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THE AGRICULTURAL TRADERS OF ST. VINCENT AND THE
GRENADINES, GRENADA, DOMINICA AND
ST. LUCIA

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Caribbean. The views expressed in this work are the sole
responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with
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Preface

Background of the research on the inter-island trade in the Caribbean

The Women in Development Unit (WID) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) - Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, initiated studies on women traders¹ in the Caribbean in 1984. The project is regarded as a priority in the work programme approved by the member governments of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) at its eighth session held in 1984 and further supported at the ninth, tenth and eleventh CDCC sessions in 1985, 1987 and 1988, respectively.

Initial research activities on the subject indicated that:

- (a) Women predominate in the sector of informal in (i) wearing apparel and light goods, commonly referred to as the suitcase trade; and (ii) fresh agricultural produce;
- (b) The economic contribution of the traders in the informal sector has been seriously underestimated as they are classified as self-employed and are not included in the statistics;
- (c) Traders engaged in the inter-island trade face serious problems;
- (d) There is a need to investigate further the situation of the inter-island traders in the Caribbean.

The possibility of studying these traders more thoroughly was found within the ECLAC/WID project: The Establishment of a Database on Selected Areas of Women's Participation in Social and Economic Development (Phase I and II). Within the scope of that project, specific data on the inter-island traders were collected in Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, the Leeward Islands, Haiti and Curaçao. The main activities in 1989 were: (a) the implementation of a regional socio-economic survey on the inter-island traders in the Caribbean; and (b) collection of statistical data on trends in the inter-island trade in fresh agricultural produce in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Dominica.

¹ Also known as *traffickers* or *speculators* in Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines, *hucksters* in Dominica, *higglers* in Jamaica and *Madam Sara* in Haiti.

The long-term objectives of the project were:

(a) To highlight the participation and contribution of female inter-island traders in the Caribbean to national and regional economic development; and

(b) To formulate and strengthen programmes and policies oriented towards improvement of the position of the female inter-island traders in the informal sector.

The immediate objectives were:

(a) To provide a regional overview of the inter-island trade in the Caribbean;

(b) To gather information on the socio-economic characteristics of the inter-island traders and relate this to their trading practice; and

(c) To describe the main problems of the traders with reference to those of child-care.

The report in this document concerns only the outcome of the survey and research on the hucksters from Dominica trading in St Martin, those from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada trading in Trinidad and Tobago, and those of St Lucia trading in Barbados.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Methodology

1. The survey among the hucksters

The survey (see appendix I) focused on the inter-island traders in agricultural produce - the so-called traffickers or hucksters - of St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada travelling to Trinidad and Tobago, of St Lucia travelling to Barbados and of Dominica travelling to St Martin. The majority of the traders purchase, export, import and market the produce themselves. They collect their produce - fresh fruits, vegetables and ground provisions - at specific collection points in their home country and transport the produce in trucks to the port where it is shipped. The traders travel by boat or plane to the neighbouring islands and collect their pre-shipped goods for marketing at their destination.

For the purpose of the research, the inter-island traders have been defined as individuals who operate in the informal sector and who purchase merchandise in one country, co-ordinate its transportation and travel to sell in another country.

The informal sector comprises all non-registered, commercial and non-commercial enterprises or activities without formal structure, which are generally family-owned, small-scale and heavily reliant on indigenous resources.

2. Methods and techniques of research

The survey executed was a sample survey: "The collection of data from a defined population by recording appropriate information about some members of that population".² Data were collected by interviewers with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of a sequence of open and closed questions (see appendix I).

Interviews were conducted in the overseas markets of the traders in order to exclude those who do not travel overseas.

During the months of March and May 1989, a total of 53 Dominican traders (43 females and 10 males) who market produce in St Martin and who agreed to co-operate were interviewed at the Marigot Market in St Martin. This location was selected although the Dominicans' main market is Guadeloupe, owing to the fact that logistically it was difficult to organize the survey in Guadeloupe and because Dominican traders trading with St Martin seemed to be the ones facing the most problems.

² D.J. Casley and D.A. Lury: Data Collection in Developing Countries New York, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 4).

The agricultural traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada export produce primarily to Trinidad and Tobago and to a lesser extent Barbados, Martinique, and St Martin. A total of 60 traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines (52 females and 8 males) and 59 traders from Grenada (39 females and 20 males) were interviewed in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, 20 female traders from St Lucia were interviewed in Barbados.

3. Statistical data collection

A database fusing all the available data on the huckster trade in fresh agricultural produce was developed.

Data on the trade in agricultural produce were collected for two months (January and February) over a period of three years - 1987, 1988 and 1989. This comprised the number of traders in the trade by name, sex, frequency of travel, quantities of produce exported in EC dollars and kilograms, name of the boat, ports of departure and arrival and if available, residence and age of the trader and membership in any traders' association.

Data were retrieved from secondary sources such as shipping bills, CARICOM certificates, phyto-sanitary certificates, traders licenses and records of traders' associations.

B. The Windward Islands

Dominica is the largest of the Windward Islands, situated between the French-governed islands of Guadeloupe to the north and Martinique to the south. It has an area of 750 square kilometres and a population of 77,700. In 1967, it acquired the status of State in association with the United Kingdom. Its principal agricultural exports are bananas, citrus and coconuts.

St Lucia is the second largest of the Windward Islands, with an area of 616 square kilometres and a population of 134,000 in mid-1984.³ It became independent in 1979. Its principal exports are bananas and coconut products.

St Vincent and the Grenadines has an area of 388 square kilometres and had a population of 113,900 in 1983.⁴ Associated statehood in 1967 was followed by independence in 1979. Its principal exports are bananas, arrowroot and vegetables.

³ World Bank (1985c:v).

⁴ World Bank (1985a:v).

Grenada is the smallest and the southernmost of the Windward Islands, with an area of 133 square kilometres and a population of 92,300 at the end of 1983.⁵ An United Kingdom Associated State in 1967, Grenada became independent in 1974. Its principal exports are cocoa, nutmeg, bananas, mace and fresh fruits.

C. Women's participation in the labour force

In recent decades, the creation of wage employment has not kept pace with the high rate of population growth.⁶ Under these conditions, the most disadvantaged sector of the population is comprised of older women with minimal formal education. The table below indicates that women from St Vincent and the Grenadines have the highest economic inactivity rate among 15 to 44-year olds of all four Windward Islands, while their male counterparts have the lowest rate of inactivity.

Table 1

Percentage distribution of economic inactivity
by country, age-group and sex

Age	St Lucia		Grenada		Dominica		St Vincent & the Grenadines	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
15-19	5.7	27.4	9.2	38.6	8.9	40.9	4.9	42.9
20-24	2.5	33.4	5.3	33.8	4.0	37.5	2.5	44.1
25-44	2.4	46.0	5.0	41.6	3.3	46.8	2.1	49.0
45-64	10.0	62.8	10.3	57.7	10.3	60.5	8.3	59.4
65+	49.3	86.4	45.7	86.6	52.8	86.6	45.3	87.9

Source: Preliminary analysis of the 1980 census data, tables C4.⁷

The proportion of women officially recorded as being part of the employed labour force is considerably lower than that of men. Female participation in the labour force is highest in the 20-24 age-group.

Dominica has the highest percentage of self-employed women: 22.9 per cent of the women in the labour force are working on their own account, compared with 18.5 per cent in St Lucia and 14.2 per cent in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

⁵ World Bank (1985b:v).

⁶ The rate of growth was 2.0 per cent from 1971 to 1983 (World Bank, 1985a:v).

⁷ UNECLAC (1988:4).

The overall majority of the female own-account workers are occupied in the agricultural sector without paid help. Commerce is the second main area where self-employed women are active.

While official statistics indicate a decline in the female agricultural labour force, according to one study women are well represented among unpaid agricultural workers.⁸ Another study noted trends in the Caribbean, whereby women are taking more responsibility for food and cash crops, and yet are being increasingly marginalized in rural areas of activity.⁹

In this context, it is often imperative for women with dependent children and little economic support to seek additional or alternative sources of income. The inter-island trade in agricultural produce has offered income-generating opportunities to some enterprising women.

D. Trade in agricultural produce within the Caribbean region

Trade in agricultural commodities among the Caribbean islands dates back to the pre-colonial period. It has continued to exist up to the present time with varying degrees of intensity.¹⁰

The latter part of the 1960s saw a rapid growth in inter-island trade. This was mainly due to government policies which promoted the establishment of regional integration schemes such as the Agricultural Marketing Protocol, the Guaranteed Market Scheme, the Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA) and the Customs Union which subsequently evolved into the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

By the end of the 1970s, however, the inter-island trade had experienced a drastic decline.¹¹ Among factors contributing to this decline, were:

⁸ Le Franc (1980).

⁹ Chaney (1983).

¹⁰ Sir Francis Watts, Report on the Agricultural Conditions of Dominica with recommendations for their amelioration, Bulletin Office, Dominica 1925, p. 18 quoted in UNECLAC Social Structural Changes in Dominica, 1984 (AHG/SEM/SSC/1).

¹¹ See Appendix II for information on the total exports to and imports from CARICOM countries in the period 1978-1987.

1. Problems in regional co-operation

The Agricultural Marketing Protocol (AMP) was introduced as a mechanism for facilitating intraregional trade in agricultural produce. The gains from thus liberalizing the trade were primarily beneficial to the more developed countries (MDCs).¹² However, the guaranteed minimum original price set by the AMP stimulated greater production in the MDCs, thereby further weakening the position of the least developed countries (LDCs).¹³ These policies had the effect of undermining regional co-operation - a situation further compounded by the unsettled political climate accompanying the new status of independence in the early 1980s of virtually all the Eastern Caribbean territories.

The AMP was abolished in July 1983 and recent agreements of 1988 among Caribbean countries aimed at eliminating intra-regional trade restrictions, are expected to reactivate Caribbean economic integration.

2. The economic crisis

The inflation that had begun in 1972, continued to accelerate and was compounded by the international energy crisis that saw a fourfold increase in the price of oil and a food crisis which resulted in a rapidly growing regional food-import bill. The LDCs were hardest hit: consumer and other import prices increased sharply, and primary exports were subject to the usual unstable conditions.¹⁴

3. The decrease in agrarian production

Higher wages in the extractive, industrial and tourist sectors as compared with the lower earnings in agro-industry, together with the traditional disdain for agricultural work, have led to a significant decrease in the total amount of land under cultivation and a movement of population away from farming areas.

The division of holdings by inheritance and the parcelling of lands have resulted in inefficient small-scale farming and limited land productivity; in Dominica natural disasters such as hurricanes have also influenced the level of agricultural production.

¹² The following countries are considered MDCs: Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados and the Bahamas.

¹³ The following countries are considered LDCs: Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize.

¹⁴ W. Andrew Axline, Agricultural Policy and Collective Self-Reliance in the Caribbean, Westview Press, Boulder, CO., 1986, pp. 33-34.

4. Increased international competition and loss of confidence in the national banking system.

International trading companies increased not only their exports of agricultural produce to the Caribbean region, but also their importation of agricultural produce from the region. Thus, the region's exports in agricultural produce were more and more directed to extraregional markets. This trend has often been set by commercial exporters from within the Caribbean region who see this means of gaining access to scarce foreign exchange as facilitating a variety of other business transactions. In other words, it is because of a lack of confidence in their own currency that business people seek to safeguard their capital and try to find ways to increase capital flow.

5. The development of traditional export crops

Historically, emphasis has been placed by governments on development of traditional primary agricultural crops such as bananas, coconuts, citrus, mangoes, cocoa, arrowroot and nutmeg, to the detriment of the small-farmer cultivated foodstuff, such as ground provisions, fruits and vegetables which constitute the prime export goods within the intraregional trade. Yet the majority of farm holdings in the Commonwealth Caribbean - 95 per cent of the three hundred and fifty thousand (350,000) farm holdings - are under 25 acres in size, representing less than 30 per cent of the total acreage of farms.¹⁵

E. The export of agricultural produce from the Windward Islands

In all four of the Windward Islands, agriculture is an important source of income, export earnings and employment. In Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Lucia, banana is the main export crop, whereas in Grenada cocoa is the leading export crop.

There are currently three major categories of exporters of agricultural produce in the Windward Islands: (1) marketing corporations of government; (2) private organizations or large individual exporters; and (3) small inter-island traders, also referred to as "hucksters" or "traffickers".

The market share of the Dominican hucksters has diminished in comparison to previous years. Prior to the upsurge of private organizations such as Farm to Market Ltd and the Caribbean Commodity Exchange, hucksters formed a major outlet for vegetables, fruits and ground provisions.

¹⁵ W. Andrew Axline, op cit., p. 51.

Prior to 1982 a substantial portion of St Vincent's crops that were destined for intraregional trade were handled by the St Vincent and the Grenadines Marketing Corporation (SVMC), which collected, bagged and shipped the produce as well as collected and distributed receipts. However, since 1982; SVMC has limited its operations to the domestic market, leaving the hucksters to dominate the intraregional trade. The traffickers' share of this trade has been estimated to be between 80 and 90 per cent.¹⁶

F. Women's participation in the inter-island trade in agricultural produce

The marketing of agricultural produce has traditionally been a female activity throughout the Caribbean region. Due to limited employment opportunities for women and their need to provide for their families, some enterprising women have entered the inter-island trade.

Several factors have facilitated the entry of women into this trade:¹⁷

(a) The availability of agricultural produce with no local markets;

(b) The relatively small capital investment required for entry into trade;

(c) The existence of established social networks among territories (caused by mass seasonal and permanent migration) which facilitate the traffickers' operations;

(d) Technological improvements in travelling facilities, such as motorized vessels and the introduction of air routes, which have reduced travel time and improved the safety of travel between island ports.

In St Vincent and the Grenadines, women's participation in the inter-island trade is a recent phenomenon. Men dominated the trade during the first half of the century, when trade was carried out on sailing vessels and male camaraderie was an important feature of the trade. The prohibition by the Trinidad and Tobago Government of passenger transport on the sailing vessels as well as declining returns in the 1960s led to the withdrawal of males from the trade in agricultural goods and the increase of female traders in this sector.¹⁸

¹⁶ Lagro (1988:6).

¹⁷ UNECLAC (1988:4).

¹⁸ Lagro (1988:8).

However, while male traders withdrew from the intraregional trade in ground provisions, they continued to dominate the more lucrative trade in livestock to Trinidad and Tobago and the extraregional trade in agricultural produce. Males who remained in the trade in agricultural produce became involved in the profitable reverse trade in electrical appliances.¹⁹

G. Means of transportation and overseas markets of the hucksters

Transportation for the marketing of the agricultural produce within the Caribbean region, is mostly by sea. The high costs of air freight militate against using air transport for short voyages.²⁰

Traditionally, traffickers accompany the cargo on the vessels to the ports of entry. For the most part, this practice persists among hucksters from Dominica and St Lucia. While a few hucksters from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada travel to Trinidad and Tobago on the transport boats as "crew", most are obliged to travel there by air, since the government of the latter country prohibited them from accompanying their produce by boat, for safety reasons.

