



GENERAL
LC/CAR/G.281/Add.1
20 November 1989
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Twelfth session
Curacao, Netherlands Antilles
4-8 December 1989

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE
1988-1989

- 6 JUL 1989



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
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INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Through the efforts of its Women in Development (WID) Unit, the secretariat collected data on traders in the informal sector, specifically in Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, the Leeward Islands, Haiti and Curacao, within the context of the project entitled "The Establishment of a Database on Selected Areas of Women's Participation in Social and Economic Development" (HOL/89/S49). This involved:

(a) A regional socio-economic survey among 250 suitcase traders travelling to Curacao to purchase commodities and 218 agricultural traders exporting produce and travelling to Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and St Martin. The suitcase-traders questioned in Curacao originated in Jamaica (82), the Dominican Republic (58), Haiti (28), Trinidad and Tobago (25), Venezuela (29), Suriname (11), Guyana (6), St Martin (6) and other countries (5). The traders in agricultural produce were from Dominica (53), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (60), Grenada (59), Saint Lucia (23) and Saint Vincent or Grenada¹ but resident legally or illegally in Trinidad and Tobago (23).

(b) Collection of statistical data on trends in the inter-island trade in fresh agricultural produce in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Dominica. In-house databases were developed for 1987, 1988 and 1989 on the number of traders by name, sex and frequency of travel; quantities of produce exported in EC dollars and kilograms, by commodity, name of the boat, port of departure and arrival; and residence, age of the trader, membership in a trader's association, possession of a licence and address and name of farmer/supplier (if available).

(c) Computerization of the statistical data on the trade in fresh agricultural produce and the data on the socio-economic survey. A computer programme enabling easy data retrieval through a computer running MS DOS was developed to facilitate the collection of data and enable in-depth analysis of changes occurring in the trade, with emphasis on the situation of female traders. Diskettes with the programme and a relevant manual were sent to the countries involved in the project.

(d) A regional survey of export processing industries in March 1989 in Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the participation of women in this sector. A questionnaire was sent to government industry and commerce focal points and to

¹ When it became clear that quite a large group of these traders had decided to stay in Trinidad in order to reduce overhead costs a special questionnaire was designed for this group and they were added to the survey.

national institutions engaged in activities related to industrial development, followed by consultant missions to the countries involved.

Other activities

Considerable work was performed on the project, "Bibliography on Women" (RLA/87/WO3). From the collections of libraries in the Caribbean Information System for Economic and Social Planning (CARISPLAN), 868 references on Women in Development were abstracted and listed. Included were articles from serial publications, monographs and less widely distributed documents, such as technical reports and conference papers.

A fact-finding mission was undertaken to Curacao from 18 to 23 December 1988 to obtain specific information on the suitcase traders operating in the Free Zone in Curacao and to prepare the socio-economic survey planned for March 1989.

On request, in-house searches from the databases on the agricultural traders of Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada were conducted and computer print-outs were provided.

The secretariat was represented at the Regional Evaluation Meeting on the CAFRA regional project, "Women in Agriculture", 1989.

A lecture was delivered on "Caribbean Women in Development and Change" at the National Seminar on Management for Effecting Change, Trinidad and Tobago, 1989.

The Governments of Antigua, Aruba, Guyana, the Netherlands Antilles, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago were provided with advice/technical assistance and training, where applicable, on specific aspects of the range of issues concerning women covered by the WID Unit.

With a view to promoting the development of skills for women through dissemination of information, the WID Unit assisted in the identification and selection of candidates from the Caribbean to attend various relevant courses and conferences.

Training

A two-day training seminar on methods and techniques of research was organized in Trinidad and Tobago on 9 and 10 February 1989, for the socio-economic survey team of Trinidad and Tobago.

A one-week training seminar on methods and techniques of research on violence against women was organized in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in December 1988, in collaboration with the Women's Desk in that country.

Publications

The following documents were prepared for publication:

(a) "Comparative Status of Women in Selected Caribbean Countries as indicated by Selected Social, Economic, Demographic and Legal Parameters" (LC/CAR/G.273). This is an update on the findings of the national studies on women as recipients of services from resources allocated in the national budget, in the period 1984-1988, conducted within the framework of a subregional project, "Women in Development and Planning";

(b) "Informal Trade in the Leeward Islands" (LC/CAR/G.275), in which an overview is provided of the inter-island trade in the informal sector in the Leeward Islands and possible sources for further data collection are identified;

(c) "Export Processing Zones and Women in the Caribbean". This report presents and analyses data derived from the survey of export processing industries undertaken in 1989 in eight CDCC countries, placed in the context of international production and early industrialization in the Caribbean;

(d) "The Informal Sector and Women in the Caribbean: Notes for Reflection", a discussion paper presented at the Consultation on Curriculum Development in Women's Studies, held at the University of Guyana, 19-23 June 1989;

(e) "Aspects of Law relating to the Status of Women in the Caribbean, with particular reference to selected CDCC countries";

(f) "The International Traders of Haiti: The Madam Sara", a description of the conditions under which Haitian traders labour and the constraints they face in an attempt to earn a living, in the Haitian social and political context; and

(g) "The Hucksters of Dominica", an overview of the inter-island trade in agricultural produce based on the statistical data collection and the survey data mentioned above; and

(h) "Participation in Formal and Informal Sectors of the Economy: Are Women Entrepreneurs?", a discussion paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, Barbados, 10-11 May 1989.

Co-operation with other agencies

The WID Unit collaborated with the FAO Office in Port-of-Spain to develop the in-house statistical databases on traders in fresh agricultural produce.

ILO and UNIDO assisted in implementing the survey on export-oriented industries.

In implementing the socio-economic survey, the WID Unit gained the collaboration of Curacao's Departments of International Relations and Labour, respectively; the Department of Sociology of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, the Extra-Mural Department (WAND) and the Caribbean Development Center in St Maarten.

The WID Unit collaborated with the PAHO Office in Trinidad and Tobago in the planning of the latter's upcoming national meeting of non-governmental organizations on health.