

3. CASE STUDIES OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN SIX COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Framework for Analysis and Format

The case studies are presented in the order in which the continuous government programme for Women in Development in each country was started. This virtually coincides with the order in which each country in the sample gained political independence.

- 1 Jamaica
- 2 Guyana
- 3 Barbados
- 4 Grenada
- 5 Dominica
- 6 Belize

The briefing for the case studies was as follows:

- 1 Background to the creation of the bureaux, history and environment at its creation
- 2
 - a) Objectives at outset
 - b) Evolving and changing objectives - reflection of these in programmes
- 3 Structure and staffing - size of organisation, position, reporting lines, legitimating devices, structural supports, linkages with other ministries, departments, programmes; sources of funds
- 4 Methods of operation, management styles, decision-making (do these in any way differ from those of regular departments and regular government institutions?)
- 5 Achievements and problems
- 6 Evaluation of any similar structures set up by the government to deal with a problem or issue

It is important that:

- a) the focus of the report be on the critical analysis. It may be useful, therefore, to relegate as much factual and supporting material as possible to appendices. This will probably assist in stimulating discussion
- b) in assessing the above 6 points, the environment - i.e. political, public perceptions etc. - be taken into account and documented
- c) the analytic approach be consistent. A force field analysis for much of the evaluation will help to clarify past performance, obstacles, success factors and point directions for the future

JAMAICA CASE STUDY

Jamaica is the largest island country in the Commonwealth Caribbean and, with 2.14 million people, has about half the Commonwealth Caribbean population.

It is classified as a lower middle income developing country with a GNP per capita of \$1,180 in 1981. The average annual inflation rate for the past ten years has been 16.8%. The oil crisis and the prolonged recession have very adversely affected the economy. Growing unemployment and serious balance of payment problems are chronic conditions. Jamaica's top earnings come from export of bauxite (which has had a poor market for some years now), tourism, sugar, bananas and citrus fruit. There are also the products of light manufacturing and "screw driver" industries. In 1962 Jamaica was the first Commonwealth Caribbean country to become independent and she has had six elections since. The Jamaica Labour Party, now in power, has ruled for fourteen of the twenty-two years of independence. The People's National Party formed a Socialist government for eight years between 1972 and 1980; it was during this period that the machinery to handle women affairs came into existence.

HAZEL BLAKE, the writer of this study, was Director of the Jamaica Women's Bureau.

A Development of Bureau of Women's Affairs

What the Jamaican Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Affairs said in 1981 is still relevant to any analysis of the forces which shape our operation. Many governments and organisations are still only paying lip service to the goals (of the Decade) and where there is national machinery, in many cases, it is inadequate and in some cases, merely tokenism. Insufficient resources, both human and financial, inadequate mechanisms and an unwillingness on the part of those at the decision-making level to treat the issue of integration of women with utmost urgency and seriousness, are hallmarks of the lack of understanding of the issues which relate to women in development and the benefit that can accrue by integrating them into national development.

Although Jamaica was a member state of the United Nations prior to 1972, it had played no part in international activities addressing the question of women. It even failed to respond to an invitation from the UN to undertake a national survey along with other member states on the important issue of the status of women and family planning.

An unpublished document on "The Jamaican Women's Bureau" reported that "when the present Government (PNP) came to power in Jamaica in 1972, there was no Governmental policy on women and no specific procedures or mechanisms for addressing issues related to the roles and status of women. There were a number of women's programmes, but these tended to be diffuse,

¹ Jamaica Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Affairs, Ms Princess Lawes to CARICOM Secretariat Seminar, *Strengthening National Machinery for the Integration of Women in Development*, November 1981.

social-welfare oriented and based on the assumption that women could only be defined in relation to their roles as home-makers. The new Government which proclaimed a commitment to structural change and the creation of a society in which the principle of social justice, equality and participation were the hallmarks, began to seriously address the issue of the roles and status of women".

The PNP Government's philosophy of "Equality and Social Justice for All", articulated while in opposition, struck a responsive chord in two main groups of women, namely:

- a) older women who had been traditional activists through formal membership organisations and who enjoyed a formidable record of achievement in social welfare, community development and family welfare matters
- b) women under age-30, who had been deeply influenced by the black civil rights activism in the United States during the 1960s, which fuelled a new wave of radicalism within the international women's movement, by altering women's perspective of how to demand and achieve social change

It should also be noted that the content of political education leading up to the 1972 General Elections suggested "the coming" of a Government which would be responsive to the plight of the poor, the working class and disaffected youth. Further, the theme of self-reliance as a means to self-determination, self-respect and dignity, evoked mass appeal especially among women, long accustomed to "making it on their own".

A paper on *Women and Social Change*, published in July 1972,¹ sums up the militant mood of the times.

- 1 Planning for national reconstruction cannot afford to overlook the special, dynamic potential of women
- 2 Women can be motivated towards civic/national activism
- 3 Some of the problems and grievances of women are particularly acute and carry fundamental implications for any strategy of social change
- 4 The official machinery required has to produce action now; it should also keep the condition of women under continuous survey

Between 1972 and 1974 there was regular discussion and recommendation about the institutional form for the establishment of women's affairs as a permanent concern. The Special Adviser on Women's Affairs worked with an Advisory Committee on the status of women to define an appropriate national machinery to promote women's affairs. Their major proposals were:

1 Paper by Lucille Mathurin-Mair, first Special Adviser on Women's Affairs in Jamaica.

- (i) To establish a Women's Bureau with statutory powers in the Prime Minister's Office to give it access to the policy-formulating and funding departments of Government
- (ii) To appoint a Parliamentary Secretary with political responsibility for women's affairs
- (iii) To appoint an Advisory Council on Women's Affairs to include NGOs

The Women's Auxiliary of the People's National Party also served as a strong pressure group within the party to change the status of women in politics from subservient levels within the rank and file membership to active participation at all levels. The Auxiliary through the party machinery was able to pressure the Government to establish the recommended Advisory Committee to address women's problems at the national level.

Other pressure groups, notably the Soroptimist Women's Club which had a tradition of lobbying for legal reforms, especially in respect of unmarried mothers and their children, supported the move for a national machinery. It is to their credit that their research findings laid the foundation for the establishment of the first Family Court in Jamaica, and prior to that supported the establishment of Day Care Centres at the workplace.

The first establishment of the national machinery for women's affairs preceded the launching of the International Women's Year, but differed from the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The year 1974 saw the establishment of a Women's Desk within the Ministry of Youth and Community Development. Jamaica also became a member of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), a specialised agency of the Organisation of American States, and attended the first CIM Assembly in 1975.

B Objectives

Buoyed by the prevailing climate in its early years the Bureau was unaffected by such considerations as whether or not it was adequate to pursue the objectives defined, the logistics involved in its role as an implementing authority, the absence of a strong and independent national-based women's movement or administrative and financial constraints which would attend the magnitude of its task.

The Bureau was expected to achieve three broad objectives:

- 1 *Identification of problems (status and conditions) peculiar to women*
- 2 *Improvement of the status (position and attitudes) of women*
- 3 *Integration (policy and planning involvement) of women in national development*

The attainment of these objectives was envisaged through the following functions:

- 1 *Research* - the provision of a source of specialised data serving all planning agencies of Government
- 2 *Programme implementation* - a concentrated emphasis on relational education, family planning and child care service
- 3 *Legislative matters* - identification of legal inequalities and advice on reform measures
- 4 *Representation* - securing the participation of greater numbers of women on public bodies, appropriate to their numbers, ability and interests
- 5 *Coordination* and identification of the special concerns of women in existing and planned Government programmes

C Structure and Staffing

What was established in 1974 was a Women's Desk within the Ministry of Youth and Community Development, directed by a part-time Special Adviser. A note from the Ministry of the Public Service justified the meagre staffing in the following statement:

The main emphasis of such an Agency should be on *research* and *advice* to policymakers rather than execution of programmes. In light of this change, the need for a Programme Administrator is obviated.

The same note goes on to state that "the Desk should coordinate the work of the agencies already involved in the field of family life education, family planning and child care". Concern was expressed that the Government was setting up "yet another agency duplicating functions already being performed in the community".

It was not until June 1975 that the Desk was upgraded and transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister, with a full-time Director. By 1976 Government had sanctioned the objectives and functions of a Women's Bureau and agreed to a policy statement which enunciated, as a major objective, equality between the sexes and the full integration of women in the whole process of national development.

Another gain was achieved in 1977 with the appointment of the first Minister of State for Women's Affairs. The hope that this move meant "that the concerns of women would be strongly represented in central Government and the political machinery", was shortlived. By 1978, the Bureau was removed to the portfolio of the Ministry of Health and Social Security and made accountable to a Permanent Secretary. Again in 1980, with a change of political administration, the Bureau was placed under the portfolio of the Ministry of Youth and Community Development, and made accountable to a Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Affairs. In six years the Women's Bureau had resided in four ministries. The result has been described by the present Director. "These movements", she asserted "tend to set back implementation as new understandings, with new personnel, become necessary. In essence, the Bureau was given a huge task, but it was not structured, in terms of personnel, expertise and budgets, to be an effective machinery for the task".

While the credibility, legitimacy and stature of the Bureau are unquestioned within the international community, the absence of legitimating devices has limited the mobilisational aspects of its work, at the national level.

Although the need "for an official link with a wider cross-section of the women's organisations and the need to involve women in the planning process" was accepted and the "importance of an effective coordinating mechanism" was recognised, three important mechanisms were never implemented, namely:

- 1 The Advisory Council
- 2 An Inter-Ministerial Committee
- 3 A National Commission on the Status of Women

The records show that by May 1977, the Government through Cabinet had approved (in principle) the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the National Commission, as well as the restructuring and expansion of the Bureau.

The Advisory Council as proposed by the Advisory Committee would have enjoyed legal power through its statutory status to act and to implement policy. The National Commission, conceived as a voluntary, advisory body to the Bureau, was expected to complement and strengthen the work of the Bureau by providing a body of experience and expertise. The records indicate that "the Commission would not only comprise women of voluntary organisations and women with special expertise in the fields of education, law, industry and agriculture, but also women sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of Jamaican women".

The opinions of the Working Committee set up to formulate the terms of reference of the National Commission were at variance with the stated intent of the Government. On the one hand, the Government saw the Commission as assisting the Bureau to achieve its goals. On the other hand, the Committee envisaged the Bureau in the role of an organ of the National Commission. The proposal was deferred pending clarification by the political directorate, and was not revived.

By 1977 it became clear that the demands being made on the Bureau were out of proportion to its capabilities and resource base. Within three years the focus of the Bureau's operations had shifted from a research and promotional orientation to incorporate the implementation of pilot socio-economic projects, counselling, education and liaison with international agencies.

According to the Bureau's first Director, "In the first year the goal was to raise consciousness and legitimise the Bureau. There were parish workshops involving literally hundreds of Jamaican women and men interacting with extension officers and field personnel of key Government ministries. Informal linkages were being established with women's groups, organisations, communities. Through seminars and workshops we tried to identify the needs of women in order to reflect their conditions to Government and so influence changes in policies and programmes."

The Bureau was also engaged in establishing relationships with various faculties of the University of the West Indies for research purposes as well as technical assistance links with several international funding agencies.

In its early years the Bureau operated on a shoestring budget with a staff of one to four at any given time. The Bureau's failure in its formative years to secure its financial independence and security has resulted in an enduring legacy of dependency on international sources of funding. It is ironic that the national programme designed from its inception specifically to initiate and implement programmes for the upliftment of women, does not itself receive a budgetary allocation for such programmes. The Government budget continues to provide only salaries for staff and maintenance provision. Since January, 1982, the Bureau's main sources of funding have been the UN Voluntary Fund and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). Over the years funds have been secured from the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, the Pathfinder Fund, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, to name a few.

The situation is ironic for the reason that we are busily engaged in promoting and developing our "independence" and acting as catalysts for others on the one hand, and simultaneously we have placed the onus for our progress on the benevolence of external forces.

We have all shared the experience of staff shortages, poor quality staff, unskilled workers already overstretched in implementing programmes and having to "make" time to prepare funding proposals and reams of progress reports. The staff of the Bureau now consists of seven professionals - the Director, the Project Development Officer, the Project Coordinator, the Education Officer and three regional/rural coordinators. Even if all are appointed they cannot meet the ever-growing demand of women for services and above all for projects.

To assist it in the complex demand the Bureau maintains ongoing collaboration with the permanent secretaries of nearly all ministries, the National Planning Agency, the Urban Development Corporation, the National Family Planning Board, the Private Sector and the University of the West Indies, particularly the Social Welfare Training Centre.

Collaboration with other agencies, groups and organisations at all levels of the society and functional linkages with regional and international development agencies have been the main instruments used by the Bureau since its inception to integrate its operations with a support network whose interests are compatible with its objectives. Examples of this strategy are many. The Bureau is represented on Jamaica's National Commission for the Inter-American Year of the Family, which comprises Government, non-governmental and locally-based funding agencies. Since all the issues being examined by this Commission (i.e. education, the law, health, economic affairs) are also issues to be discussed at the 1985 UN End of Decade for Women Conference, the Commission has undertaken to be Jamaica's preparatory body for that Conference. The Commission is chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Affairs. Through the Council of Voluntary Social Services (CVSS) which is the umbrella organisation for some twenty voluntary bodies with large female membership, the Bureau is able to influence and receive assistance in developing programmes. Pilot projects to further the training and employment of women are being

contemplated in collaboration with the major trade unions through the Women's Unit of the Joint Trade Union Research and Development Centre. The Bureau is represented on the local affiliate body of Women's World Banking which is seeking to establish the first loan guarantee facility to service the needs of female entrepreneurs.

The mandates given to the national machinery for Women's Affairs are already overwhelming in the complexity of issues they seek to address. What is not explicitly stated as a preferred course of action is implied by the wide range of real and pressing needs being felt by the majority of our women, to which we feel morally obliged to react. Often we react to the detriment of an equally urgent priority. The Bureau's own record of successful development projects and integrative strategies point to outstanding gains in the achievement of our objectives. Yet each successful step is shadowed by the spectre of what is yet to be done.

