

PART III : HOW WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS WERE ORGANISED

As an example of how the influence skills training can be used as part of a training exercise for women, we include in this section the objectives, programmes and other training notes developed for our series of regional workshops for women in small island states (held in 1981) for your information. We are including influence skills components in all of our major training courses.

1. OBJECTIVES

- a) To build an understanding of how government planning processes operate.
- b) To build an understanding of how international and regional bodies relate to the governments and the services they can provide for Women and Development.
- c) To develop the influence skills of participants.
- d) To give participants the opportunity to evaluate past experiences in their project work, particularly in working with governments and government agencies.
- e) To enable participants to identify the success factors in their past experiences.
- f) To enable participants through increased knowledge, skill and awareness to plan successful strategies for the future.
- g) To increase participants' awareness of Women's Affairs Units/Desks and their impact.
- h) To develop participants' skills in community mobilisation and communication.

2. PROPOSED AGENDA

- Item 1 : Issues raised at the Copenhagen Women's Decade Conference - the connection between the Conference and what is happening in the world at large.
- Item 2 : Participant sharing of project experiences.
- Item 3 : Women's National Machineries as they operate in the region/country.
- Item 4 : Regional/national government planning processes and how they work.
- Item 5 : Influence skills :
 - (a) Gaining entry in the first meeting
 - (b) Interviewing skills
 - (c) Dealing with conflict
 - (d) Influencing a group
- Item 6 : Community mobilisation.
- Item 7 : Field trips to women's projects in the country.
- Item 8 : Relationships of international and regional bodies to government(s) and the services they can provide.
- Item 9 : Application of identified needs to national plan(s).

P R O G R A M M E

	DAY 1 MONDAY	DAY 2 TUESDAY	DAY 3 WEDNESDAY	DAY 4 THURSDAY	DAY 5 FRIDAY
9.30	Opening address Panel discussion on Women's Bureaux	How the various governments' planning processes work	Community mobil- isation and communication 10.30	How CARICOM and the Commonwealth Secretariat relate to the governments. The services they can provide in the field of W & D	8.30 Plan field trip 9.00 Field trip
11.00			Plan field trip		
COFFEE					
11.15	Issues - the connection between the workshop and what is happen- ing in the world at large	Influence skills The first meeting - practical exercises	Plan field trip 11.30 Field trip	Confrontation and assertiveness - practical exercises	Field trip 11.30 Debriefing after field trip
12.30					
LUNCH					
2.00	Introductory exercise	Practical exercises continued	Field trip	Practical exercises continued	Application of identi- fied needs to national plans - individual exercise
3.00					
TEA					
3.15	Sharing project and work experiences	Asking questions to gather information - practical exercises	4.00 Free	How to influence groups - practical exercises	Subgroups discuss plans 4.30 Workshop review
5.00					
DINNER					
7.00 8.00	Film	Learning review	Debriefing after field trip	Learning review	

1 hr pm

4. LEARNING REVIEWS

As already mentioned in the Training Notes, we found regular learning reviews very useful for three reasons:

- (1) a reminder of what we had learned;
- (2) an indication of new learning goals, and
- (3) a way of dealing with any problems which may arise during the workshop.

The participants remained in the same subgroups they had been working in all day. The subgroup tutor asked the group to elect one member to make a brief (two-minute) report to the whole workshop at the beginning of the next day's work, covering the points raised by participants.

The tutor then asked the participants to spend a few minutes writing down what they had personally learnt during the last day(s). Each person then stated what she had learnt to the rest of the group. The other group members were asked to give her constructive feedback.

The tutor then asked the participants to write down, then state, any new learning goals they could identify following the first two days of the workshop. These were listed on newsprint and posted around the walls of the room.

$\frac{1}{2}$ hr am

GENERAL REVIEW

Each group reported the points covered in the learning reviews and noted the new learning goals. The course director led a brief discussion on points raised and dealt with any queries or problems.

The learning reviews were intended to reinforce the fact that participants are responsible for their own learning.