As most of the cargo boats are ill-equipped for passenger transportation and lack sleeping facilities, some traders willingly incur the extra expense of passenger air-fares to their overseas markets.

Trader movements are restricted by the availability of ships, whose routes, in part, determine the markets of the traders.

The most important market of the Dominican hucksters is Guadeloupe. Other markets are Antigua and Barbuda, St Martin, Tortolla, St Christopher and Nevis, Montserrat, Martinique, Barbados, St Lucia, and St Thomas. From the research, it became clear that a small group of traders (13 in total) venture into Puerto Rico.

The most important markets of the traffickers of St Vincent and the Grenadines are Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. A small group of traders travel to Carriacou, Martinique and St Martin. In order to bypass customs, some traders take small vessels to Martinique from the Grenadines. They then return by boat to St Vincent and the Grenadines at the leeward side.²¹

¹⁹ Lagro (1988:8-9).

²⁰ A few persons - males - are able to charter airlines to the United States Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico.

²¹ Lagro (1988:9).

Since emphasis is placed on the extraregional export of agricultural produce, intraregional shipping links are less developed than extraregional links. Within the region, the West Indies Shipping Corporation (WISCO)²² serves Trinidad and Tobago, Miami, Jamaica and Barbados.

There is a gap left in the intraregional shipping route that schooners and other small ships are virtually duty-bound to fill. The CARICOM Inter-Island Shipping Survey, 1977 revealed that the small-vessel fleet was responsible for a minimum of 55 per cent of the inter-island sea-borne freight trade.

The small-vessel fleet consists of privately owned craft. The smallest, mostly wooden sloops, have a capacity of approximately 32 tons and the largest, mostly steel vessels, 200 tons. The latter are older and mostly bought second-hand.

Although all the schooners, small and large, are unsuitable for the transportation of fresh agricultural produce, conditions on the wooden vessels are the worst: ventilation is poor; there is no insulation of the engine compartment and no cargo-lifting equipment.

The badly maintained conditions of the boats, which result in frequent engine breakdowns and accidents, present tremendous problems to the hucksters. One major complaint of the hucksters is the dumping of their produce in the sea whenever the boat has a problem and the unreliability of departure and arrival times. Since the goods are not insured, loss of cargo owing to spoilage or dumping are not refunded to the huckster.

II. THE HUCKSTERS

A. Definition of a huckster

A huckster is generally a female entrepreneur who purchases agricultural produce in her own country and sells to another Caribbean country. Her business, which is not officially registered, employs simple technology and is organized and supervised solely by her. "Since I born, I never work for nobody" and "I am boss of myself" are phrases often heard when talking to hucksters.

When additional labour is needed, the huckster usually depends on family members or other forms of temporary labour, contracted under informal arrangements. The huckster makes use of the services of carriers, truck drivers, crate makers, brokers, shippers and other technical intermediaries, most of whom are male. The working

²² WISCO is owned by the governments of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean (CARICOM), but Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize have withdrawn from it.

relationships established to facilitate the activity are very personalized.

After purchasing and/or collecting her goods - mostly fruits, vegetables and ground provisions²³ from small farmers - the huckster ships them by boat to the country in which they are being marketed. The huckster²⁴ travels with her goods on the boat or journeys by air to sell her own produce overseas.

B. The size of the huckster population in the Windward Islands

The total number of traffickers in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St Lucia and Grenada was estimated at 1,264 in 1988.²⁵ There are indications that this estimate represents a considerable reduction from the trading population operating in earlier years. Figures on traders in Dominica reveal that their numbers declined from 1,089 in 1985 to 467 in 1986. Interviews conducted in St Vincent and the Grenadines suggest that a large number who had been trading prior to 1983 subsequently ceased to do so.

1. Dominica

Based on data collected from shipping bills,²⁶ we estimate the number of active²⁷ Dominican traders who regularly export agricultural produce as 195 in 1987. Their number rose during 1988 to 222 and declined by 46 per cent to 119 in 1989.

In addition to changes in the size of the trading population, there have been shifts in its sex ratios over time, especially if the port of departure - Portsmouth or Roseau - is taken into consideration.

²³ 'Ground provisions' refers to: tannia, dasheen, eddoes, yams, etc.

²⁴ There are hucksters who send produce overseas but do not travel themselves. This report focuses mostly on those who travel overseas as they are the ones facing most of the problems.

²⁵ ECLAC, Draft Report on Women Traders in St Vincent, 1988; ECLAC, Draft Report on Women Traders in Grenada, 1988; Hannah Clarendon, "Constructing a Data Base on Women Traders in Dominica," Consultant Paper, p.11, cited in ECLAC (1988:7).

²⁶ This was based on the shipping bills of January-February 1987, January-February 1988 and January-February 1989.

²⁷ Caution must be exercised here, as a trader who prepares a shipping bill may stay in Dominica and only ship the produce.

A closer look at the data reveals a decline particularly among male traders embarking at Roseau (see Table 2): 56 per cent of the hucksters trading from Roseau in 1987 were females and in 1989 this rose to 82 per cent. In Portsmouth 57 per cent of the traders were female in 1987 and 66 per cent in 1989.

Table 2

Number of active hucksters, by sex and port of departure for Jan./Feb. 1987-1989

	Roseau			Portsmouth			TOTAL
	F	M	U*	F	M	U	
1987	42	32	-	65	49	7	195
1988	39	22	1	105	53	2	222
1989	24	5	-	60	30	-	119

* Means "unknown" and refers to those traders whose sex was not mentioned in the shipping bill documents.

2. St Vincent and the Grenadines²⁸

The size of the trading population grew from about 30 in the 1940s to over 400 in the 1980s. However, in recent years, the number of traders appears to have declined as older traders who had been trafficking for many years have dropped out as younger traders and males are entering trade.²⁹ In 1987 there were at least 322 traders identified over a four-month period (Jan.- May 1987), leaving St Vincent and the Grenadines for Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados with agricultural produce.³⁰

3. The number of newcomers and drop-outs

The rate of entry of newcomers to the trade seems to be relatively low, as indicated by the ECLAC socio-economic survey carried out among 192 hucksters from all four of the Windward Islands. Only 36.5 per cent of all the hucksters who were interviewed had entered the trade less than five years before. However, the proportion of newcomers among the four groups of traders varied widely. The highest was among the traders

²⁸ Lagro (1988:9-10).

²⁹ Cuales and Lagro (1987:6).

³⁰ Information on the number of active and non-active traders was collected at the Excise and Customs Department, Ministry of Agriculture in St Vincent and the Grenadines, May 1987 (Lagro, 1988:10).

from Grenada, while the lowest was among those from St Lucia, 52.5 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. While less than a quarter of the Dominican hucksters trading with St Martin had entered trade during the previous four years,³¹ 38.3 per cent of those from St Vincent and the Grenadines had. Additional evidence for the low rate of entry into trade of the Dominicans is a decrease in the number people applying for a trader's licence.

Table 3

Percentage distribution of traders by home country
and number of years in trade

Years trade	Total	Traders by home country			
		St Vinc. & Grenadines	Grenada	Dominica	St. Lucia
0-4	38.3	52.5	24.5	15.0	36.5
5-9	33.3	25.4	20.8	45.0	28.6
10-14	13.3	8.5	32.1	20.0	17.7
15+	15.0	13.6	22.6	20.0	17.2
Total	100. (N=192)	100. (N=60)	100. (N=59)	100. (N=53)	100. (N=20)
Mean duration	8.3	6.3	10.6	10.9	8.6

C. Sex

Evidence from the shipping bills of the active Dominican traders indicates that women's participation in the trade is high and on the increase. While records of traders in St Vincent and the Grenadines do not indicate gender, the names of traders appearing in various documents indicate that approximately 70 per cent are women.³²

³¹ This must be considered as a preliminary outcome: The overseas market of St Martin is considered as yielding low profits, thereby attracting fewer newcomers. If the sample had consisted of Dominican hucksters trading with Guadeloupe, the percentage of newcomers might have been higher.

³² Shipping bills, phyto-sanitary certificates, lists of members of the Traffickers' Small Business Association and lists of traders attending meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture in St Vincent and the Grenadines (Lagro, 1988:11).

Table 4

Percentage of active Dominican traders, by sex,
Jan./Feb. 1987-1989

	Female	Male
1987	57%	43%
1988	66%	34%
1989	71%	29%

Female participation in the trade in agricultural goods from St Vincent and the Grenadines increased during the second half of this century, eclipsing the dominant role of men that prevailed during the first half. However, it has been observed that male traders are once more on the increase.

Table 5

Percentage distribution of traffickers included in survey
by home country and sex

	St Vincent & the Grenadines		Grenada		Dominica		St Lucia		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	52	86.7	39	66.1	43	81.1	20	100	154	80.2
Male	8	13.3	20	33.9	10	18.9	-	-	38	19.8
Total	60	100	59	100	53	100	20	100	192	100

The survey indicated that 62.5 per cent of the male traffickers entered the trade during the previous four years, whereas only 34.5 per cent of the females did. There are indications that some women work for male dealers who operate within the informal trade sector, since women are believed to pass through customs more easily than men.³³

The sample of 192 traders who were interviewed in the survey approximates the sex ratio of traders in the population: 80.2 per cent were female and 19.8 were male.³⁴ The general hypothesis that there has

³³ Cuales and Lagro (1987:6).

³⁴ The sample of the UNECLAC survey was taken at random: during the months of March and April in 1989 all the non-resident Dominican hucksters in St Martin, were checked at the Marigot market and, if they consented, interviewed.

been an influx of males into this sector was only partially confirmed by the survey data: while only 25.7 per cent of the hucksters who entered the trade in the previous four years were male, a greater percentage of the male traders were newcomers than among the females (47.4 per cent and 33.8 per cent, respectively).

D. Age

The survey indicated that nearly half (49.5 per cent) of the traders were between 31 and 46 years old, with 41 being the average age. Male traders tended to be younger than the females (average ages of 36.6 and 42.1, respectively).

Table 6

Percentage distribution traders by age and sex

Age	Female	Male	Total
21-30	16.9	34.2	20.3
31-46	50.0	47.4	49.5
46+	33.1	18.4	30.2
Total	100 (N=154)	100 (N=38)	100 (N=192)
Mean age	42.1	36.6	41.0

On the average, the traders from Grenada were the youngest and those from St Lucia the oldest (38.3 and 43.9 years old, respectively), with the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica between the two extremes with average ages of 41.0 and 41.5 years.

Table 7

Percentage distribution of traders
by home country and age

Age	St Vinc. & the Grenadines	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia
21-30	16.7	32.2	13.2	15.0
31-46	58.3	39.0	45.3	65.0
46+	25.0	28.8	41.5	20.0
Total	100.0 (N=60)	100.0 (N=59)	100.0 (N=53)	100.0 (N=20)

Of the total sample population, the male traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada tended to be the youngest, while the females from Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines tended to be the oldest.

Table 8

Mean ages of male and female traders
of the Windward Islands

Sex	St Vinc. & the Grenadines	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia
Females	42.0	39.9	44.7	41.5
Males	34.8	35.1	40.9	-
Total	41.0	38.3	43.9	41.5

An earlier study indicated that there has been a recent trend towards younger people entering trade.³⁵ The present survey indicated that the average age of newcomers to trade was 34.4 years. Male newcomers tended to be younger than females, with average ages of 32.2 and 35.2, respectively.

The visible success of female traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines during the oil boom in Trinidad and Tobago in the 1970s was instrumental in attracting mostly younger women into trade in the 1980s. These younger women replaced the older, more established female traders. The survey results appear to reflect this earlier trend, indicating that 63 per cent of the female traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines were between 31 and 46 years old. However, a more recent trend seems to be the entry of young men into the trade, as evidenced by the large proportion of men under 30 years old (62.5 per cent), compared to females (9.6 per cent).

Data collected from the Dominican hucksters' licences also indicated that the majority of the Dominican traders were in their twenties and forties, male and female traders alike. Only 19 per cent of the female licensees were over 40. After Hurricane David in 1979, younger people registered as traders.

³⁵ Lagro (1988:11).

Table 9

Number of Dominican traders by sex and age-group
in possession of a huckster's licence, 1987-1989

	>20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>61
Female	9	190	120	47	24	5
%	2	48	31	12	6	1
%	43	42	47	57	63	38
Male	12	258	136	36	14	8
%	3	55	29	8	3	2
%	57	58	53	43	37	62
Total	22	448	256	83	38	13
%	2.5	52.1	29.8	9.7	4.4	1.5

The Dominican hucksters trading with St Martin were much older than the average licenced trader in Dominica: there were no traders in the survey under the age of 20 and the oldest trader was 73; the average age of males was 41, while that of women was 45. The average age of newcomers in the trade was 38 - less than the average age of the hucksters trading with St Martin.

From the St Martin sample it appears that traders generally start trading at a certain age in their life cycle, mainly in their early thirties.

E. Educational background

The survey revealed that, for the group as a whole, the traders' level of education is basic. Of the 183 traders who responded to the question on educational background, most (85.7 per cent) claimed to have been exposed to formal education at primary level and 14.2 per cent at secondary level. None of the traders who responded claimed to have had any formal education. The male traders tended to have had more formal education than their female counterparts; 30.6 per cent had some secondary schooling, compared to only 10.2 per cent among the women.

The traders from Grenada tended to have had more formal education than those from the other islands: 25 per cent had attended secondary school, compared with 11.9 per cent of those from St Vincent and the Grenadines, 8.4 per cent of the Dominicans, and 5 per cent of the St Lucians.

Table 10

Percentage distribution of traders by
level of education and home country³⁶

Sex	1	Level of education Primary				Secondary		Total 5-6
		2-4	5-6	7	1-2	3-4		
Female (N=147)	0.7	29.3	34.4	24.5	6.1	1.4	2.7	
Male (N=36)	-	5.6	30.6	33.3	2.8	13.9	13.9	
Total (N=183)	0.5	24.6	34.4	26.2	5.5	3.8	4.9	

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 11

Percentage distribution of traders by
level of education and home country³⁷

	1	Level of education Primary				Secondary		
		2-4	5-6	7	1-2	3-4	5-6	
St Vincent (N=56)	-	39.0	49.2	-	5.1	5.1	1.7	
Grenada (N=30)	-	17.9	19.6	37.5	7.1	5.4	12.5	
Dominica (N=17)	2.1	12.5	20.8	56.3	6.3	2.1	-	
St Lucia (N=20)	-	30.0	65.0	-	-	-	5.0	
Total (N=183)	0.5	24.6	34.4	26.2	5.5	3.8	4.9	

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The survey revealed that the youngest traders tended to have had more formal education than either of the two older groups: 43.4 per cent of the 21-30 year-olds had some secondary education, compared with 6 per cent of the 31-46 year-olds and 2.9 per cent of the traders more than 46 years old. Similarly, newcomers to the trade (less than 5 years) tended to have had more formal education than the old-timers: 19.6 per cent of the newcomers had secondary education compared to only

³⁶ This table is based on the marginals for "Schooling" for each sex, since the computer-generated table was incomplete.

