Since the initiation of the Women and Development programme within the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat in 1979, our goal has always been to define the work programme so that it responds to the articulated needs of our member countries. A major component of this work is the provision of information and technical assistance.

Research is another important aspect of our work here at ECLAC. The idea is that it should add to the critical thinking that informs social and economic policy, effective for advancing women’s rights and gender justice. Our current research agenda includes a focus on gender mainstreaming, gender issues in natural disaster; the impact of macro-economic policies on women and violence against women.

In the Social Affairs Unit, of which women and development is one programme area, we are also embarking on a project aimed at improving the region’s capacity to collect fully sex and gender disaggregated social statistics.

‘Gender Dialogue’ is a response to calls from participants at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Women held in Trinidad in October, 1999 for a more systematic sharing of information and dialogue around policies and programmes for women. At the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, we too have felt the need for a medium through which we could routinely share our work.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat will therefore be producing this newsletter twice a year and it will be available both in printed form and on the ECLAC website. Additionally we are exploring the creation of a chat room to expand the possibilities for dynamic dialogue.

Through Gender Dialogue, we will be paying particular attention to sharing research and thinking on emerging issues with regard to gender and social equity. In this first issue, we therefore share a summary of the recently concluded ECLAC study on “Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean”.

The issue of male marginalisation which can be traced back to Professor Errol Miller’s provocative book “Men at Risk” has captured the attention of policy makers throughout 1999 and this continues. In Barbados, a debate rages on the impact of co-education on the performance of boys in school. Elsewhere, the sociological meaning and consequence of the apparent dominance of girls in educational attendance and certification, particularly at tertiary level, dominates the discourse on gender equality. In this our first edition of Gender Dialogue, we share an excerpt of a paper prepared by Dr. Eudine Barritteau for the Sixth meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women’s Affairs in which she reviews the theorizing of male marginalisation.

We will be using this newsletter also to share information and we look forward to your responses and to suggestions which will help us fashion a newsletter that is interesting, relevant and useful.
Gender Mainstreaming... Achievements, Obstacles and The Way Forward

Governments in the Caribbean have attempted to advance gender equity through a variety of policy instruments and processes. Through the gender mainstreaming agenda, governments have attempted to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of public policies and programs. However, the implementation of gender mainstreaming has been, and continues to be, met with numerous challenges and obstacles.

One of the main obstacles to gender mainstreaming is the lack of political will. Without strong political commitment, the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming is nearly impossible. Political will is necessary to ensure that gender issues are taken seriously and that resources are allocated to support gender mainstreaming initiatives. Political commitment also requires that gender issues are addressed at all levels of government, from the national to the local level.

Another obstacle to gender mainstreaming is the limited capacity of national machineries to implement gender mainstreaming effectively. These machineries are often understaffed and underfunded, which limits their ability to carry out their mandate. Additionally, the lack of gender expertise within these machineries can hinder their ability to implement gender mainstreaming effectively.

The limited capacity of national machineries to implement gender mainstreaming effectively is reflected in the lack of clarity and specificity in gender mainstreaming goals and strategies. These goals and strategies often lack clear benchmarks and indicators of success. This lack of clarity and specificity makes it difficult to measure the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives and to hold decision-makers accountable for their actions.

Institutional mechanisms

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has established a number of institutional mechanisms to advance gender mainstreaming in the region. The CARICOM Secretariat, located in Bridgetown, Barbados, has been designated as the Secretariat for Gender Mainstreaming. The Secretariat has developed a number of strategies and tools to support gender mainstreaming, including the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and the Gender Mainstreaming Framework.

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy outlines the goals and objectives of gender mainstreaming in the Caribbean and provides a framework for implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives. The Gender Mainstreaming Framework provides a set of guidelines and tools for implementing gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels.

The Caribbean Community has also established a number of intergovernmental mechanisms to advance gender mainstreaming in the region. These mechanisms include the CARICOM Gender Commission, the CARICOM Gender Unit, and the Caribbean Women's Network (CWiN). These mechanisms work together to promote gender mainstreaming and to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of public policies and programs.

Conclusion

Gender mainstreaming is a complex and challenging process. It requires strong political commitment, institutional capacity, and clear strategies and tools to implement gender mainstreaming effectively. The Caribbean Community has made significant progress in advancing gender mainstreaming in the region. However, there is still much work to be done to fully institutionalize gender mainstreaming and to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of public policies and programs.

References

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<tr>
<th>Training Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming</th>
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<td>The ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat collaborated to host a three-day training workshop on gender mainstreaming for technical officers from national machinery for women. This workshop which was facilitated by the Directorate of Gender Affairs, took place at the Royal Antiguan Hotel on May 2-4 2000 and was attended by 30 participants from Anguilla, Antigua, Barbados, Saint Lucia, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Jamaica, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands.</td>
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<td>The need for gender training was highlighted at the Second and Third Caribbean Ministerial Conferences on Women. The Port-of-Spain Consensus, which was adopted at the Third Ministerial conference held on 5-7 October 1999, called on ECLAC/CDCC member States to strengthen the machinery for women through the provision of training to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming. In addition, the consensus called on countries to provide the necessary technical, material and financial resources to empower the national machinery for women to implement the various plans of action. The mandate to governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes at all levels was also stated in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.</td>
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<td>In its review of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the region, an ECLAC study on “Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean” concluded that while governments in the Caribbean have attempted in various ways to implement the mandate of gender mainstreaming, these attempts have been plagued by conceptual and operational difficulties.</td>
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<td>The workshop drew on the expertise of consultants Sonja Harris, Eudine Barriteau and Denise DeBique of CIDA’s Gender Equity Fund.</td>
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<td>The workshop focused on:</td>
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<td>1. an evaluation of best practices in gender mainstreaming in the region;</td>
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<td>2. a clarification of the definition of gender and the use of the concept of gender as an analytical tool in public policy and planning;</td>
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<td>3. evaluation and planning of mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.</td>
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**what participants had to say...**

"It was useful to hear the experiences of the other countries and understand the various stages at which they had arrived..."