Tutors found it important to remind participants to relate learning reviews to all sessions not just the role-plays.

This exercise works best if each group has its own workroom throughout the workshop. When this was not possible each tutor kept the list and brought it to the next review.

5. INFORMATION SESSIONS

The information sessions printed here cover the topics Women and Development felt were appropriate for a series of regional workshops for women in small island states. While it is not likely that trainers using this manual would want to run a workshop exactly like those we have run, we have included descriptions of our information sessions as examples of the types of information that could be presented. Information on credit, co-operatives, nutrition, child care and other topics can all be matched up in a similar way with the influence skills segments, or presented as deemed most appropriate by the tutors.

In running our information sessions, we found these points valuable in making sure that the sessions were useful and relevant to the participants:

- We tried to choose speakers who were confident, well briefed on their subject matter, experienced in speaking to groups, easy to hear and entertaining (use of examples and anecdotes, etc.)
- So that participants would be able to relate comments to their own situation, we gave speakers full details about the group in advance of their session, and tried to ensure that they spent some time observing the group in order to know the level at which their remarks should be pitched.
- We checked with each speaker about any equipment they wanted to use (such as a blackboard or projector etc.) and then checked with the venue for the meeting that the equipment would be available. We also made sure that someone could use it.
- We asked speakers to make available any documents or handouts they had before the session, to make sure that enough copies were provided for participants and tutors.

1 hr

ISSUES - The connection between the issues raised at the Copenhagen Women's Decade Conference and what is happening in the region/country.

This session is based on a paper outlining some of the issues, prepared by the Commonwealth and Caricom Secretariats. (see Appendix 2).

The discussion began with issues of direct relevance to the region/country which were then linked to the broader international issues.

For example, an initial outline of the basis of participants' national economies, reasons for this basis and their impact on national development (e.g. dependency, aid and indebtedness, unemployment, rural-urban drift, migration, etc.) were then linked to the movements for change (i.e. New International Economic Order and the North-South dialogue).

We either did this session ourselves or invited a speaker to come in. In our workshops, women from the host country's women's organisations were invited to the opening of the workshop, and it proved convenient to run this Issues Session immediately after the official opening, to reach a wider audience as well as providing a framework for the workshop discussions.

2-2½ hrs

NATIONAL MACHINERIES : Panel Discussion

Speakers from existing National Machineries in the region/country outlined their experiences and problems. Group discussion and questions then followed.

We also had printed information on different types of national machineries (either from the panellists or from UN or other agencies) for distribution at the end of the session. When this information was handed out in advance of the session, we found that participants were more prepared to discuss and ask questions.

In most regions, there were at least three reasonably well-established national machineries whose directors were willing to share their experiences and knowledge with other countries. The session was chaired by the course director or one of the tutors, and the emphasis was on encouraging questions and dialogue.

1 hr

DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES: HOW THEY RELATE TO
GOVERNMENTS AND HOW THEY CAN HELP WOMEN

Representatives of regional/national/
international organisations (e.g. Commonwealth
Secretariat*, UN agencies, South Pacific
Commission, Caricom etc) spoke briefly about
their organisations, then invited comments and
questions.

Printed information was also made available
to back-up the verbal information, and was
handed out in advance where possible.

Representatives
were asked to
speak for about
10-15 minutes.

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

1½-2 hrs

A speaker (preferably someone experienced in community work, in planning and establishing projects and working with women in a variety of groups) outlined the principles of successful community mobilisation and invited comments (and shared experiences) from participants.

Principles covered included:

1. Using plenty of examples to enable participants to relate comments to their own country.
2. Methods of including women were covered thoroughly (and documented).
3. Identifying wants and needs and analysing them is very important - and to understand the differences between wants and needs.
4. Importance of not imposing ideas on women.
5. Importance of working with women to initiate or help them to set up projects which they saw valuable and valid for their lives.
6. Knowledge of basic principles of communication and use of them.
7. Encouraging the audience to share experiences.