³⁷ This table is based on the marginals for "Schooling" for each country and the whole population of traders since the computer-generated table was incomplete.

8.5 per cent of those who had been trading for five or more years. These results appear to confirm the trend toward the entry of persons with relatively more formal into the trade as other avenues of employment have been closed.

However, the general trend of younger traders and newcomers having been more exposed to formal education than the older ones did not hold in the case of the Dominicans trading with St Martin.

F. Household type

The ECLAC survey indicated that 45.3 per cent of all the hucksters were single and 54.7 per cent of them were in partnership arrangements (married/common-law or visiting). Female traders tended to be single slightly more often than males (46.1 per cent and 42.1 per cent, respectively). The union status of the traders varied widely among the traders from the four islands: the highest rate (66.7 per cent) was among those from St Vincent and the Grenadines (both male and female), and among those from St Lucia, the lowest rate (40 per cent), while the proportion of those in a union from Grenada and Dominica was 55.9 per cent and 45.3 per cent, respectively.

Almost all the traders (94.8 per cent), regardless of their union status, had children. Women beyond the child-bearing age (46 and over) had an average of 7.1 children.

The majority of the traders (55.6 per cent) had children older than 12 years.

G. Occupational history

The survey revealed that, for the group as a whole, the majority of hucksters (65.1 per cent) had been trading for less than 10 years (see Table 13). Female hucksters were more likely than the males to have been in the trade for more than 10 years (38.3 per cent and 21.1 per cent, respectively). On the average, male hucksters had been trading for 7.1 years, while their female counterparts had been trading for 9 years. Of the four groups, the Dominicans were the most likely to have been in the trade for 10 or more years, while the Grenadians were the least likely (54.7 per cent and 22.1 per cent, respectively).

Of all the hucksters, 42.4 per cent claimed to have had no employment prior to entering trade. Male traders from Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines were more likely to have had previous employment than their female counterparts, while among Dominican hucksters, there was little difference between the sexes. Of the female hucksters, those from St Lucia were the most likely to have been previously employed, while those from St Vincent and the Grenadines were the least likely. It is likely that women from the latter group had entered trade at a younger age and therefore trade was their first job.

Table 12

Percentage of previously employed hucksters
by home country and sex

	St Vinc. & the Grenadines	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia	Total
Females	27.5	30.8	41.9	65.0	37.3
Males	37.5	85.0	40.0	-	63.2
Total	28.8	49.2	41.5	65.0	42.4

More than half the hucksters (52.4 per cent) who had been in the trade for up to 10 years had also been previously employed, compared to 23.8 per cent of those in the trade for more than 10 years. All Dominican hucksters who entered the trade between 1980 and 1985 had been previously employed. It is possible that they came from those sectors of the economy that were hit by the hurricanes. It is estimated that 30 per cent of the Dominicans entering the activity in 1981 had come directly from services which had ceased operations.³⁸

Grenadian hucksters had been previously employed as domestic workers, labourers, carpenters, masons and farmers. Other previous occupations were those of mechanic, driver, policeman, agronomist, sailor and translator. Before entering the trade, several hucksters from St Vincent and the Grenadines had been domestic workers, seamstresses, farmers and labourers. Others had been hotel cook, road worker, market vendor and shopkeeper. Previous jobs of hucksters from St Lucia included: waitress, sales clerk, housekeeper, hotel worker, laundress and furniture worker.

Table 13

Percentage distribution of hucksters
by years trading and previous employment

Previous employment	Years trading				Total
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15+	
Yes	49.3	56.4	20.6	27.3	42.4
No	50.7	43.6	79.4	72.7	57.6
Total	100 (N=69)	100 (N=55)	100 (N=34)	100 (N=33)	100 (N=191)

³⁸ Hannah Clarendon, "Constructing a Data Base on Women Traders in Dominica, Consultant Paper, August 1987.

The reason most mentioned by the Dominican hucksters trading in St Martin for entering the trade was their need for income for themselves and their children.

"I like the job because I eat from it."

"We just find we cannot sit down all the time at home; and when we have children, the world of today call for education; and most of us want to educate our children so we get out to find money to have our children educated."

H. Trade income

Reliable figures on the financial returns of the trade are difficult to obtain, as hucksters are reluctant to reveal their profits. It is also possible that the hucksters are unable to calculate profit accurately, given their lack of knowledge of accounting procedures.³⁹ It is possible that the male and female traders claimed higher and lower incomes, respectively, than they actually earned. This remains an area to be researched. In addition, given the small size of the sample, and especially of its male component, results of the survey may not be representative.

Of the 125 hucksters who responded to the question on their income from the trade, 69.6 per cent reported earning more than \$200 per week. A larger proportion of male than female hucksters was represented in the highest income group, resulting in a higher average income for males than for females (\$501 and \$433, respectively).

The survey revealed that the traders from Dominica tended to earn the lowest weekly incomes: 48.8 per cent earned less than \$200, compared with 34.2 per cent of those from St Vincent and the Grenadines, 16.1 per cent of those from Grenada and none from St Lucia. The traders from St Lucia appeared to earn the highest weekly incomes.

³⁹ Only 18.2 per cent of all the traders claimed to keep records of any kind of their trading transactions.

Table 13

Percentage distribution of hucksters
by weekly income (US\$) and sex

Weekly income US\$	Female	Male	Total
<\$50	5.1	-	4.0
\$50-100	10.1	-	8.0
\$100-150	16.2	15.4	16.0
\$150-200	3.0	-	2.4
\$200+	65.7	84.6	69.6
Total	100 (N=99)	100 (N=26)	100 (N=125)
Mean income US\$	433.2	501.4	447.4

On the whole, the weekly incomes reported by the hucksters seemed high, whereas 40.5 per cent of those in the higher income groups described themselves as being unsuccessful in their trade. This suggests that purchasing and overhead costs may not have been deducted from the amounts given as weekly income.

An earlier pilot study of hucksters operating in Barbados⁴⁰ indicated that the traders' profits per trip varied between US\$17.50 and US\$35.00. These estimates, however, did not take into account the costs they incurred in their home country.

Table 14

Percentage distribution of hucksters
by home country and weekly income (US\$) and sex

Weekly Income	St Vinc. N=38	Grenada N=31	Dominica N=41	St Lucia N=15	Total N=125
<\$50	-	3.2	9.8	-	4.0
\$50-100	10.5	3.2	12.2	-	8.0
\$100-150	18.4	9.7	24.4	-	16.0
\$150-200	5.3	-	2.4	-	2.4
\$200+	65.8	83.9	51.2	100	78.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Mean(US\$)	363.9	441.5	314.9	1033.2	447.4

⁴⁰ Christine Barrow, "Women and Inter-Island trading with Barbados", Consultant Paper, March 1988, pp. 17-23. Cited in UNECLAC (1988:8).

Of the group as a whole, those who were most likely to be represented in the higher income groups were: (1) male; (2) between 21 and 30 years old; (3) trading between 5 and 9 years; (4) from St Lucia; (5) involved in the two-way trade.⁴¹

Single hucksters were more likely than married ones to earn weekly trade incomes under US\$100 but also incomes over US\$200.

Table 15

Percentage distribution of hucksters by marital status and weekly income

Income	Marital Status	
	Married (N=68)	Single (N=57)
<\$50	1.5	7.0
\$50-100	7.4	8.8
\$100-150	23.5	7.0
\$150-200	2.9	1.8
\$200+	64.7	75.4
Total	100	100
Mean (US\$)	432.1	465.6

The majority of the hucksters - 67 per cent - appeared to be solely dependent upon revenues gained from their trade. The others claimed that they derived extra income mostly from other jobs (85 per cent) and to a lesser extent from support (15 per cent). On the whole, women were more likely to have other sources of income than the males (34.6 per cent and 24.3 per cent, respectively).

Of the four groups of hucksters, those from St Vincent and the Grenadines were the most likely to have other sources of income, while those from Grenada were the least likely (56.7 per cent and 19.3 per cent, respectively). Thirty per cent of the traders from St Lucia and 21 per cent of the Dominican hucksters admitted having additional incomes from other jobs and from support.

⁴¹ This refers to hucksters who export agricultural produce as well as import goods to their home countries.

III. THE TRADER'S ACTIVITY CYCLE

A. General description of the work

Huckstering involves the following cycle of activities, generally repeated in the same order on each trading trip:

- Investigating which produce is available, at what time and what price and placing an order;
- (Paying creditors and getting orders for re-importation of goods in the home country);⁴²
- Collecting or securing the delivery of the produce;
- Making family arrangements for household members during trafficker's absence;
- Sorting/cleaning/packing the produce;
- Transporting produce to the port and preparing travel documents such as shipping bills, phyto-sanitary certificate;
- Making arrangements for boat transport and payment of freight;
- Loading the produce;
- Trafficker embarking on ship or plane;
- Disembarking of trader and off-loading of produce at next port;⁴³
- Passing through Customs, Immigration and phyto-sanitary control;
- Selling of produce;
- (Purchasing goods for re-importation in home country and preparing the necessary documents);
- Embarking on boat or plane for return voyage.

B. Skills required

The hucksters indicated the following qualities necessary for success: physical strength, ability to talk to and deal with people, being well mannered, patience, courage, persistency, intelligence and ability to handle money. These qualities are more prevalent in women than in men, according to the traders.

"You have to have understanding; you have to have courage, you have to have strength; you have to put your mind to it. Continue to do the work and then it will come."⁴⁴

⁴² Activities in brackets are optional.

⁴³ Hucksters of Dominica often travel to different ports during one business trip. Especially those destined for St Martin disembark in different countries: Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis and Montserrat.

⁴⁴ This and the following comments were made by hucksters from Dominica during the making of the video, "God Give Us the Talent" (Lagro/Paddington).

"Well you have to have a good character, you cannot be a noisy person to be a huckster at the market. You have to behave yourself."

"You have to be very strong, you have to be patient, cool, aggressive and you have to learn to cope with others. You have to be patient as well because there are times when the sale is very slow and if you are not being patient everything will go wrong."

"You have to be nice to everybody, even smile under difficulties and so on (...)"

Some of the replies to the question as to why there were more women than men in the trade:

"Well to sit down at the market, that's a lady's work not a man's work!"

"Maybe we are more loving. Before a customer would come we give a nice smile so the people are more attached to us. Some men are very bossy; they would not like to go and let people feel that they are in the market selling, but women don't care; that is their task."

"The men like to counter. They will use the money in different ways even if they can handle the load more than us. The woman now can hold the money better. We want to use the money for our own use and our children, so that is why women more can do these things."

Although the hucksters are aware that their job cannot be done by everybody and requires certain skills, the female traders have a low opinion of their work. In general, women traders do not wish their children to follow them in this line of work:

"Well, the sort of work it is, I would not encourage my children to do that, I would not like them to do that. I would like them to learn well at school for them to do something better."

Anderson,⁴⁵ who did research among Jamaican traders, made a similar discovery. All wanted something more decent for their children.

⁴⁵ Patricia Y. Anderson and E.R.M. Lefranc: Social organisations and social relations in the informal sector in Jamaica, ISER, Mona, Jamaica, June 1984, p.21.

C. Workload

1. Time input

The trafficker's workload is high. The hours spent ordering, cleaning, packing, crating, shipping and making arrangements with different persons for each trip are time-consuming. Since traders have no formal working relations they are powerless when agreements are not met. This is why personalized contacts must be nurtured to ensure that the required services are performed.

Dominican hucksters who were interviewed informally estimated that, on average, they worked at least 10 hours a day:

"To be a huckster you really have to make up your mind to work hard because it is not an easy job. It is really a tedious job when you have to be lifting up so many boxes; it is really a hard task."

If a Dominican trader lives in the countryside, she gets up at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. to go to the market in Roseau to buy additional produce. If she goes to Guadeloupe she has to be at the port at night and spend eight hours on the boat. After having slept on the boat, she then passes through immigration and customs in Guadeloupe, goes to the market and leaves there at the end of the day to go to her sleeping accommodation. She gets up at 2 a.m. to get a space to sell. If the huckster goes to St Martin she usually unloads at several islands in just one business trip. Her time spent on sea is longer. In St Martin, however, hucksters have restricted selling hours at the Marigot market; they must leave the market at 1 p.m. On Fridays they often sleep at the market in order to ensure a space to sell the next day.

2. Time spent away from home

The Dominicans trading exclusively with Guadeloupe usually have an activity cycle lasting a week, those trading with Barbados, two weeks.

Most of the Dominican traders going to St Martin were away from home for five to eight days. On their way to St Martin some off-load only produce for wholesale in Antigua and St Kitts and travel on the boat the same night to the next island. Some hucksters leave their produce in the hands of intermediaries to market and recover their sale incomes on their way back to Dominica.⁴⁶ The hucksters usually reach St Martin on a Tuesday or Wednesday and stay until Saturday.

⁴⁶ ECLAC: The Informal Trade in the Leeward Islands, LC/CAR/G.275, August 1989.

The time spent by Dominican hucksters in the different overseas markets varies: Antigua and St Kitts, one day; Guadeloupe and St Martin, three days; and Barbados, two weeks.

Hucksters from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada trading with Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados usually have an activity cycle of one week. The former purchase produce during the weekend and transport it to the wharf in Kingstown, for shipment on the Monday. On Tuesday, the traders travel by air to Trinidad and Tobago to meet the arriving boat and collect their shipment at the port. Marketing takes place on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The traders' return trip usually takes place on Friday afternoon.⁴⁷

Almost half of the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines in the survey claimed to spend five to eight days away from home, while one-third spent from two to four days away and 17 per cent spent from nine to twelve days away.

Of the traders from Grenada, 57.7 per cent spent two to four days away from home, 28.8 per cent spent from five to eight days away, and 13.4 per cent spent more than nine days away. Most arrived in Trinidad and Tobago on a Wednesday and departed on a Thursday.