D Achievements

The achievements of the Bureau of Women's Affairs in Jamaica are best exemplified by listing the ongoing projects which have been sponsored by them. The target for these mainly income-generating projects is low-income, unemployed, unskilled women in the age group 15-29 years.

1 The Women's Centre for Adolescent Mothers

A centre for the continuing education, counselling and vocational training of adolescent mothers. Of the 750 girls who have graduated from the programme since 1978, the rate of second pregnancy has been two per cent. The main centre is located in Kingston. The first rural centre was opened in Manchester last year and a third centre in Kingston is in preparation.

2 Elders and Youth Skills Training Programme

In 1982 a training programme was launched designed to transfer special traditional craft skills from the 50-80 year old to the 15-29 age group in the society. There are 75 trainees and 15 trainers imparting skills in garment manufacturing, needlecraft, embroidery as well as agro-industrial skills. The work of the participants has been exhibited nationally. A Directory of Elderly Resource Specialists (DOERS) is now in circulation to encourage the placement of individual orders.

3 The Sistren Theatre Collective

The award-winning, much publicised and globe-trotting drama collective is no longer under the auspices of the Bureau, but received its initial encouragement and support from the Bureau in the development of its programme of community drama and "grass roots" productions.

4 **The United Woodwork and Metal Company Limited**

The Bureau's pilot "economic" project in a non-traditional skill. This is a much documented project which evolved from an experiment into a fully-fledged self-managed company.

5 **The Black Hill Pig and Vegetable Project**

This project, located in the rural parish of Portland, involved 20 youths from the village of Black Hill in pig rearing and vegetable farming on lands leased from the Government.

6 **The St. Elizabeth Cassava Project**

A total of 88 participants drawn from eight communities in this southern parish are engaged in cassava cultivation and the production of over 4,000 bammies (a bread made from cassava flour) per week for the domestic market.

7 **The Grove Town Goat Rearing Project**

Located in the parish of Manchester, the project employs 17 previously unskilled, unemployed women in goat rearing, vegetable farming, fruit preservation and co-operative management training.

E Conclusion

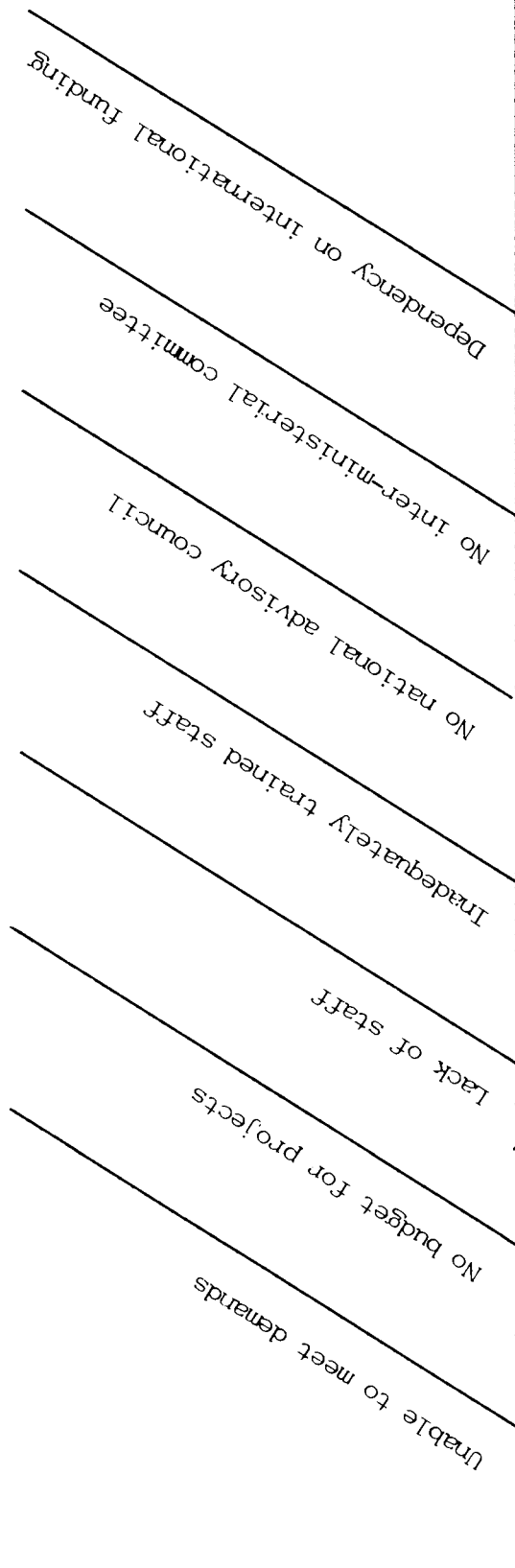
The Jamaican Women's Bureau has put its emphasis on the creation of income-generation projects for the socio-economic development of women, and there is a list of preliminary achievements. The constraints on the Bureau's activities are therefore largely associated with the problems of project development, including a feeling that the demand has been raised and now cannot be met. Lack of an operational budget, lack of staff or of adequately trained staff are the particular limiting factors. Although international funding has been found it is inappropriate that programmes in self-help should be financed from overseas.

The failure as yet to establish either a national advisory council or an inter-ministerial committee has put the onus on the Women's Bureau to initiate functional relationships without an organised structure for doing so. In fact, regular contact has been established with permanent secretaries of other Ministries and there is good collaboration with NGO's who have long conducted social welfare work for women. This is not, however, as strong a link as constituted bodies with defined functions would be. The onus of policy-making remains with the Bureau and is dependent for its implementation on ministries and other agencies who must be introduced to each project rather than to a programme. Alternatively, each project must be designed to attract the assistance of international bodies.

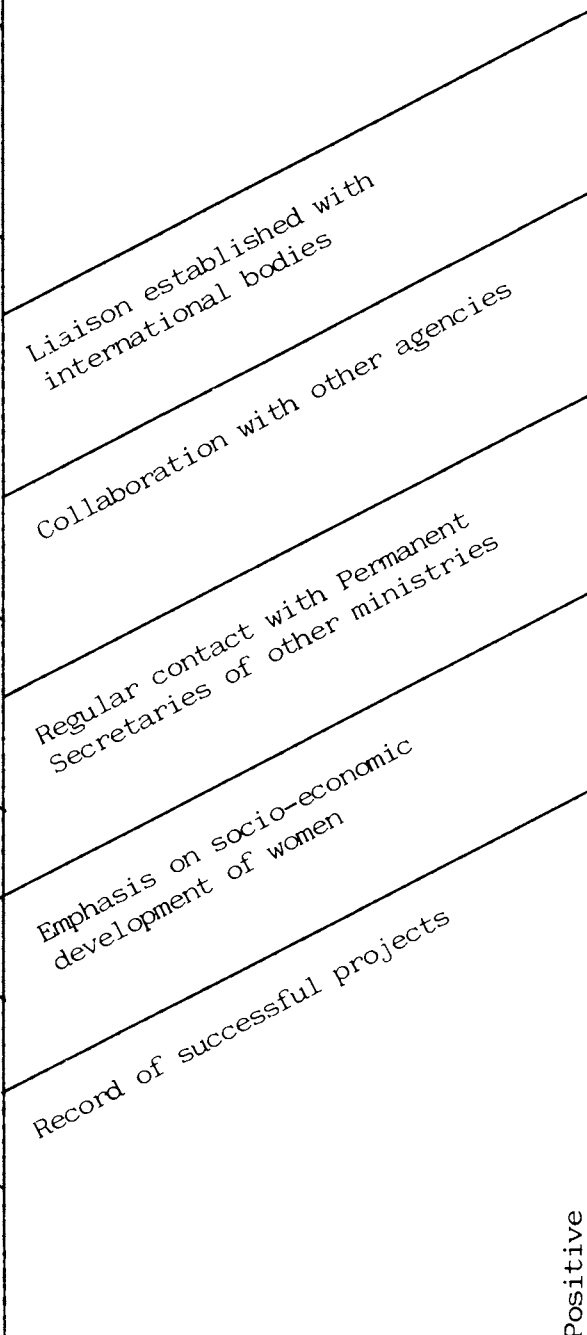
Finally, without a constituted link with other agencies, it is difficult for a small over-burdened bureau either to mobilise women to any

JAMAICA FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Negative



Positive



extent or to secure their opinions on policy in any widespread development sense. The mounting demand for help from women delays their potential mobilisation for either their own development or for their participation in the country's development.

CASE STUDY OF GUYANA

Guyana is one of the two mainland countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. In the north east of South America it shares boundaries with Surinam, Brazil and Venezuela. With the latter there has been an unresolved border dispute, inherited from the colonial period, which has lasted for nearly a century. This disagreement has kept Guyana out of the Organisation of American States in which all members must be in good standing with each other. On the other hand Guyana accommodates the headquarters of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

In area Guyana is by far the largest of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, but its population of about 800,000 is less than those of the much smaller Caribbean island countries, Jamaica and Trinidad. The interior is tropical forest and the population lives mainly on the sea coast or along the three large South American rivers which traverse Guyana. Guyana has a bauxite industry which is now nationalised. The main export crops are sugar, rice and timber.

This is a country where the descendants of East Indian immigrants outnumber those whose forebears came from Africa. There is also an Amerindian population mainly living at subsistence level in the forests. Racial differences are apparent in religious practices, places of residence, family and social organisation; they are also emphasised by a two-party political system which strongly coincides in membership with the two dominant racial groups in Guyana.

In the past the education of Indo-Guyanese women has been much neglected, specially among those living on the sugar estates. The Afro-Guyanese woman is on the whole more urbanised and has participated in public education. There is therefore a considerable range of sophistication and self-determination among Guyanese women.

MAGDA POLLARD, herself a Guyanese, contributed the case study on Guyana. She is the first Adviser on Women's Affairs in the CARICOM Secretariat, based in Georgetown.

A Development of Bureau of Women's Affairs

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana has embraced the socialist ideology. Consequently it has been pursuing a policy of equality for women, who form approximately 50 per cent of the population. The stated commitment of the Socialist People's National Congress (PNC) Government on women's issues is embodied in a State Paper on Equality for Women tabled in Parliament in January 1976 as well as in the Constitution of Guyana promulgated in October 1980.

In the Guyanese society, measures indicative of the wider role of women were introduced decades before 1976. Careers for women in the Guyana Police Force were available in 1953 and from its inception in 1966, women were eligible to seek appointments in the Guyana Defence Force. In 1904, separate property rights were conferred on women. The franchise was granted in 1928, and in 1961 they were deemed eligible to serve on juries. From 1973, female civil servants were no longer required to resign on marriage.

These and other measures, though isolated, nevertheless established a climate most receptive to the organised and comprehensive approach of the programme of the United Nations (UN) Decade for Women with its triple goals of Equality, Development and Peace.

In keeping with the socialist ideology of the PNC of promoting equality of women with men, the Women's Auxiliary, formed in 1957, was re-organised into a unit designated the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement. The WRSM shares constitutionally in the policy-making responsibilities of the party and is mandated to advance the full integration of women in the political life of the party in Guyana. As an arm of the ruling PNC, the WRSM contributes to the social and economic life of the country as a whole and has on many occasions been publicly acknowledged by the party hierarchy for its dynamic contribution to the realisation of national goals.

There has been in Guyana a tradition of social welfare service by a large number and variety of women's organisations. Many of these organisations, such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Girl Guides Association, as well as professional and political organisations, had already implemented programmes to promote an increased contribution by women as citizens. Not least among the many groups operating in Guyana was the Women's Auxiliary of the PNC whose leader, Cde. L F S Burnham, in his capacity as Prime Minister of Guyana identified the need for a regional women's organisation. This initiative led in 1970 to the formal launching of the Caribbean Women's Association (CARIWA), the regional non-governmental organisation whose objectives are to promote the welfare of women in the Caribbean region.

The Guyanese organisation linking directly with CARIWA is the Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana (CASWIG), the umbrella non-governmental organisation which has thirty affiliates. In 1972 initiatives were taken by the Ministry of Labour for improving the economic status of women which led to the establishment of CASWIG in the following year, with a Labour Officer performing the duties of Secretary until 1975. At that time a number of affiliates of CASWIG also had individual membership in the regional organisation, CARIWA. The programmes carried out by these affiliates, severally as well as collectively in CASWIG, were in keeping with the goals of the UN Decade of Women.

The delegation of Guyana to the United Nations (UN) Conference of International Women's Year was led by the Chairman of the WRSM, and included a woman Minister of Government who was also the Chairman of CASWIG. Since the declaration of the UN Decade resulting from the deliberations of the International Women's Year (IWY) Conference, the activities of these two organisations have widened in scope and have served to focus the attention of the public on women's issues and concerns. Against this background of positive action the two large and influential organisations, WRSM and CASWIG, impelled by the need for support based within the governmental infrastructure, made representation for the establishment of a Bureau of Women's Affairs.

These organisations recognised the critical need for a focal point in the government structure to act as a clearing house for information and documentation on women's affairs, particularly when seeking help from international agencies, ministries and NGOs. It was found that data,

reports of meetings, notification of official conferences and official documentation for such meetings which were considered essential for project implementation were not expeditiously dealt with administratively.

Representatives of the WRSM and the CASWIG therefore initiated joint discussions to prepare an official request for the establishment of such a focal point in Government. The proposal sought to justify the need for the establishment of a Bureau and identified the objectives which would guide the operations of such a unit. The structure was outlined with supporting details concerning the areas of responsibility and functions of personnel, including methods of operation.

While the PNC forms the Government, the party advises the Government on all aspects of policy. Since the WRSM has representation on the General Council of the PNC, it was the appropriate agency at the political level to assume advocacy for the establishment of national machinery for women's affairs. The joint proposal, prepared by the WRSM and CASWIG, was accepted in principle by the General Council and referred to the Cabinet for further examination and implementation.

During this period the economy of Guyana was deteriorating and performance was disappointing as the physical production targets set in the main sectors of economic activity - rice, sugar and bauxite - were not achieved and marketing difficulties prevailed. Sugar and rice output were affected by adverse weather conditions, and a five-week work stoppage affected the bauxite industry in 1979. Despite a temporary recovery in 1980 the Guyanese economy has been in steady decline since 1979. The Bureau of Women's Affairs was therefore finally opened in a period of retrenchment in public sector employment and of severe economic recession in the country at large. These two factors have caused considerable limitations on the scope and achievements of the Bureau.