3 hrs

HOW PLANNING PROCESSES WORK

A person involved in economic planning and aware of different planning processes outlined the topic, covering the following points:

- Recent recognition of involvement of women in development.
- Awareness of women's/people's(?) needs in national development plans.
- Types of national development plans - what form do they take, have the participants read theirs, does the plan mention women?
- Planning processes - can women have any influence on the content of their national plan? Is their plan written internally or by external experts?
- Concept of strategic thinking - the need to use women/contacts in economic and planning departments, ways in which planners can be encouraged to consider and include women's needs.

1 hr

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This subject was closely related to a field trip exercise as an important factor in project preparation. (A specific session on Needs Assessment would tie in effectively with the planning exercises.)

The needs assessment information session aimed to cover the following points:

1. Difference between needs and wants and how to separate them.
2. Need for sensitivity to people's /women's ability to recognise or articulate needs.
3. Question of who establishes needs - probably more effective for the community to do its own needs assessment.
4. Methodologies of needs assessment, in particular how to encourage women to do their own for project proposals, etc.
5. Importance of not imposing outside ideas on a community.
6. Importance of developing awareness of a developmental project based on a felt need but also including an element of confidence - raising to encourage new offshoots from the original project.

6. PRACTICAL FIELD TRIP EXERCISES

In all adult learning, practical application of knowledge (theory) gained is an essential part of the lesson. An important principle to be remembered in any field trip exercise is the difference between recording what has been seen and heard, and recording how newly acquired skills or knowledge have been applied to a real situation.

FIELD TRIP A

Preparation

1 hr

The workshop split into 4 subgroups each led by a tutor. They spent an hour planning the field trip. The tutor, with the help of a woman who understood the project, told the group where they were going and gave some background information about the project they were visiting. The subgroup then planned the field trip by agreeing:

- what to look for
- what questions to ask

These were posted on newsprint and each group member made a note of them for herself. The tutor kept the list for reference at the debriefing.

Each individual was asked to be prepared to report back on their personal experiences in asking questions and responses they got. (The aim of this was to make sure that nobody got lazy and did nothing).

The Commonwealth Secretariat's workshops included two field trips, one to a rural area lasting most of the day, and one to an urban project near the workshop venue, lasting half a day. The second one was also intended as an exercise in needs assessment.

In order to mix participants and give them a chance to work with different women, the groups were changed. In case anyone grumbled, the tutor explained that they were being re-grouped to give them all a chance to meet all the other participants.

4 hrs
30 mins

Field Trip

Each subgroup visited a project to make observations and gathered information using the plan.

Return from field trip.

1 hr
30 mins

Debriefing After Field Trip

Each subgroup met with their tutor and discussed:

- what did we find?
- what did we see?
- what were the answers to our questions?

The tutor referred to the planning list, and at the end of the debriefing session, asked how effective their plan was in getting the information.

To encourage all subgroup to participate, each one was asked to relate answers to questions they asked and comment on how effective their questions were. Tutors also sought feedback on how skillfully the group worked together and how well their pre-planned questions worked. The feedback on the project visited was dealt with first, in a brief and factual way.

FIELD TRIP B - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The workshop was divided into the same small groups as for the first field trip. Each tutor explained that participants were going to visit an area with the aim of finding out what people's needs were in that area.

The tutor asked participants to go with

open minds and try to get as much information as they could. This exercise was presented as useful training for similar exercises in their own countries.

The main aim of this field trip was to encourage participants to use questioning skills to discover the actual needs of people in the areas visited.

A further aim of the exercise was to encourage participants to practise asking questions so that they get valid information without upsetting people.

1 hr
30 mins

Field Trip

Each subgroup visited a project to make observations and gather information

Return from field trip.

1 hr

Debriefing After Field Trip

Each field trip group met with their tutor and discussed:

- what did we find?
- what did we see?
- what were the answers to our questions?

Again tutors asked for comments on the effectiveness of the plan, and any suggestions on any improvements to it.