3. Frequency of travel

The survey revealed that most of the overall group travelled either two or four times a month (45.8 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively). Only a small proportion of traders travelled once, three times, or five or more times a month (10 per cent, 10 per cent, and 4.2 per cent, respectively). Male traders tend to travel more frequently than their female counterparts, an exception being among traders from St Lucia.

Table 16

Percentage distribution of traffickers by sex
and number of trips per month

Trips/ month	Female (N=152)	Male (N=38)	Total (N=190)
1	10.5	7.9	10
2	46.1	44.7	45.8
3	3.3	7.9	4.2
4	28.3	36.8	30
5+	11.8	2.6	10
Total	100	100	100
(mean no. of trips/month)	3.8	2.9	3.5)

⁴⁷ Lagro (1988:14).

The data collected from shipping bills strongly indicated that male traders, on the whole, were trading more on a part-time basis than female traders:⁴⁸ 51.8 per cent of the male traders shipped once during the months of research.⁴⁹ Males appeared more often than females to be part-time farmers as well.

Most of the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines who were interviewed in Trinidad and Tobago claimed to travel twice or four times a month (41.7 per cent and 38.3 per cent, respectively).

Half of the traders from Grenada travelled to Trinidad and Tobago four times a month, while 30.5 per cent did so twice a month. On the average, the traders travelled 3.2 times per month.

Table 17

Percentage distribution of traffickers
by home country and frequency of travel

No. of trips/ month	St Vinc. N=60	Grenada N=59	Dominica N=53	St Lucia N=19	Total N=192
1	16.7	6.8	9.4	-	10
2	41.7	30.5	81.1	5.6	45.8
3	3.3	8.5	1.9	-	4.2
4	38.3	50.8	7.5	-	30
5+	-	3.4	-	94.4	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(mean no. of trips/month	2.6	3.2	2.1	13.0	3.6)

4. Support obtained in performing the work

Traders often relied on others for some form of help in their trading operations. The survey indicated that for the group as a whole, female traders relied on help from others more often than male traders (64.5 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively). Help was provided to 30.2 per cent of the traders by their children, to 22.9 per cent by their relatives and to 16.7 per cent by their spouses. Female traders were more likely than males (32.5 per cent and 21.1 per cent, respectively) to receive help from their children.

⁴⁸ It is possible that there is a sexual division of labour whereby males are more involved in organizing the necessary activities in Dominica, leaving the selling overseas to their trading partners.

⁴⁹ January and February in 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Of the three groups for which survey data were available,⁵⁰ traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines were the most likely to receive help from their children and spouses. Grenadian traders were the most likely to obtain help from relatives. Dominican traders were the least likely to receive help from anyone. Help from relatives was not automatically free of charge.

In addition to help from their nuclear and extended families, 80.9 per cent of the traders received help from non-family members, whom they almost always paid for their services.

Open-ended interviews with Dominican traders revealed that there were some "trade couples" among them. The men stayed in Dominica to organize the ordering, purchasing and paying off of the farmers, while the selling overseas was done by the women. The couple often did the packing together.

5. Child-care arrangements

Female hucksters with or without partners often consider themselves responsible for bringing up their children and for making arrangements when leaving their home. They often speak in the first person when referring to their offspring.

"Even, I'm making money, I have a lot of children, I have to feed them, I have to send them to school, so I always need so (...)."

According to them, they are alone in the role of looking after their children, whether they like it or not:

"Some men just don't care; they leave all the responsibilities on women (...)."

Female traders were less likely than male traders to rely on their partners to take care of the children and stay with them at night during the traders' absences.⁵¹ Female traders were more likely than males to rely on both male and female older children for child-care. Similar proportions of male and female traders relied on the extended family for child-care during the day and at night.

⁵⁰ Data were unavailable for St Lucian traders.

⁵¹ As stated before, caution must be exercised in interpreting survey data. The possibility always exists that questions, although they have been pre-tested, are misunderstood.

Table 18

Percentage distribution of hucksters
by child-care arrangements at home and by sex

Child-care provider	Female traders		Male traders	
	Day-care	At night	Day-care	At night
Spouse	18.8	18.8	44.7	47.4
Daughter	20.1	18.8	-	2.6
Son	13.0	11.0	-	2.6
Other relatives	36.4	32.5	36.8	31.6
	(N=154)		(N=38)	

The spouses of married hucksters did not generally stay at home at night significantly more often than those in other forms of relationships.

However, among the Dominican traders travelling to Guadeloupe,⁵² some said that their husbands were helpful in the rearing of their children.

"Well, my husband, he has to look about the kids, especially watch them going to school, prepare food while I does be in Guadeloupe."

Children of 84.4 per cent of the traders of all the groups, taken together, slept at home while they were overseas. Male traders were more likely than female traders to place their children in the home of one of their relatives before travelling.

Only 1.6 per cent of the hucksters said their children stayed at home alone. The children were all over twelve years of age.

Most of the hucksters with children under the age of 12 had female relatives who looked after their children during their absence from home.

⁵² For the filming of the video-production, "God Give Us the Talent", approximately 20 interviews were carried out with hucksters in Dominica by the author. A boat trip to Guadeloupe was undertaken with the hucksters; on arrival, group interviews were held.

"I have two kids and I leave them with my parents because my ... (pause) their father is not around. I live with my family. I left my mother taking care of them."

"My bigger girl, she just left school. She has finished school, she is 18 and she stays there with the two smaller ones until I come back and my mother is nearby. She keeps an eye on them for me."

Table 19

Payment for child-care by age of huckster's youngest child

Age	Payment			Total
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
<5	7	21	0	28
%	25	75	0	
%	26.9	23.1	0	
5-7	9	13	0	22
%	40.9	59.1	0	
%	34.6	14.3	0	
8-11	3	14	1	18
%	16.7	77.8	5.6	
%	11.5	15.4	100	
12-16	6	37	0	43
%	14	86	0	
%	23.1	40.7	0	
17+	1	6	0	7
%	14.3	85.7	0	
%	3.8	6.6	0	
Total	26	91	1	118
%	22.03	77.12	.85	

(CHI= 12.38083)

Although relatives help mind the children, paid arrangements are common for hucksters with young children, especially when these are in the 5-7 age-group; 22.7 per cent of all the traders regularly paid for child-care. There were no striking differences between the proportions of male and female traders who paid for child-care (23.4 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively. Of the four groups of traders, the Dominicans were the most likely to pay for child-care (37.8 per cent) and the St Lucians were the least likely (13.3 per cent).

"When they were smaller I used to pay people to comb their hair, to bathe them, to feed them."

In general, the hucksters were not dissatisfied with the arrangements they made for their children: 11.5 per cent said they were unhappy with the child-care arrangements they made. The traders from Grenada were the most satisfied and those from St Lucia were the least satisfied with child-care arrangements. There were no striking differences between male and female in terms of satisfaction with child-care arrangements.

D. Types of produce marketed overseas

The hucksters trade in a variety of products: an average of four to five are included in each shipment. Choice of produce depends mostly on availability, market demands and whether or not trade restrictions govern their entry into any particular market.

Since the appearance of the mango-seed weevil in Dominica, mangoes were not allowed entry in countries such as Barbados, Antigua, United States Virgin Islands and St Kitts and Nevis which used to be the main mango-importers. The existence of other pests, such as fruit flies, has led to restrictions on the export of agricultural produce from Dominica. Bananas, plantains and yams are not allowed entry into Guadeloupe.

The main goods marketed by the Dominican hucksters are grapefruits, plantain, oranges, dasheen, christophenes, pumpkins, tannias, pears, mangoes, limes, yams, coconuts and fresh cut flowers. Since 1982, they have traded in anthurium lilies, mainly with the French Caribbean islands; some traders with health problems seem to prefer the anthurium (flower) trade as it involves lifting more manageable loads.⁵³

The traffickers of St Vincent and the Grenadines deal mainly in ground provisions - eddoes, sweet potatoes, dasheen, tannias and yams - as well as in fruits and vegetables - christophenes, golden apples, plantains, pears, coconuts, fresh ginger, limes, plums, papaws, oranges, grapefruits, pumpkins, mangoes and bananas.⁵⁴

Grenadian traffickers trade mostly in fruits - avocado, soursop, golden apple, sapodilla, sugar apple, plums, limes, bananas and coconuts - as well as in root crops during the first quarter of the year.⁵⁵

⁵³ This is based on three interviews with hucksters in anthurium lilies by one of the authors (Lagro) in 1987.

⁵⁴ UNECLAC (1988:14).

⁵⁵ UNECLAC (1988:14).

St Lucians trade in plantain, grapefruit, oranges, mandarins, bananas, plums, coconut, and, sporadically, ginger.⁵⁶

E. Prices and payment for produce purchased

Purchasing prices of goods fluctuate a great deal and are determined by various factors, such as the degree of competition, the quantity of supplies and the market price of the goods. Whatever the conditions, traders are said to be prepared to pay higher prices for produce than formal export companies.

Often, farmers extend credit to traders, but this service depends entirely upon the farmers' willingness to undertake such risks. This is where problems often crop up between farmers and hucksters.

F. Market source

Hucksters purchase goods from three sources: (a) directly, from farmers; (b) from the local market; and (c) from growers' associations or marketing boards.

The majority of hucksters travel to rural areas to purchase their produce by the sack directly from farmers. The hucksters usually make their own arrangements to purchase goods with no involvement of intermediaries. They often leave name-labelled sacks or bags with the farmer with whom they make arrangements for subsequent collection of produce. As a safeguard against competition, they often try to conceal the names of their suppliers and the price at which they buy.⁵⁷

Personalized relationships with suppliers are of enormous importance. Hucksters living in the same area as their suppliers have more opportunities to foster these relationships than those residing further away.

Of the hucksters interviewed, 62.9 per cent regularly bought produce from the same farmers or suppliers. The majority of both male and female hucksters from St Vincent and the Grenadines (70.6 per cent and 85.7 per cent, respectively) dealt with 6-12 suppliers. The male hucksters of Grenada tended to have from 3-5 suppliers, while most of the females had from 3-12. The Dominican men generally dealt regularly with 6-7 small farmers, while women generally dealt with five. Most of the female hucksters from St Lucia dealt with three to five suppliers.

⁵⁶ UNECLAC (1988:14).

⁵⁷ Lagro (1988:16); UNECLAC (1988:13).

When produce is scarce, traders go to the countryside to get produce from the farmers.⁵⁸ In some cases, hucksters purchase fruits on the tree, doing the harvesting themselves. This practice safeguards the trader against a supply of poor-quality produce and reduces purchasing costs. When produce is not scarce, farmers take their produce to town to the hucksters.

Even when hucksters are themselves farmers, they still need to purchase additional produce since they are small farmers and their production capacity is too limited to supply market demands for all the trips they undertake.

Of the hucksters interviewed, 30 per cent claimed to grow their own produce. The males from Dominica and Grenada were the most likely to grow produce (80 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively) and the females from St Vincent and the Grenadines and St Lucia were the least likely (17.6 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively).

Table 20

Percentage of traffickers who grow their own produce
by home country and sex

	St Vincent & the Grenadines	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia	Total
Female	17.6	31.6	27.9	15.0	23.7
Male	25.0	55.0	80.0	-	55.3
Total	18.6	39.7	37.7	15.0	30.0

Relatively few hucksters purchase produce from growers' associations or marketing boards. Only a small group of Dominican traders purchase produce from the Citrus Growers Association. Hucksters from St Vincent and the Grenadines occasionally buy from the Organization of Rural Development (ORD).

⁵⁸ The scarcity of agricultural produce in Dominica is at present a problem for the hucksters and for the agricultural sector in general.

G. Market outlets

1. Countries of destination

Markets covered by the Dominican hucksters include Guadeloupe, Antigua and Barbuda, St Martin, Barbados, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla and Martinique. The greater volume of trade is with Guadeloupe, Antigua and Barbuda and St Martin. While male traders have stopped trading in many of the countries, they have remained in the trade with Guadeloupe and Barbados. In 1988 more traders started to take boats leaving Portsmouth for Guadeloupe.

Most of the hucksters from St Vincent and the Grenadines market produce in Trinidad and Tobago. Barbados is the second most visited island. Smaller numbers go to Martinique, Carriacou and St Martin.

Hucksters from Grenada market produce mainly in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hucksters from St Lucia travel to Barbados and Martinique.

The survey revealed that 72.4 per cent of all the hucksters traded with two countries. Another 19.8 per cent traded with three countries and 7.8 per cent traded with four or more countries. There appeared to be no significant differences in the trading patterns of male and female traders. The Dominican hucksters were the most likely of the four groups to trade with three or more countries (47.2 per cent). The Grenadians were the least likely to travel to more than two countries (15.3 per cent).

It appears that for the group as a whole, traders under the age of 30 transact business more often with two countries, while the older hucksters tend to travel to three or more countries.

2. The buyers

Practically all the hucksters interviewed in the survey claimed to sell their produce to vendors in the countries of destination. Dominican hucksters who travel to St Martin sell wholesale to Haitians resident there.

Only 16.7 per cent of all the hucksters sold produce to such formal sector businesses as restaurants, supermarkets, or shops. Male hucksters were more likely to sell in the formal sector than females (21.1 per cent and 15.6 per cent, respectively). Of the four groups of hucksters, the Dominicans were the most likely and the St Lucians the least likely to sell in the formal sector (32.1 per cent and none, respectively). Among the Dominican hucksters, 30 per cent of the males and 27.5 per cent of the females sold produce to shops, 40 per cent and

27.9 per cent, respectively, sold to supermarkets and 20 per cent and 9.3 per cent, respectively, sold to restaurants.

Previous studies, as well as direct observations by one of the authors, have indicated that Dominican hucksters are heavily involved in the retail trade in the countries to which they travel. However, the extent to which hucksters will be allowed to continue to engage in retail selling is limited, since countries such as Antigua and St Martin have been placing restrictions on their retailing. Through training programmes by the Dominica Hucksters' Association, hucksters have been encouraged to sell wholesale to maximize returns.

