit from burning and following one or at most two rice crops the farmers are forced to move to another "plot of ground", either a new piece of forested land or one that had been previously planted and abandoned or rested for varying periods of time, commonly between 6 and 10 years. As a result of increasing population and demand for land, the rest period is becoming shorter. Women also rely on their spouses to clear farmland and in the absence of the men, the same plot of land must be cultivated repeatedly with diminishing productivity.

Household Food Security

The high level of out migration of men from the village-communities to the urban centres in search of employment results in the woman becoming the principal family provider. In the absence of other employment opportunities she relies on farming to feed the family. In undertaking the task of food production the size of the plot and the crops cultivated are strongly influenced by the size of the family and its food requirements. The environment provides few opportunities for income generation and consumer spending or market



Women in the Upper Suriname River Community engaged in crop production

Women key to the Traditional Subsistence Farming cont'd



Women of the interior preparing traditional foods

opportunities which further discourage surplus production and contribute to persisting subsistent, agricultural economy.

The pattern of subsistence, and shifting cultivation is repeated year after year but the women are reasonably assured of producing some rice and other food crops, however insufficient, to satisfy the needs of their families. This is a responsibility, which the women assume with extreme seriousness. In a sample survey of farmers they all reported that they had no information or experience with alternative production practices. In spite of declining yields, due to the deteriorating soil conditions and other factors there is certain reluctance to adopt new practices, which evidently the farmers associate with a great degree of risk. This view is reinforced because the few men who are farming show a greater willingness to experiment with new crops and a new system, encouraged no doubt by the fact that they do not have the primary responsibility of feeding the family.

IICA's Intervention

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has been working for the past four years with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Moravian Church and other national counterparts, to assist the Maroon farmers in the Upper Suriname River Basin to improve production practices to meet family food requirements. Considering the deeply rooted cultural traditions and practices, the environmental constraints and the absence of most supporting services, an integrated community development approach has

been adopted which is proving to be reasonably effective.

At the commencement of the project's intervention in the hinterland, attention was given to assisting farmers, generally and traditional women in particular, to improve family food production. This was a priority request from all the village communities. In view of the almost exclusive concentration on the production of starchy food crops - rice, cassava, tania and banana, the project incorporated selected legumes, peas and beans and to a lesser extent vegetables, into the cropping system in order to promote a greater level of nutritional adequacy. The introduction of legumes was also aimed at improving the soil conditions and

contributing to more sustainable farming. It should be noted that it was the intention of the project during this initial phase to concentrate on traditional crops and not to introduce too many new crops.

The project also set itself two other important goals with respect to the agricultural component;

(a) to identify and select a few crops with market potential, considering in the short term, the production and marketing constraints, and (b) to carefully consider and introduce cropping systems which were compatible with the environment and farming practices.

With respect to marketing, the project has successfully been able to select a few crops with profitable market potential including peanut, ginger, cowpea, cush cush (napi) tania (taya) and plantain. The production of the crops has been incorporated in three models being tested and promoted by the project as follows:

- a) Plot rotation, which is the traditional model used by all farmers;
- b) Crop rotation; and
- c) Agro-forestry

The Crop rotation and agro-forestry models represent innovative cropping systems over the traditional plot rotation model used by farmers. Interestingly, the Agro-forestry model is the model receiving the greatest attention, particularly

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Business Development Programme for Rural Women

IICA Directorate,
Sustainable Rural Development.

The Business Development Programme for Rural Women is an initiative of the Sixth Conference of the Wives of Heads of States and Government of the Americas and is now being developed at the Hemispheric level by IICA.

The programme, is popularly referred to as PADEMUR (which refers to the Spanish acronyms *Programa para el Desarrollo Empresarial de las Mujeres Rurales*) promotes and supports efforts to improve the living conditions of women in the sustainable rural development process in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its objectives are:

- to strengthen organizations dedicated to providing services to rural women, using the gender approach; and
- to develop political, social and economic leadership skills in rural women.

The main components are :

- Human development and business management training through the coordination of policies and discussion fora, organizational strengthening and the promotion of women production-business chains;
- Establishment of a Rural Businesswomen's Fund (FERURAL)
- Establishment of a Technical Cooperation Fund (UNIDAS)

In addition, PADEMUR allows for the promotion of National Committees. These national committees will comprise the First Lady, the Minister of Agriculture and representatives of the private sector particularly, women producers. The National Committee will be:

- responsible for managing the project at the local level. IICA will provide cooperation and technical assistance to the national committees;
- the mechanism through which local proposals aimed at improving the living conditions of women and the integration of women into business will be channeled to the PADEMUR Funds.

Recently, IICA announced the receipt of a donation of US\$2.23 million to the UNIDAS Fund to support the hemispheric, regional and national initiatives of the Business Development Programme for Rural Women.

In keeping with the design of the PADEMUR Project and as part of the regional programme of activities, the establishment of a Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers would be given priority during 1999.

Our activities would therefore aim at the formation of a national networks and a PADEMUR Committees with each member country, to operate any funds received from the PADEMUR project that could be used to benefit women producers. ❖

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Executive Council Meeting. The main outcome of that meeting was to finalise the Network's 1999 work programme. It is expected that the development of a database on small-scale rural female producers, the identification and accessing of resources for the establishment of the revolving credit scheme and a schedule leading up to the meeting of the First Ladies of the Caribbean in June, 1999, will be priority areas for action.