3¼ hrs

7. APPLYING WORKSHOP SKILLS TO NATIONAL PLANS

15 mins

Introduction to Exercise

The course director explained to the whole workshop group that they were going to spend some time planning how to apply the learning from the workshop to their work back in their countries. This would involve considering the national plans of the countries they came from, and considering how the needs they had identified on the workshop could be met in the context of those plans.

Each participant was asked to do this planning individually and to discuss their plans informally with any of the tutors if they wished.

This exercise was done on the last day of the workshop, so that the participants finished the workshop with an individual action plan fresh in their minds.

1 hr
30 mins

INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

Participants worked on their own writing down their plans. All the tutors wandered about making sure that everyone knew what they were doing. Tutors helped any participant who was in difficulty.

1 hr

Subgroup Discussions on Plans

The workshop returned to the same subgroups used on Day 4. Each participant stated her plans to the rest of the group. The tutor and other group members gave constructive feedback and encouragement.

1 hr

General Discussion

45 mins

WORKSHOP REVIEW

The course director asked the whole workshop group to give feedback to the tutors on the workshop. One of the tutors made a note of the comments.

Finish.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE UN DECADE FOR WOMEN CONFERENCE, HELD IN COPENHAGEN, JULY, 1980

Background to the Conference

The United Nations, after discussions and through resolutions of its several organisations, specialised agencies, and other bodies, decided to proclaim 1975 as International Women's Year. This decision was made in response to a growing concern expressed by many countries and international agencies about the status of women in social, economic and political spheres, and the importance of ensuring their full involvement in decision-making for national and international development.

The venue for the International Women's Year Conference was Mexico. The Conference adopted the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, a World Plan of Action for the Implementation of Objectives of International Women's Year, and a Recommendation for a UN Mid-Decade Conference in 1980 to review and evaluate progress.

Other important recommendations of the World Conference 1975 were:

1. that the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women should be set up to give financial assistance to Governments in support programmes aimed at promoting the integration of Women in Development. Governments subscribe to the fund.
2. that the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) should be set up, inter alia, to promote, stimulate and develop the actions taken at the national, regional and international levels by both governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in order to ensure that the women's needs and concerns are included as essential components in development policies, plans and programmes.

In December 1975 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution noting the report of the Mexico IWY Conference, endorsing the plans of action, and proclaiming the period 1976 - 1985 as the "UN Decade for Women : Equality, Development and Peace". The General Assembly also decided to convene a Mid-Decade Conference in 1980 in Copenhagen.

Concepts for the Decade

Inequality between men and women, arising from a complex historical process, is further reinforced by many varied political, economical, social and cultural factors, and exists in varying degrees in the many countries of the world.

1. Equality before the law is vital for improving the status of women. It is also agreed that equality of rights, opportunities and responsibilities are of vital importance for improving substantially the contribution of women to the development of their countries. This presupposes that women will have equal opportunities to participate in management and decision-making at all levels.
2. Development is understood to be the improvement of societies through expanded economic and social activity. For the purposes of the Decade, development of the society relates to the total development of women, based on an acceptance of their multiple roles in socio-economic terms, as well as to their development as individuals.
3. Peace is seen to be a prerequisite - the only effective climate in which development can take place. Equality of participation in the development of friendly relations and co-operation, would promote a strengthening of peace and a total development of women themselves.

What Happened at the Copenhagen Conference?

Media reports of the official Conference proceedings at the Bella Centre in Copenhagen and the Forum nearby mostly concentrated on the reported philosophical, political and ideological wranglings which prevented the Programme of Action for the second half of the decade from being adopted by consensus. The Conference and the Forum nevertheless did identify some benchmarks and develop ideas for the future.

The documents prepared by the UN covering the first five years of the decade provide a depressing evaluation of the status of women throughout the world. In spite of the introduction in many countries of legislation guaranteeing equal rights for women and the establishment of women's bureaux and commissions to speed up the achievement of equal opportunities in some areas the rights of women have actually shrunk since 1975.