Table 21

Percentage of traffickers who sell to formal sector
businesses by home country and sex

	St Vincent & the Grenadines	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia	Total
Female	15.4	10.3	27.9	-	15.6
Male	12.5	10.0	50.0	-	21.1
Total*	15.0	10.2	32.1	-	16.7

H. The business size

Figures on the volume of trade of the hucksters are unreliable. For example, the export figures of goods shipped from St Vincent and the Grenadines to Trinidad and Tobago are often inflated. Hucksters inflate their estimation of the quantity of goods they export to and sell in Trinidad and Tobago as a way to take more currency out of the country than the true value of their shipment. On the other hand, traffickers who export goods to sell in Barbados deflate the quantities in an attempt to avoid paying heavy import taxes there. A tentative estimate of the weight per shipment per trader ranges between 500 and 7,000 kg, with Dominica occupying the lowest place and St Vincent and the Grenadines occupying the highest point within this range.⁵⁹

Research conducted in Trinidad and Tobago in October 1988 revealed that traffickers from St Vincent and the Grenadines each shipped between 20 and 210 bags of produce per trip. The more successful hucksters are known to export up to 400 bags per shipment. A sample of huckster trading during a two-month period revealed that, on average, 5,168.4 kg

⁵⁹ UNECLAC (1988:14).

were transported per trader in January 1987, as compared to an average of 2,298 kg in February 1987.⁶⁰

I. Reverse trade

Reverse trading activities are not undertaken on a large scale by the hucksters, primarily because the heavy activity cycle, poor financial returns and the vicissitudes of the voyage do not encourage this. When reverse trading occurs, however, the kinds of commodities brought back are usually determined by shortages prevailing in the importing country. Reverse trade also occurs when there are advantages to be gained. For example, traders operating in Guadeloupe purchase goods for resale since it allows them to reduce losses otherwise accrued by conversion of the foreign-earned currency into French francs.⁶¹

Hucksters do, however, purchase items abroad for personal use upon return to their home country.

Research at the Customs Department in Dominica indicated that 7.7 per cent of the active traders imported commodities into Dominica during the months of January and February, 1987. Of the 139 entries during this period, 15 were related to hucksters, who imported a range of goods with values ranging from \$267 to \$4,732. Goods originated from Guadeloupe, St Martin and Puerto Rico. From Guadeloupe, traders generally take back agricultural produce (onions, potatoes and red beans) and from St Martin and Puerto Rico, footwear, ornaments, cosmetics and clothes.

The survey among the hucksters presented conflicting evidence as to the extent of the reverse trade. Of the group as a whole, 82.8 per cent claimed that they usually brought clothing back with them to sell in their home countries. Yet, when the traders were asked to indicate the quantity of goods they usually brought back, only 56.6 per cent of them admitted to bringing back anything. This discrepancy occurred among the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines (85 per cent vs. 40.7 per cent), Dominica (77.4 per cent vs. 45 per cent) and Grenada (84.7 per cent vs. 73.7 per cent), but not among those from St Lucia (85 per cent). Thus, the traders from St Lucia and Grenada appeared to be more involved in the reverse trade than those from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica.

⁶⁰ UNECLAC (1988:14).

⁶¹ UNECLAC (1988:18).

Male traders tended to be more involved in the reverse trade than females:⁶² 63.9 per cent, compared to 54.9 per cent of the female traders. While male traders from Dominica and Grenada were more likely to be involved in the reverse trade than their female counterparts, the opposite was true among traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Of the hucksters who admitted being involved in the reverse trade, 63.6 per cent travelled by ship, 9.1 per cent travelled by air, and 27.3 per cent used both means of transportation.

The quantities of goods imported, especially by female traders, however, were small.

J. Level of business formalization

Of all the hucksters interviewed, 29.8 per cent were members of a trade association. Female traders were more often members than were males (32 per cent and 21.1 per cent, respectively). Traders from Dominica had the highest rate of association membership (69.8 per cent), while those from Grenada had the lowest (1.8 per cent). Among the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and St Lucia membership rates were 27.1 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively.

In parallel with the relatively low rate of membership in associations, was the low level of organization of individual business enterprises. This was measured as follows: a huckster was given three points if he/she had capital investment at home in the form of a van, storage area, or a shop; two points if marketing produce overseas to the formal sector (e.g., restaurants/supermarkets); two points if keeping records or business accounts; one point if making use of regular suppliers when purchasing produce; and one point if marketing at home commodities bought overseas in the formal sector.

Such rating revealed that only 26 per cent of all traders had enterprises that were organized in any way.⁶³ The businesses of female traders, on the whole, were less often organized than those of their male counterparts (23.4 per cent and 36.8 per cent, respectively). The Dominican traders were the most likely to have organized businesses (32.1 per cent) while the St Lucians were the least likely (none). Only 28.3 per cent of the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and 27.1 per cent of those from St Lucia had organized businesses.

⁶² More research is needed as the number of males in the sample was small.

⁶³ This means that they scored one point or more in the categories that were defined under "level of organization".

1. Capital investment

Capital investment in the trade by the hucksters is low. Only 21.4 per cent had any kind of capital investment in their trade. Of the group as a whole, only 10.9 per cent owned vans and only 5.7 per cent had their own storage area. Male traders were more likely than females to have either form of capital investment (28.9 per cent and 19.5 per cent, respectively).

2. Formalized contact with farmers/suppliers and buyers

Of all the hucksters questioned, 62.9 per cent made use of the same suppliers in their home countries. Traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines had the largest average number of suppliers: 11. Traders from Grenada had an average of 9.5 suppliers; St Lucians, 5.8; and Dominicans, 5.1. On average, male traders had a larger number of suppliers than females (9.4 and 8.1, respectively). None had written agreements with their suppliers.

The hucksters normally contact their suppliers by telephone or by sending messages through friends. The farmer also approaches the huckster.

Among Dominican hucksters, half of the males, compared to 27.9 per cent of the females, sold a part of their produce to the restaurants, supermarkets or hotels in St Martin. None of the St Lucian hucksters marketed produce in the formal sector in Barbados.

Only 3.2 per cent of all the traders had written agreements with their buyers abroad. All were Grenadians selling produce in Trinidad and Tobago.

Only 23.4 per cent of the traders who imported goods on the return trip to their home country (the reverse trade) sold in the formal sector. Male traders were more likely than females to do so (36.8 per cent and 20.1 per cent, respectively). Traders from Grenada were the most likely to have formal sector market outlets (45.8 per cent) compared with those from St Vincent and the Grenadines (21.7 per cent), Dominica (7.5 per cent) and St Lucia (5 per cent). Vendors and friends were the market outlets most often mentioned by the hucksters who re-import goods. Dominican traders sold goods more to family members than traders from the other groups. Forty-one and a half per cent of those re-importing goods to Dominica sell to friends.

3. Book-keeping

The level of record-keeping is very low among the traders, even among those with a high level of schooling, high trade incomes and a high level of organization. Only 18.2 per cent of all the traders - generally the younger ones - kept records, with males keeping more records than females (31.6 per cent and 14.9 per cent, respectively). Book-keeping records showed an overlap between business and domestic expenses.

Table 22

Record-keeping by age of trafficker

Age	Record-keeping		Total
	No	Yes	
21-30	29	10	39
	%		
	74.4	25.6	
	%		
	18.5	28.6	
31-46	78	17	95
	%		
	82.1	17.9	
	%		
	49.7	48.6	
46+	50	8	58
	%		
	86.2	13.8	
	%		
	31.8	22.9	
Total	157	35	192
	%		
	88.77	18.23	
(CHI = 5.342032)			

The lack of record-keeping is not necessarily an indication of poor business expertise. The trader in many instances has developed her own system, as can be illustrated by the passage below:

" Well you have to know how to handle the money and you know what the profits are like, so if you, say, make \$20 you spend \$10 and you hold \$10. From that you can save \$5 and buy with \$5."

IV. HUCKSTERS' ASSOCIATIONS

A. Introduction

Throughout the Caribbean region, there have been several attempts by traders to organize themselves into associations. Only two associations got started: one in St Vincent and the Grenadines and one in Dominica.

Several factors hinder the formation of traders into associations:⁶⁴

1) The mobility and widespread geographic distribution of traders and their lack of time, due to their heavy workload, makes them difficult to mobilize;

2) The traders' individualistic modus operandi, which they developed as a survival mechanism, makes collective enterprises unattractive;

3) Traders are reluctant to form themselves into associations, since these tend to define parameters within which they must operate and thus limit their operations. Moreover, traders fear that once they are organized into associations, government interference will increase;

4) Traders generally have a low status in society and this negative perception is internalized. Thus, traders do not perceive themselves as important and are consequently reluctant to seek any assistance.

B. The Traffickers' Small Business Association in St Vincent and the Grenadines⁶⁵

In 1983, as a result of many problems that traders were facing at the time, some organized themselves into the Traffickers' Small Business Association (TSBA). This organization attempted to bridge the gap between traders and farmers by including both groups.

The Association's main concern has been to secure a profitable income for the traders. To this effect it has addressed the problem of the weekly flooding of the market in Trinidad and Tobago by trying to restrict the number of traders and the quantity of goods shipped to that country. Initially, some success was recorded, but this attracted newcomers and the resulting increased competition caused a decline in the revenue of each trader. Failure to increase the earnings of its

⁶⁴ UNECLAC (1988:18).

⁶⁵ UNECLAC (1988:19).

members and to unify them has contributed to the weakening of the Association.

The Association started with 143 members; and by 1985, membership had grown to 250. Records of registration of new members are no longer made available. The female/male ratio indicates a predominance of women: 77 per cent female and 23 per cent male. From a survey of 198 traders,⁶⁶ it was estimated that 28 per cent were not members of the TSBA. Since then, the trend has accelerated, thus reinforcing the idea that the Association remains non-operational. Of the female traders operating in the month of January 1987, 66 per cent were not members of the Association and of the active male traders 91 per cent were not members. It should be noted that male traders have re-entered the trading business only recently and as the Association does not keep proper records, male membership is probably under-estimated in the figures above.

C. Efforts to form an association in Grenada⁶⁷

There is no formal association at present in Grenada. On 2 January 1987, the Division of Women's Affairs in Grenada and the UN ECLAC/WID held a meeting with 51 traders who outlined their problems and expressed the wish to organize themselves into an association. Ninety per cent of the participants were female. A steering committee was elected and a male trader was made president. Since then, no further action has been undertaken and the association can be considered non-functional.

D. The Dominican Hucksters' Association

The Dominican Hucksters' Association (DHA), a non-profit, non-governmental organization formed in 1982, is managed by a board of directors with representatives from the private and public sectors. The president of the association is chairperson of the board. The aim of the association is to promote the interest of the hucksters by providing them with technical and financial assistance.

To date, services provided by the association for its members have included securing the necessary documents to export; making requests for visas; maintaining individual tax records; investigating complaints, both overseas and locally; providing training and appropriate packaging; furnishing loans; conducting periodic market surveys and representing

⁶⁶ Report by the Central Planning Unit of St Vincent and the Grenadines, "A Storage for the Traffickers of St Vincent and the Grenadines", Appendix 5 (1984).

⁶⁷ UNECLAC (1988:21).

hucksters' interests in dealings with both the government and the private sector.

A training programme in basic costing and pricing and post-harvest losses forms a critical part of the work of the association. The association has also been involved in testing different prototypes of packaging material, plastic crates, wooden crates and cardboard cartons. They provide cardboard cartons to the hucksters and have introduced smaller boxes, favoured by the female traders as they can easily manage those themselves.

The DHA's Credit Scheme is administered by the AID Bank. A member of the DHA can get a 60-day short-term loan of US\$300.00. Interest on loans is 8 per cent: 4 per cent goes to the Bank to cover administrative costs and 4 per cent is retained by the DHA in a revolving fund. All reports on loan activities have been favourable, in terms of both use of funds and repayment.⁶⁸

Table 23

Number of loan applications by Dominican hucksters by year and by sex

Year	Number of Applicants		Total
	Female	Male	
1984	8	3	11
1985	118	36	154
1986	203	63	266
1987	130	49	179
1988	85	26	111
1989	43*	14*	57*

Source: Huckster Credit File, Dominica

* Figures up to 26 June 1989

Members estimate the DHA's loan facility highly:

"I found it beneficial a lot, 'cause the people who has don't feel anything, but the people that don't have, like a woman like me, I use it a lot."

At its inception, the DHA registered 152 members. By 1989, the number had risen to 517, including 65 per cent females.

⁶⁸ The impact of the Credit Scheme has not been studied or evaluated to determine how effective it has been in terms of improving trading operations.

In 1989, approximately 60 per cent of all the traders who exported agricultural produce were members of the DHA.

Table 24

Percentage active traders belonging to the Dominican
Hucksters' Association by sex, 1987-1989

	F	M
1987	5%	2.5%
1988	46%	34.6%
1989	59%	60%

The percentage of hucksters who might be considered non-active, in the sense that they were not exporting produce in the months of research, was high.

V. PROBLEMS OF THE TRADERS

A. Introduction

The traders encounter numerous problems in their work. The income they derive from their trade is small and insecure, competition is stiff, the level of produce spoilage is high, theft of their produce is frequent, their bargaining power is low and the conditions under which they perform their work are harsh, sub-standard and injurious to their health.

B. Insufficient trade income

There was a substantial difference between the trade incomes of male and female traders. A larger proportion of men were found in the higher-income groups, whereas women were more likely to be represented in the lower-income groups.

The results of the survey as regards sex must be treated with caution, however, since the sample size of male traders interviewed was small. In addition, it is possible that female hucksters reported less income than they actually earned and/or that male hucksters claimed to earn more than they did in actuality.

The income of the hucksters is never secure. At any time, something might happen that could take away all the profits:

"It is a lot of problems, you know, because sometimes the sale does not always be good. Sometimes I get spoiled fruits. Sometimes I don't get what I really want and so."

The hucksters' overhead costs are high. They include those of air or sea travel and accommodation overseas; transport and documentation costs; market fees; and taxes.

In the survey, the hucksters were asked if they considered themselves successful. Of the group as a whole, 45.4 per cent answered in the affirmative. While among traders from Grenada males and females were equally likely to consider themselves successful (50 per cent of each group), male traders from Dominica considered themselves successful more often than did their female counterparts (60 per cent and 31.2 per cent, respectively). Among traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines, females considered themselves successful more often than the males (44.2 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively). All of the female traders from St Lucia considered themselves successful.

The traders' perception of whether or not they were successful seemed to be related to their reported weekly trade income. While only 20 per cent of the traders who earned less than \$100 per week considered themselves unsuccessful, 30.4 per cent of those earning \$100-\$200 per week, and 59.5 per cent of those earning over \$200 a week, did.

C. Governments

Nearly half of all the traders (46.9 per cent) cited official rules and regulations as major obstacles to their success. Male traders mentioned governments as an obstacle to success more frequently than the females (55.3 per cent and 44.8 per cent, respectively).

The majority of traders from St Lucia (80 per cent) attributed their insufficient profits to the banning of imports of mangoes into Barbados, due to the mango-seed weevil. Because of the ban, they were faced with the difficulty and extra expenses of having to buy produce in St Vincent and Dominica.

More than half of the traders from Grenada (57.6 per cent) also attributed their lack of success to government policy. Traders blamed their low profits on the devaluation of the Trinidad and Tobago currency, as well as on high customs duties and airport taxes, restrictions on imports into Grenada and confiscation of goods and money by customs officials. Traders also mentioned that the time-consuming customs procedures contributed to the spoilage of their produce at the port and thus to lowered profits.