Outlook for the NRWP

It is anticipated that the further development of the Network will make considerable strides in support of the objectives of the United National Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women. The T&T NRWP represents the first of many national networks to be developed in the Caribbean and will be the forerunner to the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers. ❖

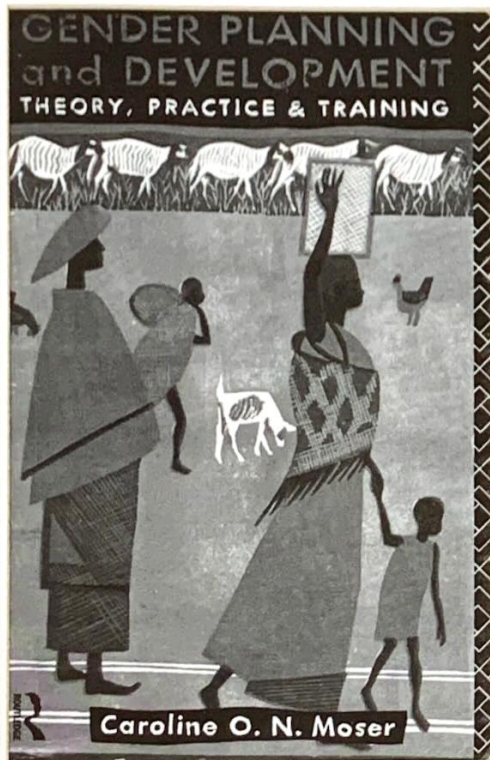
"The full and complete development of the world and the cause of peace requires the maximum participation of women as well as men in all fields"

United Nations Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women.

The Editor-in-Chief welcomes articles, news updates, book reviews and comments for publication in the Economic Policy and Sustainable Rural Development Newsletter.

Gender Planning and Development

Gender planning is a new tradition whose goal is to ensure that women, through empowering themselves, achieve equality and equity with men in developing societies. *Gender Planning and Development* focuses on the interrelationship between gender and development, the formulation of gender policy and the implementation of gender planning practice. Its importance relates to the fact that current development policy, because of incorrect assumptions, often, if inadvertently, discriminates against or 'misses' women, while even correctly formulated policy too often fails to get translated into practice. Further information can be found in Moser, C. O. N. (1993), *Gender Planning and Development - Theory, Practice and Training*, New York, Routledge.



If you have the answers to the following questions please write to us.

Why has it been so easy for environmental planning to gain identity as a separate planning tradition, and yet so difficult for the 'women in development' approach? Why do the proliferating numbers of policies and plans of action for women still only too frequently fail to be translated into practice? Why are Women's Ministries so effectively excluded from the national planning process and marginalized in terms of resource allocation?

International Economic Conference to be held in Trinidad and Tobago

The Sixth International Conference of ALACEA - The Latin American & Caribbean Association of Agricultural Economics will take place from June 30th to July 2nd in Trinidad and Tobago at the Trinidad Hilton.

ALACEA was formed in Mexico in July of 1987 with the intention of assembling professionals interested in economic problems, challenges and opportunities for agriculture. The main objectives of the association are:

- Facilitating of proposals on strategies and policies for the promotion of agricultural development
- Providing incentives for the professional development and academic growth in agricultural economics
- Stimulating the formation of national organizations in agricultural economics in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Facilitating the exchange of information amongst the membership countries

Since its formation ALACEA has organized five (5) international conferences which were held in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, and Costa Rica respectively. The theme of ALACEA's 1999 conference is the "Rural Development Challenges in the next Century". The conference will comprise Plenary Sessions - Presentations of Papers and Discussion, Cocktail Reception, a Field Trip and the Business Meeting of ALACEA.

The conference is being organized by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. In conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Participants are expected from more than twenty-five countries including Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States of America, and Europe. For further information please contact, urgently:

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Women key to the Traditional Subsistence Farming cont'd

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among the male farmers involved in the project, although it involves the most significant changes from traditional farming practices. As noted earlier, it is observed that male farmers are less constrained by the responsibility of feeding the family and therefore are more willing to adopt new practices, which are perceived by the women farmers to involve considerable risk. The participation of men in the production process is also highly motivated by the desire to earn an income.

A logical step to the diversification of the crop production base and improved practices has been to inform the women on improved and alternative ways to prepare the basic food crops and the less familiar grain legumes in order to improve the nutritional food value.

To this end, training has been provided to the village women in food preparation, sanitation, preservation, processing and family nutrition. This has been very successful as demonstrated by the range and quality of prepared "food" exhibits during the annual Agricultural Food and Handicraft Fair, organized by the Project.

Perhaps the most significant initiative undertaken by the project in collaboration with the Moravian Church

Community Development Unit, has been the introduction of a farm produce marketing service in July, 1998. This service was opportunely introduced with the aim of providing an organized and reliable marketing arrangement for the increasing production of selected farm produce and to serve as an incentive for the adoption of improved farming practices to contribute to family earnings. Initially the project has been providing technical and financial support to women's groups in the participating village-communities in the organization and management of the service but the ultimate goal is to create an Upper Suriname Women's Marketing Service to be operated and managed by the women.

In the execution of the project for the hinterland village-communities the most difficult challenge has been to induce changes from the traditional and often inefficient practices to more informed and

"improved" systems and practices. The practical lessons of four years of experiences in the village-communities underscore the real difficulties in bringing about this transition. Project experiences suggest the need in the first instance to establish confidence and acceptability within the communities, reliability, relevance and a practical approach by the project multidisciplinary team in addressing the many complex and interrelating problems. ♦♦



Traditional land clearing in Suriname's Hinterland

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Caribbean Regional Centre (CaRC) is published to provide information and encourage discussion relevant to the promotion and development of the programmes, Policy Trade & Investment and Sustainable Rural Development, administered by the CaRC.

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Production:

Morton Publishing



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