On the other hand the national measures, to confront shortages of imported food and clothes in particular, have been heavily dependent on women's efforts since 1980. Regional emergency programmes such as the Feed, Clothe and House the Nation Drive have particularly promoted the participation of women both in production and in decision-making on their own aspect of the drive.

Self help in village communities has for at least two decades been a way of life in Guyana. Schools, roads, community centres and air strips have been constructed by the communities which are to use them. The current emphasis in community self help is food production. The women's agencies in Guyana have taken much of the initiative in organising both the cultivation and processing of home grown foods. The potential participation of women in development is demonstrated by their highly visible role in the current struggle for survival. The tactics of the nineteen-eighties have led to much better support, organisation and integration of women's production in their communities than prevailed when it was a private, near individualised domestic function.

The establishment of the Bureau in January 1980 was in accordance with the Plan of Action of the UN Decade as well as with Guyana's national policies. Its mandate was "to work towards the removal of all kinds of discrimination against women, to promote development of their full potential and to ensure their integration in the national development of the country".

The structure which was recommended and adopted was considered to be appropriate for carrying out its mandate. The Bureau was to be headed by a Director, who would also be a Minister of Government. The Director would have responsibility for the formulation and implementation of policy, and would be supported by an Administrator, a Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator. These core functionaries would be supported by five sub-committees, namely, Planning, Research and Economic; Education, Training and Public Relations; Social Services and Public Welfare; Foreign Affairs, and Legal Affairs.

Non-governmental organisations, including some not affiliated to CASWIG, would also share in the operations of the Bureau. Because of the Government's policy of regionalism, provision was made within the structure for the establishment of regional women's desks, commissions and contact persons within the ten regions of Guyana.

The Bureau was established in January 1980 in the Ministry of Labour. The Director of the Bureau was identified, and was a political figure in keeping with the recommendation. A Secretary to the Bureau who was a serving officer in the Ministry of Labour was assigned to assist the Director in the setting up of the Bureau. Emoluments were already provided for both of these officers in their previous substantive positions. It was a serious omission that no specific budgetary allocation was made in the Ministry for the additional staff, including secretarial staff, and for operations of the Bureau.

In 1982 the Bureau was re-located to the Ministry of Cooperatives. This move seemed to stimulate a slight change in emphasis in the Bureau's operations. Funding through the Ministry was now made available to the Bureau. This necessitated an emphasis on those objectives, notably income-generating and training, which were in accordance with the programme objectives of the Ministry of Cooperatives. One immediate benefit was that staff was available through the Ministry. As a result, for the first time since the Bureau's inception, an Administrator and a Coordinator were in place, full-time.

In mid-1983, the Bureau had another change of location, this time to the Office of the Prime Minister. Fortunately this change has not affected the continuing leadership of the Director of the Bureau. The services of the officer serving as Administrator have however been lost. In addition, the Office of the Prime Minister is not project-oriented. A shift in emphasis has already been made in favour of consolidating the establishment of the Bureau. This is most desirable at this time, since it is becoming increasingly evident that as the project activities of the non-governmental organisations expand, there is need for collaboration, coordination and monitoring of activities, which are functions most appropriate for the Bureau.

B Objectives

To promote the general aims of the Bureau it was at its inception assigned the following responsibilities:

- 1 To provide general services for coordinating developmental programmes for women in Guyana

- 2 To impact on policies and programmes of relevant ministries to ensure that their programmes are designed to cater for the needs of women
- 3 To support the establishment and development of women's organisations, especially those whose objectives are in conformity with the stated objectives of the UN Decade for Women
- 4 To give technical and other assistance to projects and activities which contribute to the economic, political, social and cultural advancement of women
- 5 To assist the relevant organisations and agencies in designing and organising training courses to impart and upgrade the skills of women and to enable them to fill positions at all levels in established agencies of all types, as well as to organise them for self-employment.
- 6 To liaise with governmental and non-governmental agencies and promote functional coordination for accelerated progress in the areas of employment, health and nutrition, education, legislative measures and social welfare which are identified in the World Plan of Action for Women
- 7 To ensure that general educational objectives and curricula support the development strategies aimed at enhancing women's participation in political, economic and social development
- 8 To initiate research and embark on the collection of statistical data in an effort to obtain information on the participation of women in areas such as educational institutions and in various sectors of the labour force
- 9 To initiate research, and embark on the collection of statistical data and other information for planning and training purposes and to facilitate and determine action for resolving problems
- 10 To collaborate with the mass media personnel in promoting programmes, publications, songs, plays, etc., for the eradication of derogatory allusions and unflattering images connected with women
- 11 To foster and maintain contacts, and exchange information, plans and ideas with national and international organisations and agencies concerned with the affairs of women
- 12 To collaborate with international agencies and institutions which have relevant objectives for Guyana's thrust, in an effort to secure financing for projects for groups of women in income-generating programmes

The main objective of the Bureau in 1980 was to provide the liaison for non-governmental organisations with those government ministries whose expertise and resources could be requested for the implementation of programmes promoting the integration of women in development.

Its varied roles in policy formulation at government level, in coordinating and monitoring programmes and policies, in conducting research and providing technical assistance for the activities implemented by NGOs, were clearly defined and are in accord with the guidelines set out in the UN Decade's Programme of Action.

In practice the operational objectives of the Bureau have been severely restricted by the limited and changing staffing. They have also been modified by the three ministries in which the Bureau has resided in as many years. In the Ministry of Labour for the first two years there was no budgetary provision for the Women's Bureau programme. Funding came when the move was made to the Ministry of Cooperatives. The priorities then were influenced by the programme objectives of that ministry. The emphasis for the short period was on women's training for setting up income generating projects on a cooperative basis.

The recent change to the Prime Minister's Office, which is not project oriented, has shifted the emphasis again. The current responsibilities of the Bureau are concerned with a monitoring and enabling role for the work of the government ministries and NGOs who have programmes for women. It will be seen that the definition of responsibilities in 1983 is really a slightly more specific version of the definition at the Bureau's inception already quoted.

In essence, the functions of the Bureau have remained the same. This is no doubt why nine of the twelve responsibilities defined at the Bureau's inception in 1980 are identical in the 1983 version. The four new responsibilities after three years of experience are as following:

- 1 The Women's Bureau will be the policy-making body at the governmental level for all matters pertaining to women
- 2 To provide guidelines within a national framework for planning, training, technical assistance and research on matters pertaining to women
- 3 To provide general coordinating and monitoring support for programmes which are designed to promote the integration of women
- 4 To foster and maintain contacts and exchange information, plans and ideas with national, regional, international organisations and agencies concerned with the affairs of women

The changes and additions in the new "responsibilities" are instructive. In the first place the later version is more precise particularly in defining necessary limitations. For example the earlier "to provide general services for coordinating developmental programmes for women in Guyana" has become "to provide general coordinating and monitoring support for programmes which are designed to promote the integration of women".

The authority of the Women's Bureau is asserted in the new first responsibility of 1983. It will now be "the policy-making body at the governmental level for all matters pertaining to women". No such fundamental responsibility was contained in the original list.

Finally the new responsibilities include the duty of fostering and maintenance of contacts, with exchange of information, plans and ideas between national, regional and international bodies concerned with the affairs of women.

As specific activities to advance these formidable responsibilities two important areas of work for the Bureau must be to -

- a) formulate a National Plan for Guyana for the Integration of Women - arising out of the UN Regional Action Plans, but identifying our own strategies, priorities and targets
- b) document information on Guyana's achievement in relation to the minimum objectives, which were set out in the World Plan of Action for Achievement by 1980

C Structure and Staffing

Obtaining a full complement of staff has been difficult from the outset. Apart from the political directorate of one, the Administrator was assigned to the Bureau in May 1982, and the Coordinator in November 1982. A Cabinet reshuffle of mid-1983 has resulted in the reassignment of the Administrator, leaving the Coordinator as the sole functionary. Adequate secretarial support is also not available.

As the programme of work of the Bureau and other functioning agencies has developed, it has become very clear that the size of staff originally proposed for the Bureau is not adequate for dealing with the variety of tasks of a Bureau with responsibilities as now defined. A review of the structure is therefore to be made.

As an immediate resource the Bureau proposes to implement more fully the strategy of extending support to inter-ministry linkages which had previously been used with some success. In addition, it will strengthen links with non-governmental organisations, as well as regional and international agencies. It will also proceed with the introduction of linkages with the local regional administration system - a recommendation of the national seminar on "Role and Functions of the Women's Affairs Bureau", January 1983. It is hoped that these measures will ensure that relevant programmes are formulated by the Bureau and that human and financial resources are most effectively utilised.

Within the Bureau, the reporting lines are clearly defined. The Director of the Bureau, who is also a political figure, links directly to the policy-making structures within the ruling political party. The political head of the Bureau, therefore, is in a position to inform the administration of political decisions relevant to the Bureau's functioning as well as to implement those decisions. The Administrator reports directly to the Director in matters relating to policy, but in purely administrative matters reports directly to the Permanent Secretary. The Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator have the responsibility for implementing the projects of the Bureau and for liaison with the government and non-governmental agencies within the community, e.g. the regional councils and non-governmental organisations. These two officers report to the Administrator.

Communication between the Bureau officials and other officials in the same ministry seem to be very informal and ad hoc. Officials in the wider ministry are not aware of the Bureau activities unless they are directly involved. Information such as reports are not circulated to senior technical/administrative officers. Opportunities are therefore lost for exchange of views and information and for collaborative action between Bureau officials and their colleagues to promote real integration. The same situation prevails in relationships with liaison officers in the other collaborating ministries concerned with the promotion of women's affairs. Since the Women's Bureau, after the experience of the first three years, has crystallised its essential functions into monitoring and support for projects mainly financed and implemented by collaborating ministries or NGOs, the machinery of linkages for planning and consultation is crucial.

The coordinating machinery anticipated since the Women's Bureau was started is the network of sub-committees to the Bureau, only the first of which is started. It is noteworthy that the proposed linkages of the sub-committee are the first item of their specification in each case; anticipated coordinated activities follow in the description. For the pioneer sub-committee, Education and Training, for instance, the first task is "to work closely with the Ministry of Education and other related agencies to develop education and training programmes for women".

The linkages proposed for three of the other five sub-committees, not yet launched are as follows:

1 Planning Research and Economic Activities

Links: The National Planning Institution and collaborating ministries, national and regional organisations to promote women in development

2 Social Services and Public Welfare

Links: Ministries and NGOs concerned with Health, Labour and Housing

3 Foreign Affairs

Links: International agencies, collaborating ministries and NGOs concerned with projects for women in development

Only for legal and general affairs do the job descriptions omit a precise statement of necessary linkages.

The Bureau plans to intensify action in each of the above-mentioned areas. Experience has indicated to the officers of the Bureau as well as to the leadership of collaborating agencies that the important role of coordinating and monitoring of all activities is one which the Bureau is appropriately suited to perform.

The Bureau itself has identified one of its most serious constraints as a paucity of financial and human resources for the implementation of its programmes. In spite of a good record of achievement, problems encountered have limited the scope of operations of the Bureau. Targets set by

management have recently been assessed as being "unrealistic" with underestimation of the time-frame for achieving these targets.

The Bureau at the time of its establishment had support at policy-making levels in both Party and Government. It has also received adequate support from individual government officers on matters in which the Bureau has taken the initiative. Because of the activities of the non-governmental organisations there is a high level of consciousness of the general issues of the Decade at community and local levels. There is however a significant degree of unawareness on the part of Government officers of the goals of the UN Decade of Women and the specific policies and programmes of the Bureau as a government agency. This therefore is a serious constraint since some key ministries have not institutionalised support for the Bureau, and certainly do not initiate discussion which may be valuable to the Bureau in terms of policy-making.

The problems being faced by the Bureau personnel must however be viewed within the context of the economic recession facing the country since the time of its establishment. It is to the credit of the Government of Guyana that it did agree in spite of the serious economic constraints to establish a mechanism which could operate, albeit to a limited degree, to deal with women's concerns.

D Management Components and Participation in Decision-making

The rationale of the study was to assess the effective functioning of the Bureau of Women's Affairs in an environment in which measures had already been successfully implemented by well-functioning non-governmental organisations. Agencies and government personnel interviewed expressed the opinion that there is an important role for the Bureau operating within the government structure. It was clearly stated by the representatives of the two large organisations in particular that their request for the establishment of the Bureau arose from their felt needs.

The WRSB has identified its particular strengths as its position within the policy-making structure of the party and its ability, through its own organisational structure as well as that of the parent party, to mobilise women for action. CASWIG has a wide outreach, but its membership is mainly within the urban centres. As has been acknowledged by both agencies, there is need for an agency, the Bureau, which is sufficiently neutral to act as a clearing house for information and documentation; to monitor the effective allocation and implementation of programmes; to provide advisory services; to give direction for policy and provide a forum for broad-based public opinion; to draw on all governmental resources, national, regional and international; and to conduct programmes mirroring the needs of agencies and individuals operating outside the scope and influence of the other two agencies, in fact for the women of the nation as a whole. Provided collaboration, cooperation and monitoring are embraced as the *sine qua non* of all the agencies and are rated as priority functions of the Bureau, collective potential of all the agencies can be maximally utilised for the improvement of the status of Guyanese women.

An upturn of the economy may give a much needed boost to the Bureau. It is to be hoped that the Bureau's proposed effort to recruit the required staff and to secure an adequate budgetary allocation will meet with some significant degree of success.