Fifty-two per cent of the traders for St Vincent and the Grenadines were also disgruntled about the currency devaluation, which they claimed led to low prices in the market and low profits. Only 17 per cent of the Dominican traders mentioned government policy as an obstacle to their success.

D. Competition

Of the group of hucksters as a whole, only 31.8 per cent mentioned competition as a reason for their lack of success. However, 69.8 per cent of the Dominican traders, reported that internal competition was a major barrier to the success of their trade enterprises. To quote one of the hucksters:

"I am not making because too much people."

Intense competition results from the fact that all the hucksters market the same products, determined by market demand. For example, in St Martin there is a demand for bananas while in Guadeloupe there is more of a demand for grapefruits and oranges. As several boat-loads of goods arrive weekly, a situation of over-supply results.

E. Spoilage of produce

The majority of traders (64.9 per cent) reported that their produce was often damaged and some (26.7 per cent) reported occasional damage upon reaching the market in the host country. Only 8.4 per cent of the traders did not report damage to their produce during transportation from farm to market. A higher proportion of female traders than males reported damaged produce: only 7 per cent of females and 13.2 per cent of males reported no damage.

The Dominican hucksters reported damage more frequently than those in the other three groups: 81.1 per cent said they had problems with spoilage and 17 per cent said they did sometimes. The percentage of post-harvest losses is estimated to be in excess of 25 per cent-50 per cent.⁶⁹ The traders from Grenada seemed to experience the least amount of damage to produce.

Table 25

Percentage distribution of traffickers
by damage to produce

Damage to Produce	St Vinc. N=60	Grenada N=59	Dominica N=53	St Lucia N=20	Total N=191
Yes	55.9	59.3	81.1	65.0	64.9
No	6.8	16.9	1.9	5.0	8.4
Sometimes	37.3	23.7	17.0	30.0	26.7

⁶⁹ FAO, Production is only half the battle, a training manual in fresh produce marketing for the Eastern Caribbean (PFL/RLA/001/PFL), Barbados, December 1988.

Table 26

Percentage distribution of traffickers by
perceived causes of damage to produce

Damage to Produce	St Vinc. N=60	Grenada N=59	Dominica N=53	St Lucia N=20	Total N=191
Transport: home country	6.7	3.4	9.4	-	5.7
Loading/off-loading	70.0	61.0	56.6	60.0	62.5
Shipping	23.3	42.4	41.5	5.0	32.3
Poor quality produce	3.3	8.5	13.2	-	7.3
Poor packing material	10.0	27.1	11.3	65.0	21.4
Other causes	51.7	20.3	58.5	25.0	41.1

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to multiple responses.

Spoilage, however, does occur any time between harvesting and sale of the produce. Temperature, humidity, infection from fungus or bacteria and physical damage due to bad handling are among factors that affect the rate of spoilage.

The major reason given by the traders - male and female alike - for the damage to produce had to do with the shipping and off-loading of the produce: 62.5 per cent of all the traders claimed that their produce was damaged during off-loading and 32.3 per cent claimed that damage was the result of shipping. By shipping, they meant the boat transport (heat of the engines and lack of ventilation) and the dumping of produce when seas were rough. Another cause of damage mentioned by 21.4 per cent of the traders was inadequate packing methods and materials. This appears to be a serious problem for the traders of St Lucia, as 65 per cent of them mentioned it. Only small percentages of traders claimed that the spoilage had to do with the bad quality of produce they had obtained from their suppliers or transport in the home country (7.3 per cent and 5.7 per cent, respectively).

If the harvesting or packaging of the produce is done in rain, the rate of spoilage of the produce will increase. The Dominican hucksters do not have a collective checking point, where the produce obtained from the farmers can be checked properly; they also do not have a facility, such as a shed, where they can re-pack and prepare their produce for shipment. This activity is usually performed in open air.

The markets overseas also lack facilities, further affecting the quality of the produce. In St Martin, for example, the hucksters do not have a covered market: the produce remains on the ground, drying in the sun.

The traders have little or no control over those various factors that cause damage to their produce. Male traders, however, seem to have a certain degree of control over these factors as:

- a high percentage of them are part-time farmers (55.3 per cent of all the males, compared to 23.7 per cent of all the females in the survey) and can therefore ensure that harvesting is done properly; and
- their physical strength enables them to load the produce themselves.⁷⁰ As was remarked by a female huckster, "They (the men) can handle the load more than us."

In addition, occupational statistics reveal that transport is a major employment sector for men. They probably take their produce to port by car more often than female traders, who have less control over their transport.

F. Stealing

Traders, especially the females, are plagued by theft: 79.2 per cent of all the female traders reported having had produce stolen from them, compared to 57.9 per cent of the males. Goods were stolen from the women more frequently than from the males during the previous year. More research is needed for more accurate data.

Those most seriously affected by theft were female traders in the 46-and-over age-category.

Of the four groups of traders, those from St Vincent and the Grenadines appeared to be the most frequent victims of theft, as 45 per cent reported having lost goods more than 13 times during the previous year. The St Lucians appeared to be the least victimized by theft of produce.

Theft of money was less common than theft of produce. While only 10.9 per cent of the traders claimed to have had their money stolen during the previous year; females appeared to be more frequently victimized than males (11.6 per cent and 7.9 per cent, respectively). Only the female traders of St Lucia reported no theft of money.

In general, theft of produce and money occurs in the market-place overseas. This is very clear in the case of Dominican traders in St Martin; there are no storage facilities at the Marigot Market, where traders have to leave their goods at night and hope to find them there in the morning.

⁷⁰ This is an hypothesis that still has to be verified.

Table 27

Percentage of traffickers by home country
and frequency of theft

No of incidents	St Vinc. N=60	Grenada N=59	Dominica N=53	St Lucia N=20	Total N=192
Never	8.3	33.9	32.1	30.0	25.7
1-2	10.0	10.2	22.6	50.0	17.7
3-5	10.0	22.0	18.9	5.0	15.6
6-12	26.7	22.0	9.4	15.0	19.3
13+	45.0	11.9	17.0	-	22.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Of all the traders questioned, 58.9 per cent reported having had goods stolen in the markets of the host countries. Twenty-nine percent reported thefts at the ports. Traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines appeared to be the hardest hit by theft in the markets and at the port of Trinidad and Tobago (81.7 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively).

G. Problems with persons/institutions

For the group of traders as a whole, the most frequently mentioned source of problems was the customers. Thirty-nine percent of the females, as against 36.8 per cent of the males, appeared to experience this kind of difficulty. This contradicts the impression given by female hucksters (mentioned previously) that the females are better at selling as they have more patience and "give nice smiles". The second most frequently cited problem was with Customs officers.

Problems with Customs officers were mentioned by 15.1 per cent of the traders, mostly females and in the age-category 46-and-over. Research in other islands indicate that young female traders are helped first by Customs officers. If this is also the case for Dominica, it is not known.

Among the Dominican hucksters, the males appeared not to get along with the females. The second most frequently mentioned source of their problems was their female colleagues.

The female Dominican traders cited the farmers as their second biggest problem. That some of them do have such a problem is borne out by the following statement by a Dominican farmer:⁷¹

⁷¹ Interviewed by the author, 1988.

"Some of the hucksters are crooked. Some of them will tell you they will pay you and sometimes you stay a whole 4-5 weeks before you can get any money and you have to sue them."

Some farmers expressed a different view:

"Sometimes hucksters don't get proper markets, they don't order much, they don't even order at all but the problem is not with them but may be with overseas markets which is not in demand."

The male traders made less frequent mention of any problem with farmers. The number of farmer-hucksters is much higher among male than female hucksters, which partly explains this.

Problems with the drivers who transport their produce were cited by 9.4 per cent of the traders - females and males alike.

No problems were mentioned by the hucksters with regards to the phyto-sanitary officers. Only 1.9 per cent had problems with airline companies and the obtaining of loans.

Table 28

Percentage distribution of traders by home country and problems with personnel

Personnel	St Vinc.	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia	Total
Transport drivers	8.3	15.3	9.4	30	13
Farmers	25	8.5	32.4	-	19.3
Airline personnel	28.3	10.2	1.9	-	12.5
Customs officers	38.3	55.9	15.1	15	34.9
Phyto-sanitary officers	3.3	8.5	-	-	3.6
Shipping personnel	20	16.9	13.2	5	15.6
Market personnel	1.7	8.5	9.4	5	6.3
Customers	33.3	35.6	45.3	45	38.5
Bankers	11.7	5.1	1.9	-	5.7
Female traders	1.7	1.7	11.3	-	4.2
Male traders	-	-	-	-	1
No one	1.7	-	-	-	0.5

H. Hard working conditions

The working conditions of the traders are often deplorable, as they work long hours in uncovered areas exposed to sun, dust and rain and without adequate security. Other factors that put pressure on

traders include: marginal and often fluctuating trade income and the constant threat of loss of produce without insurance coverage.⁷²

"I used to trade and have a big stomach and I still trading. After I make the child, after three four-months I re-go back to the trade. So I paid somebody to mind the baby and so what have you. It is very hard fixing load, and lift-up big load; I lose three of them (children), I had eight and I lose three."⁷³

The conditions during sea-travel:

"You know I sleep on the boat whenever. Sometimes it's on the ground I have to stay. I just open a sheet, a piece of cardboard and I sleep."

Traders in St Martin often sleep at the market on the Friday night to ensure they have a space to sell on Saturday, their last day in St Martin and when they have the most customers. Haitians living in St Martin buy wholesale from them during the week and retail their produce on the road-side, but also sell their left-overs on the Saturday market. The available space at the market is small, hence their over-nighting on the spot.

I. Obtaining credits/loans

Of the group as a whole, 19.4 per cent reported obtaining bank-loans for their trade.⁷⁴ Since only 24.1 per cent reported even trying to obtain bank-loans, the overall success rate in obtaining loans was high - 80.4 per cent. Female hucksters applied for and received loans more frequently than their male counterparts: 26 per cent of the females applied for and 21.4 per cent received loans, while 16.2 per cent of the males applied for and 10.8 per cent received loans.

⁷² Lagro (1988:23).

⁷³ Remarks during interviews done for the video production; "God Give Us the Talent, The Hucksters of Dominica," ECLAC, 1987.

⁷⁴ Percentages were calculated using the number of hucksters indicated for VAR 80: succeeded at Bank divided by the total number of hucksters in each group.

Table 29

Percentage of traffickers receiving bank loans
for trade by sex and home country

	St Vinc.	Grenada	Dominica	St Lucia	Total
Female	21.1	15.4	37.2	-	21.4
Male	-	10.5	20.0	-	10.8
Total	18.3	13.8	34.0	-	19.4

The Dominican traders were the most likely to receive loans. This reflects the activity of the DHA. In this respect, they are in a much better position than the traders of the other islands, as their association facilitates their access to obtaining loans.

None of the traders from St Lucia nor the male traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines reported having applied for bank-loans.

Other credit agencies in Dominica have also issued loans to hucksters but to a lesser extent. The National Development Foundation issued 46 loans between 1983 and 1986, to a value of EC\$ 99,148. Barclays Bank at Portsmouth issued 12 loans in a period of two years. Marigot Credit Union had no applicants in 1985, two in 1986 for a value of EC\$ 30,400 and EC\$ 5,250, respectively. Portsmouth Credit Union disburses, on average, EC \$1,500 monthly to about four persons; repayments are regular and up-to-date.⁷⁵

J. Health problems

Health problems are common among traders, but the difference between males and females is striking. More than two-thirds of the females seemed to suffer with some kind of health problem, compared to one-fourth of the males.⁷⁶

Vulnerable groups are those over 46 and those who are single: 68.2 per cent of the women over 46 and 72.4 per cent of the single traders, in comparison with 45.8 per cent of those with partners, reported health problems.

Headache was the main problem for the females: 35.9 per cent of them mentioned this. Other common health troubles among women were

⁷⁵ Hannah Clarendon, Consultant Paper, 1987.

⁷⁶ It should be kept in mind that the number of male traders interviewed was small.

pains in the back (28.2 per cent), swollen feet (23.3 per cent) and dizziness (15.4 per cent).

Some were tired and just wanted to stop. One trader expressed a longing to be able to retire and draw a pension:

"I am too old for this trading but I must continue because I have to live."

According to the traders, the main cause of their health problems was being exposed too much to sun and dust.

K. Recommendations proposed by the traffickers

Hucksters have very clear ideas about the problems they are facing and the solutions to their problems. Any project should incorporate mechanisms for hucksters to reflect and speak for themselves.

1. The hucksters from Dominica trading with St Martin

<u>Problems</u>		<u>Solutions</u>
Bad market conditions	-	expand market area
	-	provide shelter
	-	provide tables/stand
	-	provide water facilities
	-	permit longer market hours at the Marigot market
Stealing of produce	-	provide facilities to store goods overnight at the market
	-	provide insurance for losses incurred
Too much competition	-	provide a pension for older traders flooding the market
	-	introduction of export quotas
	-	reduce the number of boats per week to St Martin
	-	introduce a system of rotation to stop hucksters who come every week
	-	assist in opening new markets
	-	improve economic situation in Dominica so that traders can make a living
High overhead costs	-	lower the freight costs for boat transport
Spoilage of produce	-	provide cold-storage facilities on boat
	-	improve handling of produce by crew members

Dumping of goods by boat-owners dumped	-	obtain financial redress when produce is dumped
Customers buy on credit and don't pay back	-	cash payment
High prices of farm produce	-	control prices on agricultural produce

2. The traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines trading with Trinidad and Tobago

<u>Problems</u>		<u>Solutions</u>
Bad market conditions	-	provide shelter
	-	provide more security
Bad port conditions	-	more security
Foreign exchange	-	exchange should be approved immediately in Trinidad and Tobago
	-	exchange should be done in St Vincent and the Grenadines
	-	exchange rate should be EC\$1= TT\$1 instead of devaluation of TT\$
High overhead costs	-	reduce air-fares
	-	lower freight costs
Customs	-	streamline documentation procedures
	-	reduce duty on imports into St Vincent and the Grenadines.
Problems in Trinidad and Tobago	-	authorities should respond to problems

Traders suggested that an organization be created to foster co-operation among traders and to facilitate trading activities in both countries.