The world economic profile of women points up some of the problems:

Women represent 50% of the world population and
one third of the official labour force
they perform for nearly two thirds of all working hours and
receive only one tenth of world income
they own less than 1% of world property

The review indicates an unfavourable situation in the condition of employment and the education of rural and marginal urban women. Illiteracy rates appear to have increased. Even where enrolment has increased at all levels of education, this has not been matched by an increase in the levels of employment. There is evidence of women being moved to the informal

sectors. Where large scale industrialisation has taken place, discriminatory labour practices have surfaced in rural and urban areas. Rural-urban migration have provided opportunity for the exploitation of cheap unskilled and semi-skilled labour, nevertheless registering an overall increase in employment. Multinational companies have added to this exploitation by a deliberate policy of siting factories in areas where cheap and easily-controlled labour is found - predominantly female.

The present unfavourable world economic situation continues to maintain the position of women as the majority of the unemployed and underemployed, and predominating in the lowest paid, lowest status jobs.

This is further emphasised by the fact that generally speaking, though accepting the principle, Governments have done little to integrate women into national development planning. Failure to address the needs and concerns of women in planning development strategies will continue to influence adversely the rate of development in many societies. This is a crucial area.

In spite of serious constraints however, developing countries have recorded significant improvements. Research programmes are being implemented to provide a better data base for formulating sound and relevant programmes. Efforts are being made to establish and strengthen national governmental machineries; to increase participation by women in a variety of non-traditional training programmes and activities; to improve the working conditions of women and to organise them for remunerative employment and for making a more dynamic contribution to development; to extend to women and the community at large a wider and more efficient health care; to explore the areas of appropriate technology in easing the double work burden of women.

The review of progress indicates clearly that a decade is not long enough to achieve the complex goals identified. Recommendations have already been made for a Second Decade, and for periodic reviews to strengthen the strategies and objectives of the Plan.

Nature and Scope of the Programme of Action

The Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade aims at strengthening the existing programme to achieve the objectives of Equality, Development and Peace through the elimination of all inequalities between men and women and identifies strategies in line with the Third United Nations development strategy and established priority areas for action. Recommendations are also made for action to be taken simultaneously on several fronts, identifying their interrelationships. Priority action is strongly recommended for improving the conditions of the most disadvantaged groups e.g. the rural and marginal urban poor, and women workers in the tertiary sector.

Some important factors which adversely affect the status of women globally are unequal accumulation of capital, denial of

the rights of self-determination, the unfavourable economic world situation, and the continued non-recognition of women's actual or potential capacity for contributing to the economic welfare of their country. Even now, there is still the narrow concept which limits women's participation to the traditional welfare sectors of the economy. Poverty and lack of development continue to reinforce the disparity between the status of women and men.

ISSUES

Inclusion of Women in Development Planning and Decision-making

Although most governments report an acceptance of the need to integrate women in development as a planning objective, little has been done in many countries to implement this.

National mechanisms such as women's bureaux have been established in many countries, however, and these have initiated action to sensitise policy-makers and planners; to enunciate women's needs and concerns; to compile data and conduct research on the status and roles of women. Legislation and constitutional provisions have been passed which seek to protect the rights of women.

Limiting factors to these developments include insufficient funds, scarcity of human resources, narrow terms of reference for the national machinery, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms for the laws enacted.

While women's work continues to be seen in many countries as inextricably tied to their traditional reproductive and motherhood roles, their status will remain second-class and subordinate. The world's governments cannot afford to ignore half of their economic resources by failing to integrate women into decision-making and implementation strategies for national development. There is still too little recognition or kudos for women workers in other than domestic or welfare-related work such as teaching or nursing, extensions of their traditional roles.

The key issue is still therefore acceptance of a status for women which recognises their traditional role, but which also acknowledges a role in economic and political spheres still regarded as non-traditional for women.