In its short life the Women's Bureau has refined its responsibilities in the light of hard experience. It is now for it to exploit the goodwill and cooperation which have undoubtedly resulted from the first three years of work. In order to reinforce these positive attitudes and further to build on the awakening interest stimulated by these developments, the administration of the Bureau is considering the following priority activities:

- 1 to endeavour to secure a period of permanency for officers who will be appointed in the near future. A settling-in period is urgently needed for consolidation of effort
- 2 consciousness-raising within the Office of the Prime Minister, and institutionalising of the programme in that ministry. This should include a specific allocation within the budget for recurrent expenditure and the assignment of support staff such as stenographers/typists
- 3 to gain more wide-based support -
 - a) to up-date the status paper on Equality of Women which is narrow in concept. The inclusion of other important emphases such as measures to promote the economic status of women may enlist the support of officers in ministries dealing with these matters
 - b) consciousness raising programmes - particularly with government officers and with women in CASWIG and WRSM - transmitting its clearly defined objectives to all support agencies and government ministries
 - c) institutionalisation of the programme in the support ministries. The services of the Management Division of Government should be requested to prepare a detailed organisational chart involving all supporting ministries, liaison officers and agencies
 - d) channelling of information to liaison officers and sub-committees
 - e) promote the feed-back mechanism from the support agencies to guide policy and programme formulation
 - f) stress the collaborative participatory approach in effecting links with agencies
- 4 to mount strong advocacy, based on sound programme planning, for an adequate budgetary provision to facilitate implementation and to support staff. In the review of the structure it was suggested that the Bureau should programme for a project formulation capability as well as a negotiating capability
- 5 to carry out as fully as possible its monitoring, collaborating and coordinating role
- 6 to develop its capability to meet the need of agencies for technical assistance; for funding; for information; for data for

Negative



Positive

direction in terms of policy-making; for advice on appropriate strategies to achieve identified goals.

E Achievements

- 1 Representation on behalf of 50+ women on welfare and legal problems
- 2 Work with committee studying legal disabilities of women
- 3 Comprehensive reports, information and literature on the role of the Women's Bureau for national distribution to government and regional administration and NGOs
- 4 Establishing links with collaborating ministries, regional administration and NGOs
- 5 Establishment of Education and Training Sub-Committee
- 6 Organisation of a workshop and consideration of its proposals in the programme planning of the Bureau
- 7 Establishing of a Fruit Processing Factory
- 8 Technical assistance e.g. management advice, project writing and funding and feasibility studies as support for projects, such as:

Guylin - CASWIG Linenmaking

Assistance: Tie Dye & Batik courses

WRSM Production Projects

Assistance: Training -

Tie Dye & Batik

Local food preparation

Craft

Management advice -

Fish processing project

Craft production outlet

2 small agricultural projects

- 9 Collaboration with other agencies in a variety of nutrition activities, agricultural activities and needs assessment workshops.

F Conclusion

The constraints in the Guyana programme for women in development are basically twofold. The logistics of wholly inadequate staffing, lack of an operational budget and no support staff in the Prime Minister's Office are obviously considerable limitations which may or may not be eased when the period of economic crisis passes. The second factor arises from the mobility of the Women's Bureau in its short life. No ministry accepts any

part of the women's programme as its own on a regular basis. The last move to the Prime Minister's Office, furthermore, takes the Bureau into a policy-making rather than a project development setting. The need for positive, regular coordination with cooperating ministries is reiterated.

On the positive side the constraints have forced the Women's Bureau to find a realistic role as monitor and supporter rather than implementer of programmes. The good relationship with the women's groups which sponsored the Bureau in the first place have allowed development through their projects already.

If the Women's Bureau can link its programmes more closely with the regional administrative units set up by Government, it will be integrated with the self help and development programmes in the villages throughout the country. If, in addition, the proposed sub-committees combining Government bodies and NGOs, each to advise on a specific issue in women's affairs, can be set up quickly, there is good promise for the future.

CASE STUDY OF BARBADOS

Barbados is a compact small island country accommodating a population of 300,000 in an area of 166 sq miles most of which is planted in sugar cane, the traditional export crop. After Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados is the most prosperous Commonwealth Caribbean country. It is the only one of the sample classified as an Upper Middle Income country, with a GNP per capita in 1981 of \$3,500.

Barbados has substantially improved the national economy by a year-round tourist industry. The recurrent failures of sugar are offset by the position Barbados has established as a tourist centre.

Barbados has a well publicised reputation for political stability and absence of violence. This, no doubt, encourages the visitors; it has also attracted investment in some light manufacturing industry.

Barbados is the headquarters of the Caribbean Development Bank, the regional UNDP Office and of several bilateral agencies including USAID, and the British and Canadian development agencies.

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A History of Department of Women's Affairs

In addition to being childbearers and childrears, women in Barbados have functioned for generations as employers and employees, professionals and non-professionals, in both the private and public sectors. They have provided every variety of community and welfare service. They have participated in every facet of political activity. And they have done this in the face of numerous legal disadvantages and persistent cultural attitudes which are reluctant to recognise the value of their contribution outside of the home, preferring to place women squarely within the confines of their homes.

From as early as 1968, women's organisations in Barbados had begun a quiet, non-militant agitation to voice their concerns and attract Government attention. Conferences were held, resolutions circulated to all women's organisations and relevant government agencies; letters and articles were written in the newspaper; appearances were made on radio and television.

Between 1973 and 1976 both the Government and the Opposition at different times declared themselves in favour of a National Commission on the status of women. It was not achieved until a change in government in 1976. During the general election campaign of that year, the Barbados Labour Party issued its Manifesto, including a section entitled 'Charter for Women'. The Charter guided the policies of the BLP when it came into power later that year. The new government established in November 1976 a National Commission on the Status of Women in Barbados (NCSW) simultaneously with a Department of Women's Affairs which was located in the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The Commission was an *ad hoc* body set up to examine the situation of women in Barbados and to make recommendations for improving their status. The Department was initially required to serve as the Secretariat to the Commission; thereafter its functions were defined more generally. The Government commitment to the inclusion of women's concerns on its agenda was further evidenced by the inclusion of such statements in the inaugural address of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the General Assembly of the UN and by its sending a four-member delegation, headed by the Minister of Education, to the UN mid-decade Conference in 1980.

The Commission (and the Department) experienced a high level of public visibility through its public hearings and meetings with various organisations. The Commission presented a three-volume report in May 1978 to the Attorney General who was then the Minister responsible for Women's Affairs. A spate of public discussion and media attention followed. The report, which included over two hundred recommendations, was adopted in September 1978. It now represented the framework within which the Department was left to get on with its work. From that time, however, public awareness of the Department and its activities have declined. The Department has been located in four ministries, serving under three different ministers:

- (i) Ministry of Attorney General 1977-1979
- (ii) Ministry of Labour and Community Services 1979-81
- (iii) Ministry of Transport, Works and Community Services 1981-82
- (iv) Ministry of Information and Culture 1982 to present.

B Objectives

For the first two years of its operations the Department functioned primarily as the Secretariat for the National Commission. For the next year it concentrated on disseminating and discussing the findings of the Commission's report.

However, it was still expected to carry out the other functions which were included in its original mandate. They were as follows:

- (i) to act as a co-ordinating point in matters relating to Women's Affairs
- (ii) to monitor generally the situation relating to women
- (iii) to keep track of the recommendations made by the Commission on Women and to ensure that these are implemented
- (iv) to make recommendations concerning matters which affect women
- (v) to undertake consciousness-raising activities in the community on the role of women
- (vi) to identify projects

These functions provided the foundation on which the Department based its work. However, since the relocation to the Ministry of Information and Culture, there has been a shift in emphasis such that the

Department is seen more as an advisory and co-ordinating body concerned with:

- (i) promoting attitudinal change and community awareness
- (ii) creating and maintaining linkages between government, regional and international agencies concerned with women's issues
- (iii) promoting research about the problems and needs of women and disseminating the results of that research

In effect the current thrust appears to be towards an informational rather than a project-oriented agency.

C Structure

The present establishment of the Department consists of a Director and a Research Assistant. While not making any specific recommendations about the structure of the Department, the Report of the National Commission did envisage the Department as a vibrant, well-organised unit and had urged the extension and strengthening of what existed at that time. No evidence is available to indicate whether that recommendation was ever considered; it would appear not.

The post of Director has never been substantively filled; occupants for the seven years of the Department's life have functioned in an acting capacity. The first appointee at that level was a Community Development Officer provided from the Ministry of Labour and Community Services. She held the post for three years, after which she took up a position with a regional organisation. Her place was filled by a newly appointed Research Assistant who still occupies the position of Acting Director.⁵ The position of Research Assistant has been filled by four different persons, the last two in an acting capacity. No provision was ever made for programme or field officers on the establishment. Initially the Department was provided with its own secretary. However, on its most recent relocation, that position was lost to the Ministry's general typing pool.

The Director is answerable to the Minister responsible for Women's Affairs, through the Permanent Secretary and the Senior Administrative Officer. In the present location, it is anticipated that the Department's field programme can be assisted by working through the Community Development Officers who already have direct contact with the communities.

No formal arrangement exists for ensuring linkages between ministries. However, the Department works through informal contacts with individuals in various ministries and departments. Closest ties are maintained with the Ministries of Labour, Education and Health. No ongoing links exist with the Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Within the Department there is presently a proposal "to establish an interministerial committee in order to ensure an input concerning women within the policies and programmes of all relevant ministries". There is also a proposal to establish an advisory council, consisting of persons from a cross-section of the community. This would represent the first response to a specific recommendation by the National

Commission for an independent Status of Women Council, with authority to initiate and monitor programmes relating to women.

At the regional level, the Department maintains close links with the CARICOM Women's Desk, and with the UWI, Women and Development Unit (WAND). Barbados has attended all of the CARICOM organised meetings, being represented at the Dominica meeting in 1981 by the then Minister responsible for Women's Affairs. Barbados is currently one of the principal delegates to the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM).

D Funding

Government provides the salary for the two positions on the staff as well as for ancillary services and annual subventions to various non-government organisations (NGOs). Funds for various aspects of its work programme are sought externally. To date grants have been received from the CIM, the OAS and Appropriate Technology International (ATI) for specific programmes.

E Programmes

The Department's programme activity is heavily weighted in favour of public education, but other areas also assume importance.

a) Public Education

The earliest activity in this regard was the hosting of a workshop in April 1979 entitled Towards the Total Integration of Women in Barbados. This was an opportunity for the Department to present and discuss the findings of the Commission's Report to a group of representatives of the government and non-government agencies.

Two years later the Department co-sponsored with the Extra-mural Department, UWI, a three month seminar on Civic Education for Effective Leadership, which included a special section on Women and Development issues. Participants were drawn mainly from women's voluntary organisations.

Recent efforts have been directed at developing specific workshops for carefully selected target groups which could assist the Department in the execution of its work programme. Thus teachers and guidance counsellors were exposed to a workshop which looked at the effect of sex-role stereotyping in the home and school environment on children's expectations and career choices; youth leaders and representatives of women's organisations were the beneficiaries of a workshop focussing on interpersonal relationships in the workplace; Community Development officers attended a workshop designed to sensitise them to issues affecting women. It is proposed to continue this programme with this latter group of government officers and to extend it to field officers in other ministries.

The Department is currently in the process of developing a series of activities aimed at enhancing its image. Work is currently underway on the development of a television documentary designed to illustrate the economic activity of women in traditional and non-traditional areas. A second

project aims to publish an occasional newsletter highlighting the activities of individual women, women's groups and the Department itself. The first of these is expected to be available shortly.

b) Training

Two options are available under this programme. It is possible for the Department to sponsor local training activities directly. This requires funds to be solicited mainly from external sources. Alternatively it is possible for the Department to channel participants to training courses overseas.

One major programme in the first category was a leadership training course for women from various voluntary organisations. Without direct funds to undertake such programmes in a sustained manner the Department has adopted the second strategy of sending Barbadian participants to overseas training workshops. Here the principal resource has been CIM which has covered the costs of attendance of Barbadians at three of its recent workshops:

- | | | | | |
|-------|-----------|------|---|---|
| (i) | August | 1982 | - | Mass Communications Media and Women's Image - Cordoba, Argentina. |
| (ii) | May | 1983 | - | Training and Employment of Women - Mona, Jamaica. |
| (iii) | September | 1983 | - | Inter-American Year of the Family - Santiago, Chile. |

In such cases the Department identifies a participant, makes all the necessary arrangements and undertakes all follow-up action to ensure that the recommendations of these workshops are relayed to relevant agencies.

The Government Training Division provides a variety of basic courses, some of which Department staff have attended e.g. the Senior Level Administration and Communication course. For special purpose courses concerned specifically with women reliance is placed on outside agencies.

c) NCSW Recommendations

Monitoring the progress of implementation of the Commission's Report is a major function of the Department. Progress on this however has been slow and fragmented, largely due to the sluggishness of the bureaucratic process and, of course, to the Department's staff limitations. Recommendations on the law have been directed to the Attorney General's office and some action has resulted. The Department is now about to start the process of channelling the other recommendations to the relevant agencies for action.

d) Research

Although the Department has been provided with a Research Assistant, the heavy workload of the Director requires this person to function more as an administrative officer. Thus independent primary research to produce material for dissemination is not possible.

However, the Department was able to finance a small research study on women in agriculture in 1981. This has since been updated and the report will be released shortly. In addition, the Department provided information for the Barbados sector of the Women in the Caribbean Project sponsored by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), UWI.

(e) **Project Activities**

(i) *Careers Showcase*

In conjunction with WAND, the Bureau sponsors a booth at the annual Careers Showcase put on by Business and Professional Women, which is intended to provide school leavers with information on possible job opportunities, training opportunities, training requirements and so on. Out of this exercise the Business and Professional Women have recently produced a manual on careers for women which is currently being prepared for publication.

(ii) *Dried Fruit Projects*

A second project started by the Department is the preservation and sale of local fruits as substitutes for imported dried fruits. Twenty-five women and one man were trained in the techniques of solar drying, marketing and general record-keeping. Of this group, eight women have been provided with the necessary equipment and are earning an independent income from this activity. The Department has now ceased to be directly involved in the project and has assumed a monitoring role.

(iii) *Legal Education/Legal Aid Projects*

This project has provided the Department with the services of an attorney to examine and analyse those areas of the law specially pertaining to women, to prepare background material for a public education programme on the legislation examined and to organise seminars to advise special interest groups about women's rights and responsibilities under the law. The project also permits the Department to provide a modicum of financial assistance for legal representation of poor women.