3. The traders from St Lucia trading with Barbados

<u>Problems</u>		<u>Solutions</u>
Poor sales	-	lift the ban on mangoes
	-	eliminate mango-weevil problem
Bad market conditions	-	improve security
	-	provide shelter

- provide space to sell produce wholesale
- Customs - reduce import duties on produce
- facilitate licence requirements

4. The traders from Grenada trading with Trinidad and Tobago

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Solutions</u>
Packing, grading and sorting	- need facilities
Bad market conditions	- provide shelter
	- improve security
High overhead costs	- reduce air-fares
	- reduce freight charges
Exchange rate	- revalue currency (\$TT)
Customs problems	- reduce customs duties
	- reduce import restrictions
	- eliminate restrictions on exports
	- better treatment by personnel
	- increase export quota of TT\$
	- eliminate cumbersome procedures
Airport tax	- reduce tax

Several traders expressed the need for an organization to address their needs and to foster co-operation among them on pricing.

VI. SUMMARY

A. Trade characteristics

- The total number of traffickers in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St Lucia and Grenada was estimated at 1,264 in 1987.
- The number of active traders⁷⁷ in Dominica for 1989 was 119.
- The number of active traders in St Vincent and the Grenadines was 322 in 1987.

⁷⁷ Those who exported agricultural produce in the period of research: January - February 1987, 1988 and 1989.

- The estimated number of traders in Grenada was 275 and in St Lucia, 60 (active and non-active).
- The drop-out rate among Dominican traders was high: between 1988 and 1989 the number of active Dominican traders declined by 46 per cent.
- The large numbers of traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines also declined in recent years.
- The participation of Dominican women in the huckster trade was high and on the increase. In 1989, 71 per cent of the active traders were female.
- The percentage of active male traders from Dominica declined from 43 per cent in 1987 to 29 per cent in 1989.
- Portsmouth was the most important port for the Dominican hucksters: in 1989, 60 per cent of the traders were operating from there.
- Male Dominican traders made greater use in 1989 than in previous years of the Portsmouth port, rather than the Roseau port: 34 per cent of the hucksters shipping from Portsmouth were male in 1989, compared to 18 per cent from Roseau.
- Hucksters did not specialize in any particular product; they traded in 4-5 products.
- In 1989, produce assortment shipped from Roseau was higher than that leaving Portsmouth.
- The quantity of the three main products exported by the Dominican hucksters (grapefruit, plantain and oranges) tripled between 1987 and 1988, but declined drastically between 1988 and 1989.
- The traffickers of St Vincent and the Grenadines traded mainly in ground provisions: eddoes, sweet potatoes, dasheen, tannias and yams.
- Traffickers from Grenada and St Lucia traded mostly in fruits.
- The influx of new hucksters travelling from Dominica to St Martin was low and consisted only of females.
- Of the hucksters trading with St Martin, 37.7 per cent partly marketed their own produce.
- Of all the traders, 23.7 per cent grew their own produce.
- The three main markets for the Dominican traders were Guadeloupe, Antigua and St Martin.

- The main markets for the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada were Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados.
- Barbados and Martinique were the main markets of the hucksters from St Lucia.
- Of the total huckster population, 56.6 per cent, mainly male, were involved in a regular reverse trade.
- The value of commodities imported into Dominica by the hucksters varied from \$EC 267 to \$EC 4,732.⁷⁸
- The level of business formalization was low, especially for the female hucksters.
- Capital investment in the trade was low, especially for female traders: only 19.5 per cent invested in a van or storage area compared to 28.9 per cent of males.
- Of all the traders, 81.8 per cent did not do regular book-keeping.
- Only 16.7 per cent of all the traders sold produce in the formal sector. Male traders sold to formal-sector outlets (e.g., shops, supermarkets, restaurants) more often than females (21.1 per cent and 15.6 per cent, respectively).
- Only 3.2 per cent of all traders had written agreements with buyers.
- Of all the hucksters, 36.4 per cent travelled by air. The others travelled by boat.
- The traders relied mostly on children and other relatives for assistance in their work.
- Dominican hucksters of the same sex and the same parish co-operated in the transporting, documenting and supervising of the load.
- Female hucksters tended to travel more frequently and more were engaged full-time in the trade than males.

⁷⁸ Based on data entries in Dominica in Jan-Feb. 1987

B. The traders

- The average age of all the traders was 41. Male traders tended to be younger than females (their average ages were 36.6 and 42.1, respectively).
- On average, Dominican traders shipping to St Martin were the oldest and Grenadian traders were the youngest of the traders of the Windward Islands. Most of the Dominicans had started trading in their early thirties.
- Most of the traders had finished primary school. Younger traders and newcomers were the most likely to have been exposed to higher education.
- Male hucksters tended to have had some secondary education more often than females.
- Grenadian traders tended to be the best educated and St Lucians the least educated of the four groups of traders.
- Of the hucksters,⁷⁹ 45.3 per cent were single/widowed/separated/divorced.
- Males earned higher incomes from the trade than females.
- Traders from Dominica tended to earn the lowest weekly incomes of the four groups of traders.
- The traders from St Lucia appeared to earn the highest weekly incomes.
- Of the traders, 67 per cent seemed to be solely dependent on their trade income.
- More male hucksters appeared to be also small farmers than females (55.3 per cent and 23.7 per cent, respectively).⁸⁰
- The Dominican hucksters were resident mostly in the parish of St Georges.

⁷⁹ See footnote 78.

⁸⁰ More research is needed to verify this, as the number of male respondents in the survey was small.

C. Traders' Associations

- In 1989, approximately 60 per cent of the traders shipping agricultural produce were members of the Dominica Hucksters Association (DHA).
- Among the hucksters going to St Martin in 1989, 69.8 per cent were members of the DHA.
- Of hucksters in the DHA, 77.7 per cent had not shipped agricultural produce during the months of research (January - February 1987, 1988 and 1989).
- The Traffickers' Small Business Association in St Vincent and the Grenadines was non-operational in the late 1980s.
- Efforts were underway to form a traders' association in Grenada.

D. Child-care

- Only 18.8 per cent of the female traders relied on their spouse to take care of their children during their absence from home.
- Paid arrangements were common for taking care of children in the 5-7 age-group.
- Of the hucksters, 11.5 per cent expressed dissatisfaction with child-care arrangements.
- Hucksters' female relatives helped especially in looking after the children during the trader's absence from home.

E. Views

- There were strong indications that female traders had low esteem for their work.
- According to complaints by hucksters, the deplorable conditions of the schooners operating from Dominica, in which the produce is transported, led to delays and the dumping or spoiling of the cargo.
- Males were regarded by the female traders as being able to cope better in the loading activity while they considered themselves as being better at selling. Males, on the whole, had less problems with farmers than females and probably coped better in the purchasing of the produce.
- The hucksters liked the fact that they were their own boss.

- Many hucksters did not like to travel overseas, but did so out of necessity; some were tired and wanted to stop trading.
- F. Problem areas
- The hucksters had no insurance coverage of losses.
 - They had a very heavy workload and performed under less than adequate conditions.
 - Conditions on the boats presented problems to the traders. One major complaint was the dumping of produce when rough seas occurred.
 - The hucksters' income varied, resulting in much insecurity.
 - Of all the traders, 54.5 per cent considered themselves unsuccessful.
 - Male traders were slightly more likely to consider themselves successful than females.
 - Of the Dominican male traders, 60 per cent considered themselves successful, compared to only 31.2 per cent of the females.
 - All the traders from St Lucia considered themselves successful.
 - Among traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines, females considered themselves successful more often than males (44.2 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively).
 - Among Grenadian traders, 50 per cent of both males and females considered themselves successful.
 - Nearly half of all the traders cited governmental rules and regulations as major obstacles to their success in trade.
 - Traders from St Lucia attributed their difficulties to the ban on the export of mangoes from their island.
 - Traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada attributed their lack of success to the devaluation of the Trinidad and Tobago currency.
 - Traders felt that their spoilage problems were caused by bad handling during loading and off-loading and during the voyage by boat. They seemed to underestimate other factors affecting the spoilage rate.
 - Of all the female traders, 79.2 per cent compared to 57.9 per cent of the males, reported goods stolen during the previous year.

- Of the female traders marketing their produce in St Martin, 74.4 per cent had experienced theft of produce in the Marigot market in 1988. Most victims were females over the age of 46.
- Most of the theft of produce occurred in the overseas markets.
- Both male and female traders reported having difficulty with customers abroad.
- Of the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines, 38.3 per cent complained of problems with Customs officers, as did 55.9 per cent of the Grenadians .
- Of the traders from St Vincent and the Grenadines, 28.3 per cent complained of mistreatment by airline personnel.
- Co-operation between male and female traders travelling to St Martin was rare. Males, in the minority, seemed to have antagonistic feelings towards their female counterparts.
- Conflicts existed between female traders and farmers with regard to the quality of the produce obtained from the farmers and the lack of repayment of credit by the hucksters to the farmers.
- Only 19.4 per cent of all the traders had obtained bank-loans for their trade. Female traders had applied for and received loans more often than the males.
- Of the female traders, 76 per cent had experienced health problems compared to 34.2 per cent of the males. Single women and those over 46 years old were the most vulnerable.
- More than two-thirds of the female traders marketing in St Martin had experienced health problems such as headaches, back-pains and dizziness.

G. Concluding remarks

The hucksters constitute a dynamic sector of entrepreneurs in the informal sector of the region's economies, where they play an important role by responding to the need for food and other consumer goods that are not available in sufficient quantity through formal-sector import/export channels. In spite of the fact that the hucksters contribute to economic development by creating employment, increasing export and foreign exchange earnings and contributing to the nutritional status of the populations served, government programmes and policies continue to focus on promoting exports in the formal sector. The hucksters, who labour under poor working conditions and take risks that formal-sector participants are not prepared to take, must struggle, largely unaided, to overcome numerous barriers in order to survive. Whether they are successful depends largely on their ability to cope

with the difficult social and economic environment in which they have to operate.

VII. Recommendations

A. Recommendation 1

To set up a pilot project in which traders are pooled together in small groups with the aim of tackling the many problems they encounter in their work. The long-term objectives of the project would be: are (1) to increase the control the traders have on their business; and (2) to elevate their economic and social position.

Suggestions for action:

- To introduce a division of labour among the traders within each small group. Specialization could be possible in the following fields: (a) purchasing; (b) sorting/grading; (c) packing; and (d) marketing/selling overseas.
- Time constraints do not allow the traders to check the produce when they purchase it from the farmers/suppliers. It is not uncommon, therefore, for them to end up with very poor quality produce. When this happens the trader, as an individual, has no guarantee of reimbursement from the supplier. Legal assistance and collective checking procedures could be put in place in order to protect the trader.
- The huckster has no recourse against vessel-operators whenever they handle their produce badly or dump when the boat faces difficulties in rough seas. Mechanisms to prevent such practices could be implemented in co-operation with the vessel operators. The possibility of setting up an emergency/insurance fund for losses of produce could also be explored.
- Those activities that are in direct control of the traders could be improved and upgraded. Some traders still use sacks and bags, round wicker baskets and wooden crates that do not protect the produce sufficiently, the contents often being compressed. To improve their market penetration, they should improve their packaging methods.

Prerequisites for the success of the above project

- Carriers, drivers, ship-crew/owners and farmers must be included in the project. The hucksters are not in a position to solve all their problems individually or even as group. Brainstorming sessions with all the parties involved in the trade are necessary.

- The selection of the small groups should be based on those traders who are members of the Dominican Hucksters' Association and who already co-operate to a certain extent. Co-operation occurs mainly among traders residing in the same area. Participation must be based on a purely voluntary basis. The different groups can, at a later stage, learn from each other and be fused together.
- Mechanisms should be put in place to foster discussion among hucksters. A participatory approach is needed, whereby the hucksters are involved from the beginning of the project. It is important that the hucksters' view the project as their own; they must stay "boss of themselves" and make their own decisions on their work and their future. The role of the project would be to monitor the groups and to provide the necessary information in order to reduce possible mistakes.
- The project should provide enough financial backing to ensure the full participation of both male and female traders.

B. Recommendation 2

To improve the collection of data on the traders and their trade.

- The sex of the traders should be added to the records of the phyto-sanitary certificates, manifest and shipping bills so that more gender-specific detailed data can be retrieved, such as volume of trade by sex of trader, number of traders by sex, per shipment, etc.
- All the data available from the huckster licence register, shipping documents, DHA files and phyto-sanitary certificates should be pooled together in a Database 4 programme at a central place. A suggestion for such a place would be the DHA offices. The data should be analyzed regularly in order to up-date understanding of trends and enable necessary adjustments. The creation of a database containing all the available data has been initiated by the Women in Development Unit of ECLAC and could be expanded.

C. General recommendations

1. Efforts should be made to support the establishment and growth of traders' associations. The full participation of female traders in the formation process should be actively encouraged.
2. Trading programmes should be provided to the traders in order to upgrade their trading skills and practices and to facilitate their access to market information, advisory services and credit.

3. Credit schemes should be developed to facilitate traders' access to credit.
4. Facilities to improve the working conditions of the traders, such as sheds at the ports and the markets, refrigeration/cold storage and sanitation, should be provided.
5. Security measures in the markets and at the ports should be improved in order to reduce larceny.
6. The possibility of developing and expanding links with extra-regional markets as well as with the formal sector within the region (e.g., supermarkets and hotels/restaurants) should be explored.
7. Further research into the operations of traders should be undertaken in order to determine remedial measures to address the existing problems.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRADERS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE
pretest

Country Int.no. Resp.no Date

PERSONAL DATA

1 (a) Sex; M / F
[to be observed]

Age of boys :

____/____/____/____/____/____

(b) Ethnicity: _____
[to be observed]

Age of girls :

____/____/____/____/____/____

(c) How old are you? Age: _____
[in completed years]

CHILD CARE

[If no children or the children are older than 15 year, go to question 12]

2 (a) In which country do you live?

Home country:

(b) In which parish?

Parish:

3. What is the highest school standard you have achieved?

Primary school
: _____ standardSecondary school
: _____ formPost secondary education
: _____

4. Are you:

- in a common-law relationship
- in a visiting relationship
- married
- single
- divorced
- separated
- widowed

5 (a) How many children do you have?

Number of children:

(b) How many boys / girls?

Number of boys:

Number of girls:

(c) What age are they?

6. How do you feel about being separated from your children while you are trading?

7 (a) Do your children sleep at home, while you are trading?

- yes [If yes, skip (b)]
- no

(b) At who's place do the children stay?

At the home of:

8. Who is taking care of them at home?

- no one
- husband/wife
- elder daughter(s)
- elder son(s)

 others:

9. Which of these persons do stay with the children at night?

- no one
- husband/wife
- elder daughter(s)
- elder son(s)

 others:

10. Do you pay for the child care services?

- yes
- no
- sometimes

11 (a) Are you happy or unhappy with the child care arrangements you make?

- unhappy
- happy

(b) Why unhappy/happy?

TRADE BACKGROUND

12 (a) How many years have you been trading overseas?