"Given the new debates on male marginalization in the Caribbean at this time, the workshop could have provided some information to help us deal with the new challenges emerging in our respective countries..."

"My conceptual understanding of gender and gender mainstreaming was broadened..."

"Financial and technical support needed to promote relevant programmes and conduct gender training..."
Male marginalisation in the Caribbean

The concerns and perceptions of Young Men's Rights Network and Men Matter have been articulated by some policymakers worldwide for the region. These concerns evidence a somewhat limited understanding of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of male marginalisation. This paper addresses some of the key critical issues in the construction and maintenance of notions of masculinity and femininity. The analysis of the data is based on research conducted by the author, in the context of Caribbean societies. She argues that answering this question is essential to the proper analysis of the problem that men currently face in the Caribbean. For them, the problem that men currently face in the Caribbean is related to the history of male privilege that fosters gender inequalities and the resulting negative outcomes for men and women, boys and girls. The ideological dimension, which indicates how Caribbean societies construct and maintain notions of masculinity and femininity. Her analysis of the material dimension which exposes how men or women gain access to or are afforded material and non-material resources within a system or society. The material dimension also reveals how the material resources of the state are systematically invalidates women and women’s experiences.

Barry Chevannes, in her paper on “Re-examining Issues of Male Marginalization and Marginalization of the Black Male” presented at the Sixth Meeting of the Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Gender and Development in Bridgetown, Barbados on 29 March 2000, coined the terms ‘male marginalization’ and ‘men at risk’, in the late 1990s. Chevannes also reports that in the 1990s, “men have been seriously challenged by women in all spheres of life, from political arenas to the islands’ industries.” She argues that answering this question is essential to the proper analysis of the problem that men currently face in the Caribbean. For them, the problem that men currently face in the Caribbean is related to the history of male privilege that fosters gender inequalities and the resulting negative outcomes for men and women, boys and girls. The ideological dimension, which indicates how Caribbean societies construct and maintain notions of masculinity and femininity. Her analysis of the material dimension which exposes how men or women gain access to or are afforded material and non-material resources within a system or society. The material dimension also reveals how the material resources of the state are systematically invalidates women and women’s experiences.

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Reflections on Beijing +5

Five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, governmental delegations and NGOs from around the world convened in New York at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) to review the achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. More importantly, this global review focused on building a consensus on further actions necessary to accelerate the attainment of gender equality, development and peace.

Delegations from the ECLAC/CDCC member countries of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, the Netherlands Antilles, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago attended and participated in the Special Session. These delegations reported on the progress made in advancing gender equity in areas such as violence against women, education, poverty eradication and health. With technical assistance from representatives of the ECLAC/CDCC and CARICOM secretariats, Caribbean delegations were also able to make vital interventions, which assisted in bridging the ideological and cultural gaps among countries.

At the end of the Special Session, the plenary adopted what came to be known as the “Outcomes Document” entitled “Further Actions and Initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action”. This document acknowledges that the objective of the Beijing Platform for Action is the empowerment of all women and speaks to the achievements made since 1995. It also points to the continuing obstacles.

In the area of health, the document reflects that a shortage of financial and human resources as well as the increasing trend to privatization of health care systems has resulted in poor quality, as well as reduced and insufficient health care services. Consistent with the concerns of the Caribbean region, the lack of a comprehensive programme dealing with perpetrators of violence against women was seen as a persistent obstacle to the elimination of violence against women. In the area of the economy, the gender wage gap that also exists in the Caribbean region to the disadvantage of women was highlighted as an impediment to women’s economic advancement.

In light of the economic obstacles to women’s progress and the persistent exclusion of women from decision-making, the world’s governments agreed to use a gender perspective to review macroeconomic and social policies and programmes to ensure equitable access to social services and economic resources.

Global consensus was finally achieved that reproductive health implied that people were able to have a satisfying and safe sex life. It was therefore agreed that both men and women had the right to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice.

Beyond the prosecution of perpetrators of all forms of violence against women and girls, the Outcomes Document also calls for the introduction of actions aimed at helping and motivating perpetrators to break the cycle of violence and to take measures to provide avenues for redress to victims. Special attention was given to the trafficking of women and children, and the international sex trade. States agreed to intensify cooperation with each other to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in women and children.

Despite extended negotiations which went one day beyond the end of the Special Session on 9 June, 2000, no progress was made on controversial issues on access to safe abortion, sexual rights for women, non-discrimination against homosexuals and inheritance rights. Still the importance of the United Nations human rights system as a framework for further actions to be taken was evident throughout the Special Session.

Reflecting the Caribbean concerns for accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Sports for Jamaica Portia Simpson-Miller called on governments to move from commitment to action and to aggressively implement the recommendations. Only then, she opined, could it be said confidently, in the words of Bob Marley “No Woman, Nuh Cry… everything is gonna be alright”.

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Prepared by Dr. Neville C. Duncan, Reader in Caribbean Policy Issues, University of the West Indies, Barbados, for the Caribbean Subregional Review of WSSD+5 and the Status of the Older Person.

Poverty in the Caribbean

Globalization and Governance