(iv) *Channel for Funds to NGOs*

Two sources of funds are available to the Department for distributing to women's organisations. The Government of Barbados provides annual subventions to a number of NGOs including the National Organisation of Women (NOW), the Girl Guides, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Girls' Industrial Union. Additionally government funds are available through the Department on an *ad hoc* basis for special projects e.g. the NOW received a subsidy for its Food Preservation Factory, and the Business and the Professional Women were provided with air fares to attend their international conference last year.

The second source is CIM/OAS which can offer assistance to small NGO projects at the request of the Department. Thus the YWCA obtained a small grant to purchase equipment for a project; Women in Development (WID) Inc. received a small grant to reprint the findings of a research project on Low Income Women in Barbados.

f) **Achievements and Shortcomings**

Given the difficulties under which the Department has been operating, it is difficult to determine whether its activities have affected the position of women in the country at all. Certainly the Department has been responsible for ensuring the widespread distribution of the Report of the National Commission; but it has not been able to follow through as it would wish with the monitoring of the recommendations in order to promote implementation. Thus two years after the presentation of the Report it was possible for the Chairman of the Commission to state:

Purists cannot be faulted for inferring that only four of the Commission's recommendations have been implemented, for it is only in the stated objects and reasons of four Bills which were brought before Parliament that any real indication is given which would lead any observer to believe that the Report may have influenced decision-makers to some extent.

A more detailed review from the same source suggests that some of the recommendations have undoubtedly received attention, and efforts have been made to implement them:

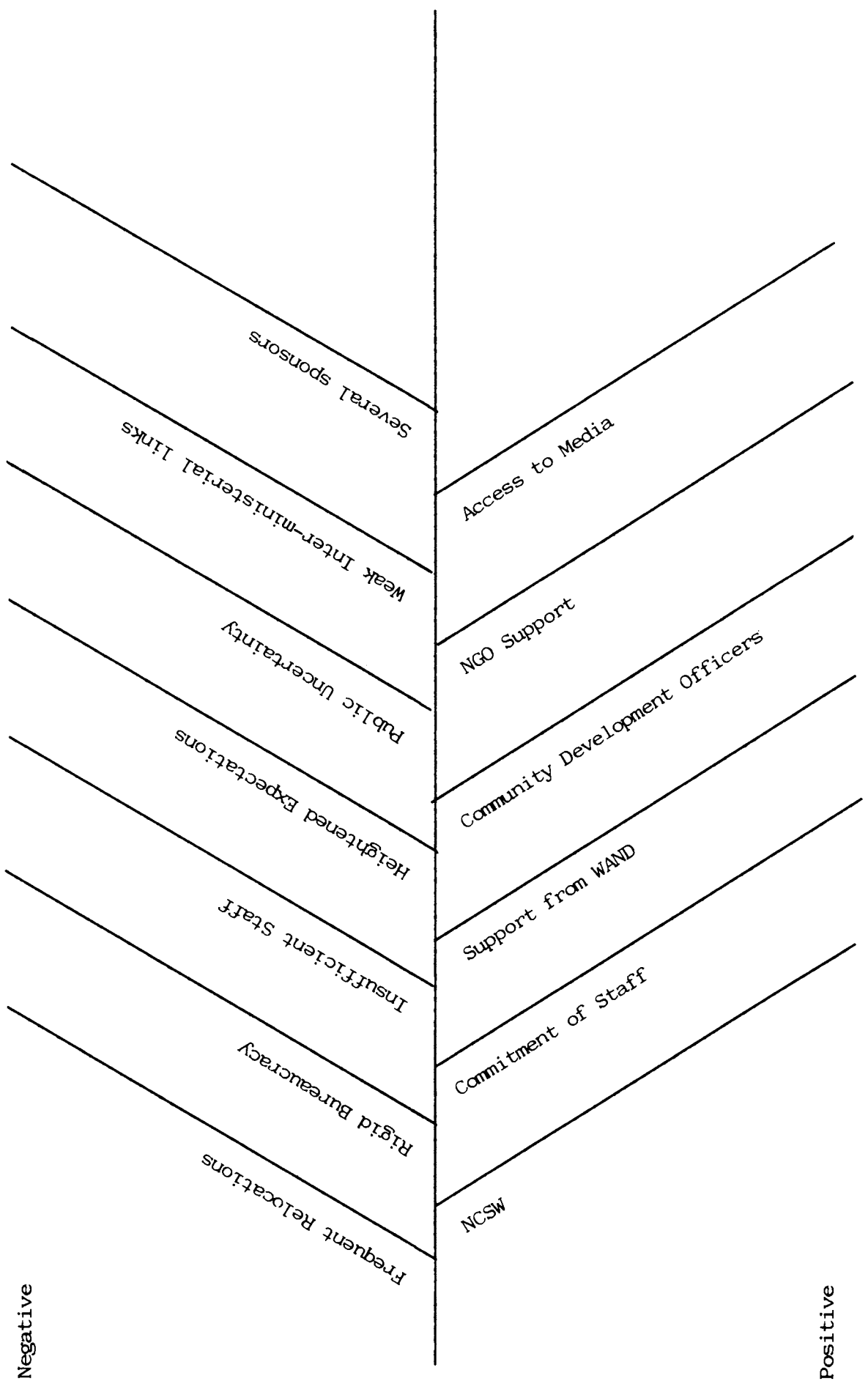
The much requested separate income tax assessment for husbands and wives is now operational. There is much discussion of improvement in community services. The problems associated with employment and unemployment among women have been recognised. The kind of expansion which would bring new jobs and relevant statutory change has been promised. Concern for health, mental and physical, is evident in the Proposed National Health Scheme. Legislation has been enacted.

Since this statement, the abortion law has also been liberalised.

But important areas of the Commission's recommendations have been left untouched. In the dissemination programme for the Commission's Report, the Department was particularly well placed to achieve its goal of consciousness-raising. Women began to use the Department as a source of information and guidance. But this original impetus has waned and the Department has been unable to recapture that advantage.

The unique history of the Department has served to draw attention in regional fora to the particular constellation of problems which pervade all national machinery in the region. This in turn has served to attract the attention and interest of international agencies which may be able to provide the kind of assistance required by these forms of national machinery. Two good examples of this are the workshop on Women in Development Planning organised by ECLA and the seminar on Strengthening National Machinery for the Integration of Women in Development which was sponsored by CARICOM, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies and the Jamaica Bureau of Women's Affairs.

BARBADOS FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS



G Factors Influencing the Operation of the Department

Using responses obtained in interviews it has been possible to identify the positive and negative factors affecting the situation of the national machinery for the Women's Affairs programme in Barbados.

A general question about the impact of the work of the Department has raised responses which were largely negative. The consensus seemed to be that the Department was reaching only the few groups which were directly involved in some aspect of its work. However the wider public appeared to be uncertain both about what the Department was supposed to be doing and what it was actually doing. There was consensus that any impact has been minimal, and there was considerable uncertainty as to whether or not efforts should be made to strengthen the Department. Those interviewed were all agreed that the role of the Department should be an advisory and coordinating one.

Relating this set of responses to what has happened in the Department of Women's Affairs to date, two lists can now separate the positive from the negative factors:

a) Positive Factors

- I Impetus given by the work of the NCSW
- II Commitment of staff
- III Programme/Support from WAND
- IV Support in field work from Community Development Officers
- V Moral support from NGOs
- VI Easier access to media

b) Negative Factors

- 1 Frequent relocation between ministries
- 2 Rigid bureaucratic structure and procedures
- 3 Insufficient staff
- 4 Inability to build on heightened public awareness generated by NCSW
- 5 Public uncertainty about role of Department
- 6 Weak inter-ministerial links
- 7 Multiplicity of sponsors

Actions to Reduce Negative/Enhance Positive*

During the interview various strategies were proposed for dealing with the problems identified. These proposals related specifically to action required by government to improve the effectiveness of the Department and included the following:

Increase staff complement [II, 3, 4]

Develop strong public education programme [I, III, IV, 5]

* Numbers following each item refer to items on lists of positive and negative factors which proposed actions are intended to address.

Issue government policy statement [5, v]

Discontinue direct involvement in projects [5]

Determine permanent ministerial location [1,5]

Improve coordination among parent bodies [7]

Develop informal structure to facilitate formal procedures [7]

Evaluate impact of governmental initiatives. (I, II, 1, 2, 5, 6)

Editor's Note: Since the case study was written Barbados has, in 1984, adopted a women's bureau in place of the former department and has started the National Women's Commission.

THE CASE STUDY OF GRENADA

The hallmark of the Grenada case is that the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been part of the mobilisation of the country under the People's Revolutionary Government led by Maurice Bishop since 1979.

Following the overthrow of that government in October 1983 an interim administration was appointed to organise the country until a general election can be held towards the end of 1984. It is impossible as yet to say whether the machinery set up to promote Women's Affairs will survive or not. It includes the only Ministry of Women's Affairs in CARICOM, the third in the Americas. This is, therefore, a different case study from the rest.

Grenada is one of the smaller Caribbean islands, a member of the newly formed Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which is an association of the eight smallest Commonwealth Caribbean countries. In 1974 Grenada was the first of these to gain independence. After five years the leaders of the New Jewel Movement took over the reins of government in a nearly bloodless coup and, as the People's Revolutionary Government, introduced far-reaching social and political change.

The population of Grenada is about 100,000 strong, most of it living in mountain villages or fishing villages round the coast. The main exports are bananas and spices. Tourism is being developed, somewhat sporadically in the changing political climate; fishing, crafts, perfume from indigenous plants are being developed, mainly as adjuncts to tourism.

PEGGY ANTROBUS, Coordinator of the WAND Programme of the Department of Extral Mural Studies, University of the West Indies, contributed the paper on Grenada.

A Development of Ministry of Women's Affairs

Two paths led to the establishment of Grenada's national machinery for the integration of women in development. One path, at international and regional levels, focussed on women; the other, at national level, focussed on development.

For Grenadians the years immediately preceding 1979 were marked by their preoccupation with the issues of Equality, Development and Peace, not just for women but for the whole country.

The formation of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) was the response of a small group of concerned Grenadians to the increasingly oppressive regime of the day. The women's organisation of the NJM was formed on December 10, 1978. Six organisers were selected, who at the time of the March 13th revolution had already formed six groups, with a membership of 120 women.

Other women's organisations in Grenada at that time included those common to the other countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean, namely; the Church Women's groups, the YWCA, Business and Professional Women's Club, Soroptimists, and the Homemakers groups.

The leadership of the revolution used the change of government in March 1979 as an opportunity to launch a process aimed at the restructuring of the systems and relationships within the society which would transfer power from a small elite to the mass of the people. According to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Trade and Planning, in the People's Revolutionary Government, the three most important goals or objectives of the Grenada process have been:

- 1 To raise the living standards of all the people of the country and in particular the vast majority who have been materially disadvantaged
- 2 To deepen the quality of development, the all-rounded development of the human personality of all our people
- 3 To constantly develop, deepen, broaden and enrich the process of grass roots democracy, democratization of people's involvement and people's participation in the process of the socio-economic transformation of the society

Philosophically the People's Revolutionary Government has been committed to a process whereby the people could define their own concerns and priorities. The strategies adopted included the formation of zonal councils, women's, youth and workers' parish councils and the formation of mass organisations as the vehicles through which these groups could be mobilised to articulate and exercise their power. The organisation of women in development was therefore part of a national mobilisation rather than a separate process.

The establishment of the Women's Desk in June 1979, within the Ministry of Education and Social Affairs, was perceived by the leadership as an essential and integral part of their revolutionary process. Commitment to the achievement of the international goals for women of Equality, Development and Peace went beyond rhetoric. There developed a correlated programme of policies, mechanisms and strategies to advance these goals for the mass of Grenadian women, who had historically and traditionally experienced the greatest degree of inequality, underdevelopment and violence in the society.

The Women's Desk was staffed initially by two field officers who reported to a Parliamentary Secretary/Director, a woman who had been both a founding member of the NJM and, prior to the revolution, a programme officer with the U.W.I. Department of Extra-Mural Studies Women and Development Unit (WAND). The Women's Desk was up-graded to a Ministry of Women's Affairs in August 1982. It is the first such ministry within CARICOM and the third in the Americas.

The initial focus of the Desk was on protecting women's rights and on encouraging their participation in the process of national reconstruction and development. The first task of the field staff was to build a mass organisation of women, the channel through which their special needs and concerns could be articulated and their efforts mobilised for their own development and that of their communities and country.

The National Women's Organisation (NWO) grew out of the organisational efforts of the Women's Desk and the expansion of the women's

organisation of the NJM. The establishment of the NWO as a mass organisation, open to all women regardless of their affiliation to other organisations, or their lack of affiliation to the NJM, was not achieved overnight. It was a process spread over two years and subject to a great deal of debate within the party. The decision of NJM women's groups to accept membership from other organisations and non-party members was taken in May 1980.

In December 1980, when the first General Meeting of the NWO was held, the organisation comprised 1,500 members, operating in 47 groups in all the parishes except Carriacou. The campaign to increase membership to build a mass organisation was the focus of activities of the Women's Desk in 1981. The present membership is reported as 6,500 (21% of the female population of Grenada), organised into 155 groups.

B Objectives

The NWO held its first Congress in December 1982. On this occasion the new name, its constitution and programme of action, were adopted.

The NWO was established as "an important vehicle for organising women to take advantage of both the material improvements, as well as the educational, cultural, sporting and community activities that build up the person". The aim of the organisation "is more than benefits for all our working people ... (but) also real power for all our working and poor people".

This document defined two main tasks facing the Revolution:

- 1 to play an active part in solving unemployment among women
- 2 to play an equally active part in ensuring that women receive education of all types - academic (adult) education, political and social education, leadership training and skill training

The programme of the Ministry of Women's Affairs has reflected these priorities. The current objectives of the ministry have been described as:

- 1 To strengthen women's organisations and promote cooperation between the various organisations
- 2 To mobilise women to play a more active role in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the country
- 3 To build the consciousness and awareness of women of their role in development
- 4 To improve the social and economic status of women
- 5 To coordinate policies and programmes for the integration of women in development
- 6 To build solidarity and links between women across national boundaries

Structure and Staffing

The organisational structure for the Women in Development Programme as well as its work for 1983 has reflected the close link between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the NWO. The working association has reflected the close relationship between the people and the state organs which has been the hallmark of the Revolutionary Government.