Years:

(b) With which countries do you trade overseas?

country:

country:

country:

13 (a) When you started trading overseas, could you tell me how many other people from your country were trading?

Number of traders:

(b) What percentage were women?

- 0 % to 25 %
- 25 % to 50 %
- 50 % to 75 %
- 75 % to 100 %

14 (a) How many people of your country are trading nowadays?

Number of traders:

(b) What percentage are women?

- 25 % to 50 %
- 50 % to 75 %
- 75 % to 100 %

15 (a) Were you employed before entering the trade?

- yes
- no [If no, skip (b)]

(b) What kind of employment did you have just before entering the trade?

16. How much do you weekly get from trading after taking out your expenses?

Weekly income:

_____ EC

_____ TT or

17. Do you have any additional sources of income?

- yes
- no [If no, skip question 18]

18. What are those sources?

o other jobs:

o financial support from: _____

19. Do you have at home:

- a shop
- a storage area
- a private owned van or truck for transportation of the produce

the

20 (a) Do you think you are a successful trader?

- yes
- no

(b) Why are you (not) successful?

21. Which of the following things or persons are making it difficult for you to be a successful trader?

And in what way?

governmental regulations and rules

strong competition with other traders

family

cargo ships

documentation requirements

22 (a) Is any of your produce often damaged when you reach the market in St. Martin / St. Maarten?

- yes
- no {if no skip (b) and

(c)]

- sometimes

(b) Which items are often damaged?

(c) What do you think causes the produce to be damaged?

- transportation in home country
- loading/off-loading ship
- shipping
- bad quality of the produce
- inadequate packing material
- o o t h e r :

23 (a) How often in the last year did you have problems with stealing of produce?

- no stealing
- number: _____

(b) And at what places did this stealing occur?

- at the port in home country
- at the port in St. Martin / St. Maarten
- on the market in St. Martin / St. Maarten
- o e l s e w h e r e :

at day

(c) How often in the last year did you have problems with stealing of money?

- no stealing
- number: _____

(d) And at what places did this stealing occur?

- at the port in home country
- at the port in St. Martin / St. Maarten
- on the market in St. Martin / St. Maarten
- o e l s e w h e r e :

at day

24(a) Did you try to get any credit or loans from banks for your trade?

no [If no, go to question 25]

(b) Did you succeed?

yes [If yes, skip (c)]
 no

(c) Why did you not succeed?

25 (a) With which of the following persons do you sometimes have problems?

- truck drivers
- farmers
- airline personnel
- custom officers
- plant-quarantine officers
- shipping personnel
- market personnel
- customers
- bankers
- female traders
- male traders
- no one

(b) What problems do you have with these persons?

with: _____ problem: _____

with: _____ problem: _____

with: _____ problem: _____

with: _____ problem: _____

26 (a) Which of the following health problems do you have:

- often feeling dizzy
- swollen, stiff legs/feet
- aching back
- high blood pressure
- stress
- heart problems

o t h e r

problems: _____

(b) What do you think causes these problems?

- poor eating during trade
- bad sleeping conditions during trade
- standing the whole day
- working the whole day in sun, rain or/and dust
- working too many hours a day

other: _____

27. What would you like to be done to make the trade easier for all the traders?

TRADING ACTIVITIES

28. On which day did you arrive in this country?

Day: _____ Date: _____

29. On which day are you going to leave?

Day: _____ Date: _____

30. At what time will you be back at your place in your country?

A t : _____

31. How many trips do you usually make in a month?

Number of trips: _____

32. In which months you do NOT trade at all?

Months :

33. What produce do you trade on a regular basis?

o no special produce on a regular basis
o regular trade in :

- tannah o avocado (pears) o
- o bananas o
- tomatoes o breadfruit o yams
- o cabbage o
- others: o christophene
- o coconuts
- o dasheen
- o eddoes
- o ginger
- o golden apple
- o grapefruits
- o lettuce
- o onions
- o oranges
- o paw paw
- o plantains
- o portugals
- o pumpkin
- o spices
- o sweet peppers
- o sweet potatoes

34. What produce have you brought this time?

- o avocado (pears) o tannah
- o bananas o tomatoes
- o breadfruit o yams
- o cabbage o others:
- o christophene
- o coconuts
- o dasheen
- o eddoes
- o ginger
- o golden apple
- o grapefruits
- o lettuce
- o onions
- o oranges
- o paw paw
- o plantains
- o portugals
- o pumpkin
- o spices
- o sweet peppers
- o sweet potatoes

35. How much produce do you usually bring to St. Martin / St.

NUMBER	KIND OF PRODUCE
	B O X E S /
	CARTONS
	B A G S /
	SACKS
	B U N C H E S
	C R A T E S

36 (a) Do you or your family grow any of the produce you trade?

- o yes
- o no [If no, skip (b)]

(b) How much of the produce you sell in this country is grown by you or your family?

- o none
- o less than a quarter
- o quarter
- o half
- o three quarter
- o more than three quarter

37. From how many persons do you buy produce?

Number of suppliers:

38. Do you always buy your produce from the same suppliers?

- o yes
- o no

39. With how many of the suppliers do you have a written agreement?

o number: _____

40. Which of the following groups of persons buy your produce:

- hotel owners or personnel
- restaurant holders or personnel
- supermarket holders or personnel
- shop holders or personnel
- street vendors/ market vendors
- don't know

41. Do you have a written agreement with anyone to buy your produce?

- yes
- no

42. What do you do with the produce you are not able to sell?

43 (a) What type of goods do you usually take back to your country?

- no goods
-

(b) Are any of these goods for sale in your country?

- yes
- no [If not for sale, go to

question 48]

44. Do you take these goods back to your country by ship or plane?

- plane
- ship [If by ship only, skip

question 45]

- both

45. How many packages of goods do you usually take back by plane?

Number of packages:

46. How many packages of goods do you take back by ship?

Number of packages:

47. To whom do you usually sell the goods you take back to your home country?

- shops
- supermarkets
- street vendors/ market vendors
- friends/neighbours
- family
- businessmen

48. Let us talk about all the activities you carry out in preparation for trading. On what day do you start collecting your produce? And at what time do you start this activity?

[Continue asking for following activities - see activity list below -]

Activity list: E.g.: cleaning; sorting; grading; packing; transporting to harbour; documenting the produce in home country.

ACTIVITIES STARTING AT (HOUR)	DAY
_____	_____
_____	_____

Activity 1 :

Activity 2 :

Activity 3 :

other relatives:

51 (a) Do other persons help you?

- yes
- no [If no, skip (b)]

(b) Do you regularly pay them?

- yes
- no

52. What kind of records do you keep regularly?

- not keeping any records
- the costs of each trip
- the profits of each trip
- the number of working days
- other :

53. Are you a member of any traders association?

- yes
- no

54. Is there something you want to add that has not been dealt with in this interview?

55. [If the respondent make no objection, please ask his/her name]

Family name: _____ First name: _____

APPENDIX II
CODE BOOK FOR THE SURVEY: TRADERS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

I. Identification of the interview

Country: Trinidad = TT
 Barbados = BB
 St. Maarten = SM
 Curaçao = CU

Int. no.: = Each interviewer get a number.

Resp.no.= Number of the respondent; The first respondent interviewed get number 1, the second respondent get number 2 etc...

Date: = Day and month the interview take place.

Example: Monique Lagro, interviewer number 1, interviewed the first respondent on 13 February 1989 in St. Martin/St. Maarten

country:	int.no.:	resp.no.	date:
SM	0	1	1502

II. Coding of the survey

General code for: Not answered = N.A.
 Don't know = D.K.

1.a sex: M or F

2.b ethnicity: mixed = 1
 black/afro = 2
 east-indian = 3
 white = 4

1.c age: in completed years
 e.g. 19 or 57

2.a home country: St. Vincent = SV
 Grenada = GR
 St. Lucia = SL
 Dominica = DO
 Anguilla = AN

2.b parish: Grenada St. Martin = stm
 St. Patrick = stp
 St. Andrew = sta
 St. David = std
 St. George = stg
 Carriacou = car

St. Vincent and the Grenadines St. David = std
 St. Andrew = sta
 St. Patrick = stp
 St. George = stg
 Charlotte = cha

Dominica: St. Patrick = stp
 St. Mark = stm
 St. Luke = stl
 St. George = stg
 St. Paul = stp

St. David = std
 St. Andrew = sta
 St. Joseph = stj
 St. Peter = spe
 St. John = stj

Saint Lucia Anse la Raye = alr
 Castries = cas
 Choiseul = cho
 Dauphin = dau
 Dennery = den
 Gros Islet = gro
 Laborie = lab
 Micoud = mic
 Praslin = pra
 Soufriere = sou
 Vieux Fort = vif

3. highest school standard:

no school at all = 0
 primary school = p
 secondary school = s
 tertiary instit. = t
 school standard = 1,2,3

...

example: primary school standard 3 = p 3

4. union status: common law = 1
 visiting = 2
 married = 3
 single = 4
 widowed = 5
 separated = 6
 divorced = 7

5.a number of children: 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7.....

5.b1 number of boys: 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7.....

5.b2 number of girls: 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7.....

5.c1 age of boys: the age of the youngest and
 the oldest
 e.g.: 1 2 2 4

5.c2 age of girls: Same

7.a children at home yes = y
 no = n

8. child care no one = 0
 husband/wife = 1
 elder daughter(s) = 2
 elder son(s) = 3
 others = 4

9. child care at night no one = 0
 husband/wife = 1
 elder daughter(s) = 2
 elder son(s) = 3

	others = 4	3		
10. paying for child-care	yes = y, no = n, sometimes = s	4	cargo ships =	
11. satisfaction with child care	unhappy = 1 happy = 2	5	documentation requir. =	
12.a years of trading:	0,1,2,3,4,5,6.....	22.a damage of produce	yes = y no = n	
12.b countries overseas:	Trinidad and Tobago = TT Barbados = BB Guadeloupe = GU Martinique = MA Sint Maarten = SM	22.c causes of damage	transport in home ctr. = 1 (off)loading ship = 2 shipping = 3 bad quality of prod. = 4 bad packing material = 5 other = 6	
	Use for other countries the first two letters	23.a frequency of stealing produce	0,1,2,3,4	
13.a exact number of traders, when started:	e.g. 251, 824, 700	23.b place of stealing produce	at port in home ctr. = 1 at port in St. Mart. = 2 on market in St.Mart. = 3 else where = 4	
13.b estimated number of women when started:	under 25 % = 1 25% - 50% = 2 50% - 75% = 3 above 75% = 4	23.c frequency of stealing money	0,1,2,3,4	
14.a exact number of traders, now:	e.g. 251, 824, 700	23.d place of stealing produce	at port in home ctr. = 1 at port in St. Mart. = 2 on market in St. Mart. = 3 else where = 4	
14.b estimated number of women now:	under 25 % = 1 25% - 50% = 2 50% - 75% = 3 above 75% = 4	24.a try to get credit	yes = y no = n	
15.a employment before trade	yes = y no = n	24.b succeeded to get credit	yes = y no = n	
16. weekly income: = TT	Trinidad dollars East Caribbean dollars =	25.a problems with persons	no one = 0 truck driver = 1 farmers = 2 airline personnel = 3 custom officers = 4 plant-quar.officers = 5 shipping personnel = 6 market personnel = 7 customers/buyers = 8 bankers = 9 female traders = 10 male traders = 11	
EC	e.g. 1500 TT			
17. additional income:	yes = y no = n			
18. sources of additional income:	other jobs = 1 financ.support = 2			
19. having at home	van/ truck = 1 storage area = 2 shop = 3			
20.a being a successful trader	yes = y no = n	26.a health problems	head ache = 1 feeling dizzy = 2 swollen legs = 3 aching back = 4 high blood pressure = 5 stress = 6 heart problem = 7 other problems = 8	
21 persons/inst	governmental restrict. =	26.b causes of health	poor eating = 1	
1	constraining success strong competition =			
2	family =			

Note that code 10 and 11 have to be placed in one box.

- problem
- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| bad sleeping | = 2 | a quarter | = 2 |
| standing | = 3 | a half | = 3 |
| working in sun (...) | = 4 | three of a quarter | = 4 |
| working too long | = 5 | more than three quar. | = 5 |
| other causes | = 6 | | |
28. day of arrival:
- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| monday | = mon |
| tuesday | = tue |
| wednesday | = wed |
| thursday | = thu |
| friday | = fri |
| saturday | = sat |
| sunday | = sun |
- date of arrival: example: 3 of april = 03 04
29. day of departure:
- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| monday | = mon |
| tuesday | = tue |
| wednesday | = wed |
| thursday | = thu |
| friday | = fri |
| saturday | = sat |
| sunday | = sun |
- date of departure: example: 6 april = 06 04
30. time of arrival add P.M. or A.M. to the time
at home e.g. half past one = 01.30 P.M.
31. average number of trips: 1,2,3,4,5.....
32. months not trading:
- | | |
|-----------|------|
| January | = 1 |
| February | = 2 |
| March | = 3 |
| April | = 4 |
| May | = 5 |
| June | = 6 |
| July | = 7 |
| August | = 8 |
| September | = 9 |
| October | = 10 |
| November | = 11 |
| December | = 12 |
33. number of different produce on regular basis: count the total number: 1,2,.....
34. number of produce on this trip: count the total number: 1,2,.....
35. total number of packages* count the total number of all cartons, crates, boxes etc.
- 36.a own grown produce yes = y
no = n
- 36.b. amount of produce grown none = 0
less than a quarter = 1
37. number of suppliers 1,2,3,4,5,6.....
38. the same suppliers yes = y
no = n
39. number of suppliers with written agreement 0,1,2,3,4.....
40. type of buyers
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| hotels | = 1 |
| restaurants | = 2 |
| supermarkets | = 3 |
| shop holders | = 4 |
| street/market vendors | = 5 |
| don't know | = 0 |
41. written agreement with buyer yes = y
no = n
- 43.b reselling goods: yes = y
no = n
44. way of transport: plane = 1
ship = 2
both = 3
45. number of packages by plane exact number
e.g. 35 packages = 35
46. number of packages by ship exact number
e.g. 35 packages = 35
47. type of buyers of resale goods in home country
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| shops | = 1 |
| supermarkets | = 2 |
| street/market vendors | = 3 |
| friends/neighbours | = 4 |
| family | = 5 |
| businessmen | = 6 |
- 50.a kind of helping relatives no one = 1
husband/wife = 2
children = 3
other relatives = 4
- 51.a help from others yes = y
no = n
- 51.b regular payment yes = y
no = n
52. keeping records none = 0
costs = 1
profits = 2
days = 3
other = 4
53. membership of traders org. yes = y
no = n