Economic Issues

Improvement of the socio-economic condition of women is integrally connected with the call for a new international economic order. Actions needed to achieve this include better utilisation of technology; increased technical and economic co-operation between developed and developing countries and among developing countries based on the principle of self-

reliance. Other input issues are better wage levels and job security for women; methods of transfer of technology requiring careful application in order that the earning capacity of women in the tertiary section is not adversely affected.

The serious existing economic world situation has necessitated a re-examination of the strategies outlined in the World Plan of Action, 1975. Problems related to foreign exchange, continued low levels of industrialisation and inadequate production of goods - food in particular - require new strategies for solution.

There is the growing recognition of the fact that inter alia national development strategies have not planned to utilise fully their human resources. The implication is therefore clear that women forming approximately 50% of the population are not being mobilised to make the fullest possible contribution to the development of their countries.

Even though income generating activities in the tertiary sector must be maintained at present, the quality of jobs available to women and their conditions of work must be improved. The preponderance of the world's women in the categories of the underemployed performing in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, should be considerably lessened during the second half of the Decade.

Global Negotiations

Women have recognised the relevance of the debates in UN forums on economic and development issues to the Decade's goals of Equality, Development and Peace, and the importance of women's participation in such debates to ensure that the needs and goals of the female 50% of world population are raised and integrated into any discussions about a New International Economic Order.

The attempt to resolve conflicts between developing and developed countries over a proposed New International Economic Order has been an urgent concern of the developing countries for over a decade. The developing countries felt strongly that, as the major economic and development topics at issue were so inter-related, they should be discussed in one forum so that the decision-making could also be interrelated. As a result of their pressure, the 34th General Assembly of the UN in 1979 adopted a Resolution (No. 34/138) calling for a "new round of global and sustained negotiations on international economic co-operation for development". The Resolution noted the need for "bold initiatives and new, concrete, comprehensive and global solutions going beyond limited efforts".

Accepted by all UN members, the Resolution also stated that the negotiations should include the major issues in the field of raw materials, energy, trade, development, money and finance.

The 11th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (August - September 1980) tried to agree on what procedures should be used for this unique conference, but they failed. However, a three-stage procedure was proposed and informally agreed. Stage one

would be an eight-week "conceptual" stage during which the agenda items could be clarified and the procedures for debate agreed upon. Then the specific items would go to the UN specialised agencies and the ad hoc groups already dealing with these items. Then all the decisions from these groups would come back to the central conference to be fitted into a "package agreement" for approval by all UN member states. Stage four would be implementations.

Three countries (U.S.A., F.R. Germany and U.K.) could not agree with that proposal. What worried them most was that the proposed structure of the negotiations did not clarify whether a decision made in the specialised agencies could be changed or amended in order to fit it into the final "package agreement".

Since September 1980 many private consultations have been held on the procedural questions and exactly what should be included under each agenda item. With 90% agreement reached on both agenda and procedural matters, it was hoped that the Global Negotiations could be launched in late May 1981 by the re-convening of the General Assembly.

However, the U.S.A. (Reagan Administration) announced that it needed more time for the completion of its review of relations with developing countries, and was not prepared to enter any further negotiations with member states until much later in 1981. Meanwhile the President of the UN General Assembly will continue to consult with member nations in an attempt to reach agreement on the launching of the Global Negotiations as soon as possible.

Intensive lobbying by women delegates during the debate on the International Development Strategy for the 3rd UN Development Decade (adopted by the 35th Session of the General Assembly, October 1980) has resulted in the first specific mentions of the role of women in development in a major economic document of the UN.

FOOD PRODUCTION

Concern with the performance of the agricultural sector, evidenced by low production of food, inevitably links with the problems faced by rural women in particular, who are in large measure the producers and marketers of food, both raw and processed. Rural women constitute a sizeable proportion of the female population, and form a significant part of the agricultural labour force.