The Minister for Education, Youth, Social Affairs and Culture in the People's Revolutionary Government was Minister for all the human resource ministries. The Ministries of Women's Affairs and Youth each have their own Deputy Ministers, and in addition, the Deputy Minister for Community Development has since early 1981, been assigned to work within the Ministry of Women's Affairs, an indication of the priority which the PRG has placed on women's development. The Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs is also President of the NWO.

The Ministry works very closely with a number of other ministries and departments, as well as with various agencies, trade unions and mass organisations, in the execution of programmes to benefit women and to speed up their integration into the economic and social development of the country. This collaboration with other agencies leads to a considerable saving on programme costs. The diagram opposite indicates the Ministry's departments and the agencies with which they are working.

Liaison with other ministries and agencies is achieved formally through representation of the NWO and Ministry of Women's Affairs on various boards and committees as well as through informal contact with their staff and directorate.

The chief agencies with which the Ministry of Women's Affairs has contact are:

a) The Ministries of:

Education, Youth, Sports, Social Affairs and Culture
Mobilisation
Agriculture
Health
Construction
Legal Affairs

b) The National Organisations of:

Women (NWO)
Youth (NYO)
Workers (Trade Unions)
Farmers (PFU)

The Armed Forces and Police Service

Centre for Popular Education (CPE)

National Cooperative Development Agency (NACDA)

Agency for Rural Transportation (ART)

GRENCRAFT

Grenada Save the Children Fund (GRENSAVE)

The Homemakers Association

The way in which the regular and formal links with other ministries established systematic relationships can be demonstrated by the following four examples:

1 *The Attorney General* states that he takes his instructions on legislation concerning the status of women from the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The initiatives come through the Ministry from concerns raised at Parish and Zonal Councils and in discussions with the NWO. The procedure allows for draft legislation to be discussed at Parish and Zonal Councils throughout the country, and for comment from the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

2 A senior member of staff of the Macro Planning Unit of the *Ministry of Planning* describes how UN project identification missions are briefed on the Government's mandate that account must be taken of women's role and contribution to development in the preparation of projects.

3 The head of the *Health Education Unit of the Ministry of Health* has a memorandum from the President of the NWO/Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs to the Minister of Health requesting the collaboration of his Ministry in the organisation of Community Health Brigades which would "enable women to play a more active role in ensuring the health of their communities". Clinic hours and the location of dental services are now being determined by women at community level.

4 In the Ministry of Education three examples of cooperation have developed. The head of the Curriculum Development Programme, which is engaged in a major programme of changing the school curricula to reflect more positive attitudes towards development, has endeavoured to eliminate sexism from all the material used in the schools. Secondly, a new drive by the Ministry to open up training opportunities for women in non-traditional skills has led to the involvement of women in training at the *Agricultural Training School* and in woodcarving at *GRENCRAFT*, a Government-sponsored programme for the strengthening and expansion of a national craft industry. Thirdly, the Ministry of Women's Affairs shares responsibility, with the Ministry of Education, for the training of personnel for nursery and pre-primary education and for the establishment of a national day care programme.

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

DEPUTY MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

SECRETARY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL COORDINATOR WOMEN'S BUREAU

Personal Secretary/
Assistant to Secretary
Women's Affairs

Head of Department of Organisation of Women	Head of Department of Women in Production	Head of Political and Social Education	Head of the Early Childhood Department and UNICEF coordinator	Senior Executive Officer Administration and Finance
Social Advisory Centre Officer	Officer Responsible for C.P.E., Culture, Crafts and Sports	Political Education and International Relations Officer	Director, Early Childhood NISTEP	Acting Office Manager and Typist
12 Fieldworkers		Political Education Officer	Community Education/ Child Care Officer	Typist
			Community Education/ Child Care Officer	Receptionist/Typist
				Office Attendant
				Drivers

At this time the Ministry of Women's Affairs has a staff of 31, including 16 professional staff within the Ministry, 8 field officers and 7 support staff. The Ministry receives from the PRG funding to pay most of its salary bill, to attend international and regional conferences, and to maintain its officers. However, almost all the Ministry's programmes are externally financed, some EC\$651,674 having been raised externally to support programmes for women during the past four years.

In addition, Grenada's Women's programme has received technical assistance (including training and project development) from Cuba and from regional agencies such as WAND and the CARICOM Secretariat. Grenada has also participated in regional and international workshops (training) organised by the CARICOM Secretariat, WAND, the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), ECLA, CIM and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

C Management Styles and Decision-Making

The structure of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, its relationships with the policy-makers, other ministries, the mass organisations of women, youth, farmers and workers have given it a strength and force which is absent in other national machinery in the region - and perhaps most other countries.

It has been observed that the achievement of the objectives of equality between the sexes and the full participation of women in the process of development are closely related to the political context in which these goals are pursued. There is a spectrum ranging from those societies in which patterns of domination, oppression and authoritarianism reflect strongly entrenched patriarchal structures to those engaged in a revolutionary process which challenges these structures. While the revolution *per se* does not ensure the achievement of the goals of equality and integration for women, it creates a climate and context within which fundamental changes in power relationships are possible. The involvement of women in these processes is crucial for the achievement of the goals of equality and integration for women. In Grenada women have always been a part of the revolutionary process and the presence of conscious and articulate women among the leadership of the vanguard party has helped to ensure the full integration of their concerns and priorities within the process.

At the same time there is a fundamental contradiction between a philosophical commitment to a participatory process and a political system which holds to the concept of the paramountcy of a vanguard party. The nature of this revolutionary process has led inevitably, and perhaps necessarily, to the alienation and exclusion of certain groups of women from the process of change. Some of the people whose privileges and status have been challenged have remained outside the process. Some of these had hitherto been actively involved in women's organisations and programmes for improving the status of women. While their programmes reflected a strong social welfare orientation they had little impact on the entrenched problems facing women and could only touch the lives of a few women in need. Moreover the welfare orientation did nothing to empower the mass of women, but actually tended to maintain the *status quo* of patriarchy.

Nevertheless, these women have skills and experience which are undoubtedly needed in the revolutionary process. It is debatable whether the leadership of the revolution seriously tried to involve these women or whether these women excluded themselves. It is most likely a combination of factors. The rhetoric of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism to which the revolutionary leaders attach great importance can in the final analysis be divisive and exclusive. It can inhibit the building of the unity which the revolution claims to seek. Nevertheless, some groups have continued and draw a new sense of purpose for their existence within the framework of revolutionary change. The YWCA, Church Women's and Homemakers Groups all fall into this category.

Radical change is threatening at a personal level also. Many women of all classes are fearful, or at least ambivalent, about changes which challenge the security of familiar roles and responsibilities. The emphasis on consciousness-raising in the political sphere was not matched by similar efforts in the personal sphere. There has been no attempt to help women to a deeper level of consciousness of their lack of autonomy, powerlessness and marginality *as women* - even within the revolutionary process. For this reason issues related to violence and role-sharing in the home have not been addressed; the political has not yet been made personal.

Perhaps it is inevitable that certain sectors of women will be excluded from the process of change. The Grenada experience demonstrates the difference between the revolutionary and reformist approaches. The gains, but also the cost, have emerged of the achievement of the goals of equality and development. One of the costs in the short run is the goal of Peace. The revolution has inevitably created tensions and the threat of violence as the leaders prepare for the military defence of the revolution.

Grenada's size, the closeness of relationships within the society, the nature of its revolution - that the overthrow of the Gairy dictatorship was both bloodless and welcomed by almost every class (certainly by the middle class) - all provided opportunities which are perhaps unique for revolutionaries, opportunities for involving all groups in the process. There are, however, groups and agencies which feel that their contribution has been rejected, that critical participation is constrained by fear of repercussions. Perhaps these are inevitable costs of the revolutionary process; perhaps they are not.

Postscript November, 1983

The events of the past year, including the death of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Social Affairs of the PRG, and, following the American intervention, the arrest of the Deputy Prime Minister and his wife, the Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs, raise questions about the fundamental issue of people's participation in decision-making, the central principle of the revolutionary process, and of feminism. Dignity and autonomy for women are the touchstones of their liberation at both personal and political levels; unless women have opportunities for choice and for the exercise of their free will there is no liberation. As the strength of Grenada's national machinery for Women's Affairs has to be seen within the context of the revolution so too the weaknesses of this process have affected the operations of the functioning of the Ministry.

Some of the weaknesses, the costs, have been referred to in the report: the exclusion or alienation of certain groups of women from the process and programmes for change; the blurring of the distinction between party and government; the difficulty of planning and follow-through against a background of revolutionary zeal; the inadequacy of the training and experience of the staff. Others were not as evident at the time of writing but are now clear in retrospect. The centralisation of power in the hands of the few leaders and the consequent unwillingness of lower echelon people to take decisions, the climate of fear which inhibits full participation in discussions on a full range of issues; the rejection of assistance from certain sources, the under-utilisation of resources set up by the Government to serve the programmes.

Most significant the failure to integrate the personal into the political had left unchallenged the paramountcy of the party which denies to the broad mass of people opportunities for participation in deciding such fundamental issues as leadership. Unchallenged too was the militarism which was promoted by the party as an essential part of the revolutionary process. The horror of the Grenada coup confronts us with the fact that a political system based on the paramountcy of a vanguard party backed up by military force cannot produce the kind of societal transformation which removes oppressive relationships between groups of people and which reflect feminine values of cooperation, caring, respect for the dignity of the individual and the abhorrence of violence.

These elements in the model make it inherently unstable and it was the failure to confront and resolve them by non-oppressive, non-violent means that led in the end to the destruction of the revolutionary process.

And yet when all of this is taken into account the fact still remains that the effectiveness of national machinery for the integration of women in development depends on the commitment of a government to the process of social transformation. The tragic and terrible events of the past few weeks in Grenada should not blind us to this fact - nor to the truth that Grenada's experience in this field may well remain the best and most effective model we shall know for some time to come.

D Achievements

The achievements are impressive and are undoubtedly due to the context in which the national machinery was established. The participation of women in the processes for consultation and action in areas of major concern to them is perhaps the single most impressive achievement. The strategies for mobilising the views and energies of women have been based on the Ministry's link with the NWO. The People's Revolutionary Government's recognition of the NWO as one of the mass organisations through which developmental goals are to be achieved has conferred on the organisation a substantial measure of authority and influence. It is the NWO which represents the views of women on a number of key boards and committees. At the same time the Organisation's perception and understanding of the issues has been influenced by those of its leadership and by their analysis of these issues and the priority assigned to them.

The achievements of the four years of revolutionary government which affect the lives of women can be listed in five categories:

- a) Efforts to facilitate access of women to every level of education
- b) Integration of women in economic and social development
- c) Participation of women in political and policy making concerns
- d) New legislation affecting women
- e) An improved women's image in the mass media

a) Efforts to facilitate access of women to every level of education

In Grenada there is no legal basis for discrimination against women at any level of education; under the law primary education is compulsory from 5-16 years for both boys and girls. However, the law has never been formally enforced, and many young girls have been taken from school to care for younger siblings in order to allow mothers to work. Very little technical education was made available. The basis of Grenada's economy is agriculture, yet agricultural science was rarely taught, and particularly not to girls.

The measures taken by the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada include:

- 1 A mass literacy campaign, begun in September 1980, accompanied by a mass adult education and skills education campaign, begun in 1982. The first phase of the literacy campaign resulted in a reduction of illiteracy by 49%; it is striking that a high proportion of both students and teachers in the initial campaign were women
- 2 The beginning of the enforcement of compulsory primary education as from September 1980, with a national "Back to School" campaign
- 3 The establishment in August 1980 of a special fund of US\$20,000 to assist low income mothers, especially *unsupported* mothers, with the purchase of school books and uniforms. For the school year beginning in September 1981 the fund was increased, and US\$75,000 in assistance has been given to the poorest families
- 4 The commencement of a school meals programme, which at this time provides free milk to all primary and pre-primary school children and subsidised meals to nearly half of all children
- 5 The introduction of free secondary education as from September, 1981
- 6 The adoption of a policy of teaching technical subjects equally to both boys and girls (especially agricultural science, carpentry, metal-work and domestic science)
- 7 At tertiary level, one-third of all students enrolled in 1980-81 at the National Agricultural College were female, as compared with less than one-quarter in 1979. Women students were also enrolled at the fisheries training school for the first time

- 8 The organisation by the People's Revolutionary Government of greatly increased numbers of scholarships to universities and further education institutes abroad, through fraternal assistance offered by several socialist and non-aligned countries
- 9 The commencement, in November 1980, of a National In-Service Teacher Training Programme where, by 1986, all primary school teachers will become fully qualified. Presently only one-quarter of all teachers are qualified
- 10 The reduction of the primary pupil-teacher ratio from 1:42 to 1:30-35, mainly through the employment of more teachers
- 11 The repair of all school buildings through the entirely voluntary efforts of 4,000 citizens during the month of January 1980
- 12 Commencement of work on a new school curriculum which will be relevant to the needs of our society, and which will aim to prepare our youth to play a productive role in the economic life of our society. Women play a leading role in the Curriculum Development Committee, which is taking into account the importance of avoiding role-stereotyping, and promoting a positive image of the women in our society
- 13 The Ministry of Women's Affairs is also working actively to expand the number of day-care centres and pre-primary schools, both through renovation of existing buildings by voluntary labour and by building new ones. In 1981 six new pre-schools and one nursery were set up. This allows mothers to work and older daughters to return to school, as well as ensuring the total healthy development of the young child

b) Integration of Women in Economic and Social Development

Measures taken to improve the integration of women into active economic life include:

- 1 Sanctions against sexual exploitation and sexual blackmail of women by employers, both private and public
- 2 The passage of a Trade Union Recognition Law in May 1979 making recognition of trade unions compulsory for employers once a poll has indicated positively the workers' choice of union. As a result, between May 1979 and May 1980 the percentage of unionised workers jumped from 30% to more than 80%. This favoured women especially
- 3 The passing, in October 1980, of a Maternity Leave Law guaranteeing three months maternity leave to all women workers (two months with pay), including domestic servants who form a relatively large and economically depressed sector of working women

- 4 The creation in August 1980 of a National Co-operative Development Agency (NACDA) which has organised more than 24 co-operatives during its first year. In this area women have shown particular interest, and two co-operatives officers have been assigned by the Ministry of Women's Affairs to work full-time in the creation of co-operatives among women. The majority of these will be in the rural areas
- 5 The establishment of a National Commercial Bank designed to facilitate, through low interest loans, the creation of small local business enterprise, without discrimination concerning the gender of the borrower
- 6 The March 1979 policy declaration for equal pay for women has been implemented in some sectors. Where different types of work are being done by men and women, as is traditional in the agricultural sector for instance, the situation is more complex. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is presently conducting a study taking into account the views of women themselves, to determine which types of work are of equal value
- 7 A policy of greatly increased skills training for women in traditional handicrafts, in agro-industry and in non-traditional skills, such as fishing and furniture-making, has begun. This is being linked to the formation of co-operatives. The first women's furniture-making co-operative was started in July, 1981

c) Participation of Women in the Political and Policy Making Area

Since March 1979 the number of women political appointees has increased from two to five (1 minister, 2 deputy ministers and 2 ambassadors). The number of women appointed as directors of public agencies and commissions, statutory bodies, and as senior civil servants, advisors, and technical officers has increased from two to twenty-five. Women technical officers currently head the Economic Planning Ministry, the Health Ministry, the Housing Ministry and the mass Literacy Campaign; and are playing leading roles in areas as diverse as the development of the tourism sector, the curriculum development programme for the primary schools, National Importing and Marketing Board, and the Information and Foreign Ministries.

d) New Legislation Affecting Women

The laws concerning trade union recognition and maternity leave have provided immediate and clear benefits to women. A study of all legislation affecting women and children has been undertaken by the Ministry of Legal Affairs, to lead to an overall plan of legal reform regarding women; in order also to determine what legislation must be amended and/or created to conform as soon as possible with the international convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, adopted in Copenhagen, July 1980.

e) Women's Image in the Mass Media

The portrayal of women through the mass media has improved significantly, though there is still room for improvement.

There were no practising women journalists before the revolution; there are now seven. The Programme Director of the National Television and the Assistant Editor of the national newspaper under the PRG were women.

The monthly newsletter of the National Women's Organisation, of which 8,000 copies are sold locally each month, reaches approximately half of all women at this time.

E. Problems

The technique of Force Field Analysis was used to analyse the major problems of the Ministry. Following on the discussion of achievements the major problem to emerge was the excessive work-load of the staff of the Ministry. Some of the factors influencing this were also seen as problems, e.g. shortage of staff, finance and transportation.

A Force Field Analysis shown overleaf revealed the following:

a) Restraining Forces

The Ministry's success in mobilising women which placed increasing demands on the staff

Inadequate transportation

Lack of staff

Inadequate training especially for field staff

Loss of staff to other ministries

Inadequate financial resources

b) Driving Forces

Government's commitment to women

The commitment of women themselves to contribute to the work of the Ministry (in other words, the commitment to women within the framework of the revolutionary process)

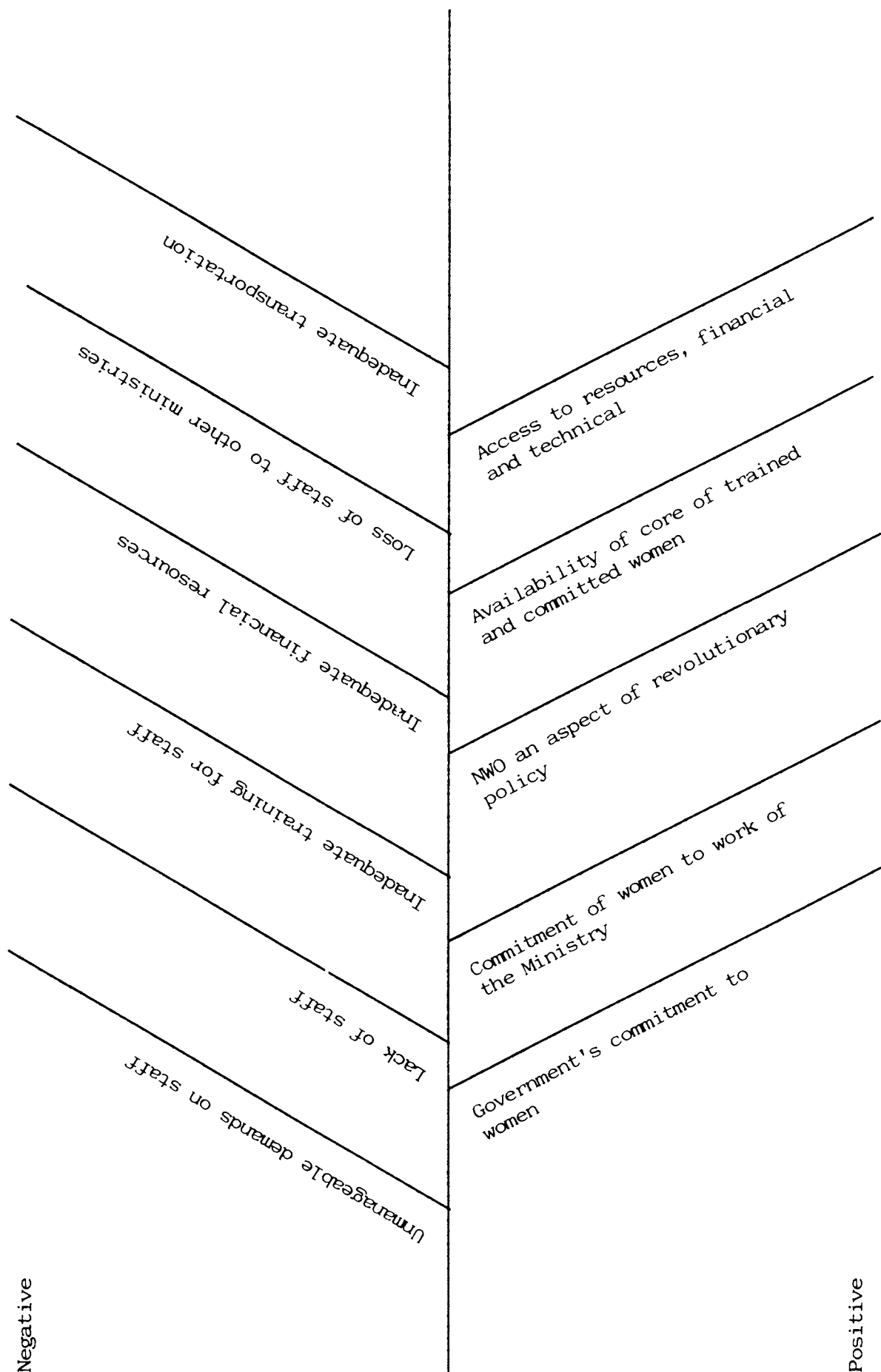
Availability of a core staff of trained and committed women

Access to resources, both financial and technical

Postscript by editor

Grenada's case study alone gives the Government's commitment to women as the main driving force in the integration of women into the development movement of the country. The restraining forces are all logistical in the case of Grenada. The other Caribbean countries would realise immediately the comparative nature of "lack of staff", "inadequate transportation". The solutions offered in the original case study are similarly logistical, namely, more training for staff, the exploration of more sources, governmental and non-governmental, for technical and financial assistance.

GRENADA FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS



The collapse of the government "committed to women in development" including the departure of both the Minister and Deputy Minister concerned with women's affairs creates a void in the situation. Caribbean governments, when changed at elections, are given to rejecting the usually small gains of their predecessors. A revolutionary government which came and went with coups is even less likely to be allowed a legacy. The critical question is whether new administration can sustain an undoubted mobilisation of women in revolutionary Grenada, and use it to articulate further ideas for self-development at both community and, in due course, national levels.

THE CASE OF DOMINICA

Dominica, politically independent since 1978, has the smallest population (74,000) of the sample of Caribbean countries presented. They live mainly around the coastline and cliffs of a rugged, mountainous island and maintain a banana economy, increasingly supported by the export of coconut products and to a lesser extent limes, grapefruit and fresh vegetables to other Caribbean islands. Since Dominica lacks tourist beaches the tourist industry is confined to an eclectic group of mountain and tropical forest lovers.

The infrastructure of Dominica, particularly its roads, was severely damaged by three hurricanes within a year between 1979 and 1980. These natural disasters at a time of international recession has left Dominica in considerable economic distress, particularly in the public sector. Reconstruction has overshadowed development at a time when development was already badly needed. The GNP per capita (1981) is \$750 and Dominica in fact of our sample had the highest rate of inflation in the 1970s. There has been heavy emigration; remittances are undoubtedly the family income of many households.

Dominica is a member of the new OECS and has indeed provided the first governmental chairman, who is also the only woman prime minister in the Caribbean.

The case study has been written by JOYCELIN MASSIAH, Senior Lecturer in the University of the West Indies Institute of Social and Economic Research, Cave Hill, Barbados.

A History of the Women's Bureau

As elsewhere in the region the primary role performed by women in Dominica is the mothering one. However, despite various legal disadvantages they have made considerable contributions in other areas. In the labour market Dominican women are teachers, nurses, lawyers, doctors, small business proprietors, hucksters, agricultural labourers. In the public service, they occupy every rung of the hierarchy. In community service, they have been predominant. In political life they have produced the only female prime minister in the region.

The professional women and women communication leaders were aware of the UN initiatives in women's affairs in the mid-nineteen seventies. Official action was therefore forthcoming in the first year of independence; in November 1978 the newly independent Government of Dominica appointed a Minister of State for Women's Affairs. As a result of representations made by the Minister, the government invited WAND to visit the country in 1979, to advise on the establishment of some institutional machinery to provide the administrative and technical support for the Minister. On the basis of WAND's recommendations, the Dominica Cabinet agreed in January 1980 to establish a Women's Desk within the Ministry of Home Affairs, Industrial Relations and Housing. In 1983 the Women's Desk was upgraded to the Women's Bureau on the recommendation of the Minister of Home Affairs who is also the Minister responsible for Women's Affairs.

To advise the Bureau on its operations, an informal Resource Persons Committee was created in 1980 by the then acting Director. The functions and status of this body have recently been strengthened by its reconstitution as a 17-member Advisory Committee comprising high level technocrats from government ministries and non-government organisations under the Chairmanship of the Minister Responsible for Women's Affairs.

B Objectives

In advising on the functions of the proposed Desk the WAND recommendations referred to the functions of governmental machinery identified by the ECLA *Regional Plan of Action*. As a minimum, they recommended that its primary functions should be:

- (i) data collection, research, evaluation and diagnosis
- (ii) participation in the formulation of national plans, policies and programmes
- (iii) documentation, education and information
- (iv) counselling and advisory services
- (v) liaison with regional and international bodies

While these functions were regarded as being basic for the operation of the Desk it was felt in Dominica that the particular circumstances of the country, particularly after Hurricanes David and Frederick, required an extension of these activities. Accordingly, the first Director redefined the functions of the Desk as follows:

- (i) motivating and mobilising women for greater involvement in the national reconstruction programme
- (ii) establishing a sound working relationship between government and the various women's organisations
- (iii) ensuring the education and training of women for particular skills as required at this time
- (iv) formulation of an action plan for the integration of women in development
- (v) seeking overseas funding for the implementation of the action plan, and for meeting the developmental needs of women
- (vi) guidance and advisory services
- (vii) data collection and research
- (viii) co-ordination of programmes relating to women and promotion of innovative pilot projects among women
- (ix) liaison between government and regional and international bodies.

- (x) participation in the formulation of plans, policies and programmes.

The first Director's definition of functions continues to provide the framework within which the Bureau formulates its work, although there has been some shift of emphasis. In 1980, following the devastation caused by two major hurricanes, the most critical function of the Desk was seen as the motivation and mobilisation of woman for their support and greater involvement in the task of national reconstruction. After two years, the mobilisation began to be interpreted as being related to national development rather than any longer to reconstruction. Accordingly, considerable attention is now concentrated on providing assistance to women's programmes and to ensuring linkages between government and non-government programmes within a development context.

C **Structure**

The WAND proposals had included a recommendation that the Desk be staffed initially by a Director and one (Senior Grade) Secretary. It was recommended that the Director be appointed at the level of a technical head of department "since she will have to relate to other officers at that level". It was also recommended that the Director should, preferably, have a social science degree and, definitely, some years of administrative experience.

The first incumbent of the post (1980/81) was prior to her appointment a Librarian, then Director of the Social Centre, the umbrella women's organisation of the country. She was appointed at the level of Senior Assistant Secretary i.e. immediately below the Permanent Secretary level. Subsequent appointments followed this precedent. The Acting Director (1981/82) had a social science degree and experience in several departments of the public service. The present holder of the post has a strong background in social work, with diplomas from Swansea University and the Commonwealth Secretariat, and considerable experience in the public service. She has also received in-service middle management training in both her previous and present posts.

At its inception, the Desk was provided with one member of the staff - the Director. This establishment was later upgraded to include a programme officer, a field officer and a secretary.

Duties of these officers are as follows:

(i) *Programme Officer*

- 1 To research and collect data to establish the status of women in certain specific areas, e.g. employment, education, health, the law
- 2 To compile and disseminate research material
- 3 To prepare and implement projects
- 4 To train women for Government and NGO programmes

- 5 To establish sound public relations
- 6 To assist women's groups in identifying and carrying out income-generating and other projects
- 7 To perform such other duties which may be assigned to her from time to time

(ii) *Field Officer*

- 1 To acquire a working knowledge and understanding of the community and its people
- 2 To work with primary groups to assist women in identifying their needs
- 3 To assist in running training programmes
- 4 To organise a wide range of activities for personal and social development of women, including programmes designed to improve levels of living and participating in the National Development process
- 5 To develop and maintain a good working relationship with other agencies (Government and non-Government) which are involved in promoting the development of women
- 6 To assist in data collection and research
- 7 To keep records and submit monthly reports
- 8 To promote and implement Government/Organisation/Agencies policies and programmes which relate to the development of women
- 9 To perform such other duties which may be assigned to her from time to time

(iii) *Secretary*

- 1 Typing of correspondence
- 2 Compilation and maintenance of a documentation section for the receipt of material and dissemination to groups and individuals
- 3 Receipt, dispatch and filing of correspondence
- 4 Performance of any clerical duties relating to Bureau

All staff are recruited under and subject to the general civil service procedures.