Programmes in priority areas such as rural development should focus inter alia on inclusion of women (and data on existing work patterns) in all development planning, wages, conditions of work, training opportunities for rural women. In addition, provision of more and better facilities e.g. credit, land should be made. Transfer of technology and the development of appropriate technology should be planned for in order to increase the quantum of food produced, as well as to ease the heavy work

burden of women fulfilling multiple roles.

WATER AND SANITATION

An issue closely connected to food production and health is the availability of a safe and adequate water supply. The World Health Organisation estimates that 80 per cent of all diseases in the world are water-related. The major fetchers and carriers of water are, of course, women.

The provision of safe water supplies must therefore be seen as a top priority for the Decade for Women, in that it would materially and dramatically improve living and working conditions for millions of women and their major responsibility, children.

This issue also points to the need to involve women at every level, and particularly at the village level, of decision-making for development. The experience noted in an Indian village, where a group of men were asked what their major need was and replied "a new road", and a group of women, when asked the same question, replied "water", makes this need evident.

BREASTFEEDING AND BABY FOOD

The issue of activities by multinational companies in marketing infant food formulas in developing countries is now being hotly disputed in international meetings. In many countries, it seems clear that thousands (maybe millions on a world scale) of babies are suffering from malnutrition and/or diarrhoeal disease as a direct result of promotional campaigns for infant food formula in areas where water supplies are not pure (in some cases badly polluted).

Governments are now being asked to monitor and eliminate advertising campaigns in all but safe areas where water supplies are adequate and pure. Again there is a need for education programmes in health and nutrition, not only for mothers and prospective mothers but for medical personnel, to encourage a return to breastfeeding of new babies. Statistics and medical research have proven time and again the complete value of breastmilk for the newborn infant in building of antibodies in the infant, natural transfer of vitamins and other important minerals, to name but a few benefits.

ENERGY

The link between women's work in food production and processing, water supplies and energy consumption is important on two levels - the use of human energy and the use of fuels.

In many developing countries, the methods of food production, gathering and processing cause a massive wastage of human energy, much of which could be eliminated by closer consultation with the women who do the work. Development project proposals need to be aimed at ways of reducing and facilitating

the work which has to be done by women, and data on existing work patterns for males and females in the area where the project will operate should be compiled before the approval of any project proposal. Although this appears to be a common sense suggestion, much of women's agricultural and household work is invisible to programme designers and even to their own male relatives, so much is it taken for granted.

Women in many rural areas are the main subsistence farmers, while the males concentrate on cash cropping or income-generating activities. In spite of the critical importance of providing and processing food for the family, women's work in this area is constantly undervalued.

Much research at international level is now being done on non-conventional fuel energy sources for use in cooking, heating, and electricity. These non-conventional sources of energy include solar power, wind, plant and animal wastes, geothermal, waste heat and alcohol.

The importance of social factors in ensuring that available technologies could be made operative and maintained at the village level was also noted in a UNDP-initiated study. The importance, therefore, of involving rural women and men in the design and installation of new machinery and/or methods becomes clear as soon as the skilled personnel from outside the village withdraw. Only if the villagers are involved in the introduction and installation of new machines will they feel any responsibility for keeping them going and secure.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

One of the crucial issues during this Decade for Women is the encouragement of participation by women in every level of political decision-making. National machineries such as women's bureaux and commissions are ineffective without the ability to penetrate and fully participate in local and national government and international fora.

Although women have equal political rights in most countries, there are many obstacles preventing them from putting themselves forward as candidates for election to political office, not least of which is the desire of many powerful men to keep the political arena as their exclusive domain.

Education programmes are needed for women to increase their awareness of the need for their involvement in politics, and the corresponding need to work to change the structure of society to enable women to gain equal political power. A substantial change in attitudes to women's roles is probably a prerequisite for equality in many countries.

The ultimate aim of the Decade for Women must be to make women a force which permeates every political decision taken nationally and internationally. Progress will be dependent (initially) on the attitudes of women themselves, their perception of their needs and potential roles, and their activism in working to

change systems and societies to enable women to gain equal say in decision-making.