The Director is responsible to the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, through the Permanent Secretary. The entire staff of the Desk works in close collaboration with the staff of various government departments and

maintains a close working relationship with non-government organisations throughout the territory. This is achieved through the Advisory Committee, through representation on various government and non-government committees and through informal personal contacts with individuals.

At the regional level, the Bureau maintains close links with the CARICOM Women's Desk which is responsible for convening the biennial meetings of CARICOM Ministers and officials concerned with Women's Affairs. Dominica has attended all such meetings, and has, in fact, hosted the first of the Ministerial meetings. Dominica also serves as a member of the current advisory committee of WAND. At the international level, Dominica is now the Principal Delegate on the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

D Funding

For the first year of its operation, the Desk was funded from external sources identified and approached by WAND, on behalf of the Desk. Since then the Government provides for the salary of the Director and for the Secretary who has been seconded from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Estimates for 1982/83, however, include provision for a Junior Clerk, office rental, utilities, supplies, furniture and internal travel. This marks the first occasion on which the Bureau was involved in the budgetary process of government and, therefore, the occasion of the Bureau's formal incorporation into the government bureaucratic structure. It is proposed that this process should be completed by the end of the Decade.

Funds for programme staff and operations are sought externally on a project-by-project basis. In some instances the process involves the Economic Development Unit and the Ministry of External Affairs; in others the process is direct with the funding body. To date financial support has been obtained mainly from CIM, CUSO and the OAS.

E Programmes

The Desk develops and executes programmes in four major areas - public education, training, project development and research.

a) Public Education

One of the first activities of the Desk was the hosting in April 1980 of a National Seminar on the Role of Women in Development, which brought together 44 men and women from various voluntary organisations and from government departments "to share ideas and problems, work together for the advancement" of Dominican women. Among the resolutions submitted to Cabinet was one calling for a clarification of Government policy with regard to women in the following areas:

- (i) equal opportunity in employment
- (ii) the right to equal pay for equal work
- (iii) the right to equal access to education and full participation in national life

- (iv) the right to personal privacy, through improved housing, provision of adequate sanitary facilities and otherwise

It appears that no policy statement has ever been issued on the matter, however. The Advisory Committee is currently in the process of researching official papers and statements with a view to preparing a policy paper for submission to Cabinet.

The second major activity in this area was Dominica's hosting of the First Meeting of CARICOM Ministers with responsibility for the Integration of Women in Development in April 1981.

These major meetings have been followed by several smaller seminars and workshops aimed at raising the consciousness of Dominican women of their strengths and ability to participate fully in national development. The programme of seminars was at one time supplemented by a weekly radio programme sponsored by the Bureau. This has since gone into abeyance, but efforts are currently being made to revive it with the help of the Government Information Service.

b) Training

The Bureau sees its role as assisting women to prepare themselves for participation in national development. To do this, it has embarked on a series of training workshops, some of which tend to emerge as a by-product of other Bureau programmes, others as a response to specially identified needs with the wider society. Training sessions are conducted by Bureau staff either alone, in collaboration with private organisations or individuals, or with personnel from regional organisations. Thus, a workshop on data collection was identified as a need by the Bureau and training was conducted by the Bureau and the ISER (UWI, Barbados). Similarly, a workshop on Managerial Skills was conducted in association with a private firm, Management Consultants. In other cases, the women themselves express the need and are provided with the necessary assistance by the Bureau to conduct their own workshops. Thus a group involved in a banana-raisins project organised a workshop to train its members in the construction and use of solar dryers.

Where funds permit, the Bureau arranges for the participation of Dominican women in regional training programmes. For example, one woman who specialised in craft work was sent to Haiti on a course concerned with Small Business and Access to Credit. Another was sent to Jamaica on a course providing training for Master Craftsmen; while yet another attended a course in Jamaica on Craft Design and Implementation. Three others were sent to a course on the Participatory Approach to Development. In these cases the intention is that women will return and conduct training workshops with their own groups.

Another aspect of the Bureau's training programmes is the involvement of its staff as trainers in training programmes organised by other government departments. Examples of this include training in personal development for workers involved in pharmaceuticals and primary health care (Ministry of Health); community development to student nurses (Ministry of Health); in personal development to staff and recruits of the Prisons (Ministry of Home Affairs); West Indian cooking to a summer school (Ministry of Education). A related activity is the Bureau's collaboration with various groups to produce a Manual on Family Life Education for use in schools.

For staff training recourse is taken to opportunities overseas for special purpose courses.

c) Project Development

The Bureau's involvement in this regard is restricted to providing assistance to groups wishing to develop a proposal, trying to obtain funds for the execution of the projects and to providing small loans through a revolving fund operated by the Bureau. No attempt is made to become directly involved in projects, but simply to act as a catalyst through which projects receive whatever assistance is perceived as necessary to make them operational.

Projects which have benefitted from this approach cover a range of activities including Banana Vinegar, Banana Raisins, Carpentry, Smocking, Wine Making, Appropriate Technology, Dehydration of Sorrel, Sewing and Handicraft.

d) Research

While not properly equipped to undertake comprehensive research, the Bureau needs to undertake small scale enquiries in order to inform its own agenda of work. To this end it has undertaken a survey on the Status of Women in Dominica, and is currently involved in an employment survey. No resources however exist to disseminate the results of these surveys. The Bureau has also assisted the WAND Population Council Research Project on 'The Impact of Development Projects on the Rural Household and Women', and is now using findings of that project to develop, with Agricultural Extension Officers, strategies for implementing an integrated Rural Development Programme.

e) Other Activities

(i) An important by-product of the Bureau's activity has been a Counselling Service which the Bureau has found itself providing, mostly on the basis of referrals from lawyers but also on the basis of individual requests from women.

(ii) Another activity is the operation of a small Revolving Loan Fund intended to provide small sums to small business women in need of short term financial assistance not usually available from commercial banks.

F Achievements

a) Motivation

Following the trend set by the first Director, the Bureau has concentrated major efforts on building awareness of women's strengths and ability, their problems and needs. The most significant result of this is that "women themselves are recognising their importance to development and are making themselves heard and are re-emphasising their commitment to their families and to the development of their countries".

b) Legislative Reform

Another major result has been the amendment of discriminatory legislation, notably the Maintenance Act which now makes all children equal

in law, whether born in or out of wedlock; the Income Tax Ordinance which now provides for separate assessment of husband and wife; and the Maternity and Social Security Acts which together permit maternity leave with full pay for nine weeks after delivery, instead of the six weeks previously allowed. Sympathetic consideration is also being given to recommendations by the Bureau for amendments to laws relating to Inheritance, Marriage, Divorce, Leave Passage to Civil Servants, with a view to removing discriminatory aspects against women.

G Positive and Negative Factors Influencing the Operation of the Bureau

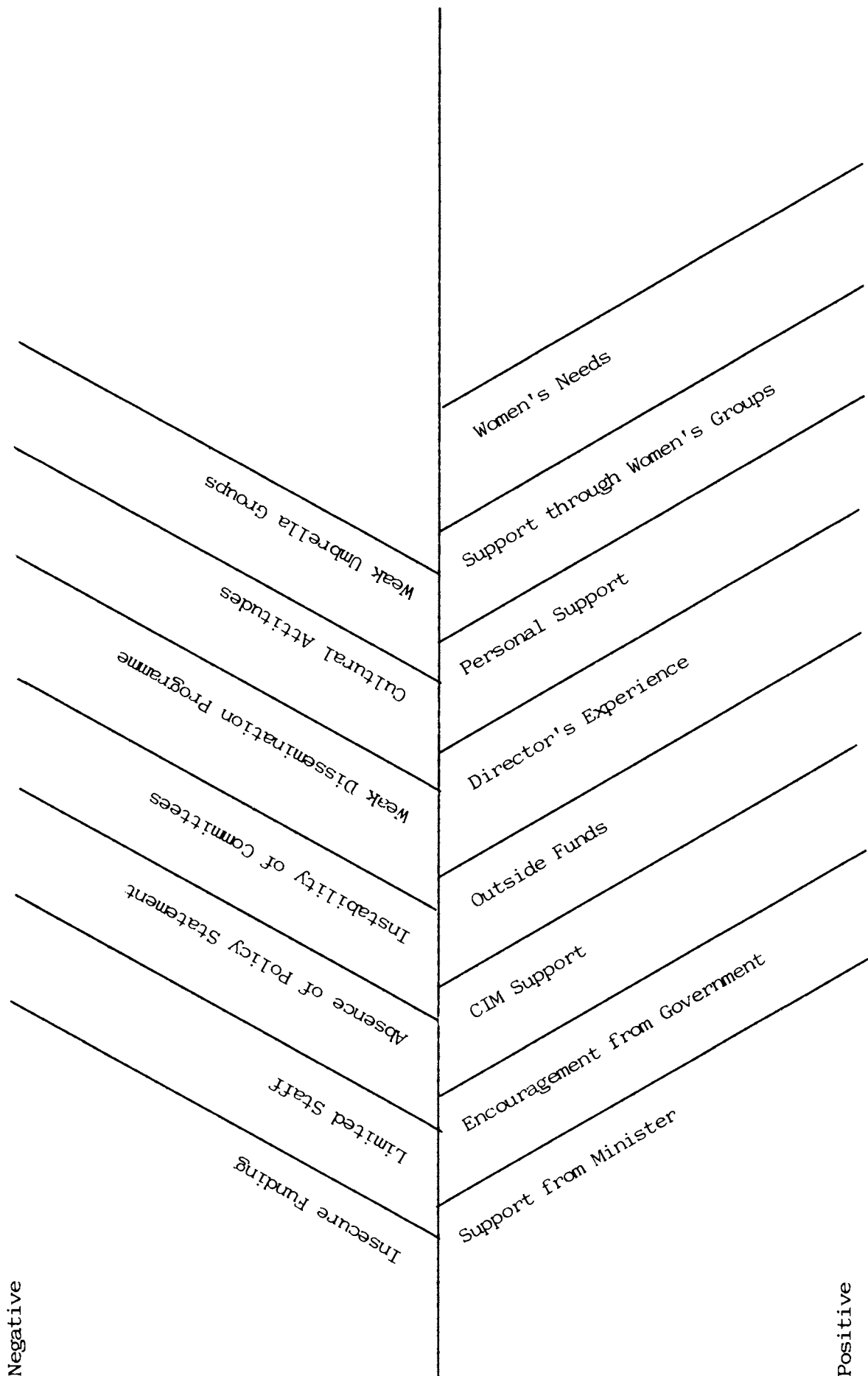
In interviews seeking information about the perceived impact of the work of the Bureau, three types of responses were received. There seemed to be a consensus that through its training workshops, consciousness raising seminars and technical assistance programmes the Bureau was reaching a relatively large number of women who need that type of assistance. This, however, appeared to be limited to those women in rural areas who expressed a need for these services. It was felt that the Bureau was not as effective in reaching other rural women and poor urban women. The second type of response related to the apparent inability of the Bureau to reach urban, middle-income women. This was perceived not so much as a weakness of the Bureau but as an indication of the disinterest of that group of women in the Bureau and its activities. The third type of response had to do with intangibles. The public education activities and the counselling service were seen as vehicles which provided the women with "the courage to go on". The availability of an official institution which could relate to and deal sympathetically with the problems which women face was seen as a welcome innovation in a male-dominated bureaucratic structure perceived to be unsympathetic, and sometimes even antagonistic, to personal problems. In all three types of responses, there were expressions of the need to strengthen and upgrade the Bureau.

Responses obtained in the interviews may be used to identify the positive and negative factors affecting the situation of the national machinery in this territory.

a) Positive Factors

- I Support from the Minister
- II Recognition of the work and encouragement from the Government, e.g. the decision to take over the costs of all staff by 1985
- III Financial and moral support from CIM
- IV Financial support from the international agencies
- V Past experience and training of the Director
- VI Personal encouragement given to the Director and staff by members of the public
- VII Support from women's groups
- VIII Needs of the women themselves

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b) Negative Factors

- 1 Insecure funding
- 2 Limited staff
- 3 Absence of firm policy statement
- 4 Instability of committees
- 5 Weak dissemination programme
- 6 Negative cultural attitudes
- 7 Weak 'umbrella' women's groups

Using the approach of force field analysis, these factors are expressed graphically in the diagram opposite.

H Action to Reduce Negative/Enhance Positive Factors ¹

The strategies needed to enhance the positive factors and minimise the negative factors may also be listed, but the question of the sequencing, and timing of those strategies and determining the feasibility of those strategies is best left for future discussion. The following list is therefore not prioritised.

Maintain close contact with Minister	[I]
Increase contact with local groups	[VII,4]
Develop an independent five-year plan of action linked to National Development Plan	[II,VI,VII,4,7]
Institute regional action committees	[6]
Maintain close contact with members of the Advisory Committee	[II,3,7]
Develop programmes aimed at specific target groups	[VIII,4,6,7]
Develop more aggressive public education programmes	[VIII,4]
Direct more attention to income generating projects	[VIII,4,6,7]
Strengthen Family Consulting Service	[VIII,4,6,7]
Identify and recruit appropriate staff	[II,2]
Development more positive fund seeking efforts	[II,3,7]

¹ Numbers following each action proposed refer to items on list of Positive and Negative factors which proposed actions are intended to address.

THE CASE OF BELIZE

Belize is a Central American country with a population of 100,000 living mainly on the coastline and along the rivers of a heavily forested country. (Grenada, the other Commonwealth Caribbean country of our sample with a population of 100,000, has a population density of 290 people per sq km; Belize, by contrast, has 4.3 per sq km). The population is very mixed and sustains not only heavy emigration to the comparatively accessible USA but also in-migration, particularly from the neighbouring Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. The Amerindian population is therefore large, and Spanish and English are spoken bilingually. Historically timber has been the main export of Belize; sugar and some citrus and fruit products are also export crops.

A long term border dispute with Guatemala delayed the independence of what was British Honduras; it also meant that independent Belize could not be a member of OAS. These factors have somewhat divided Belize from the rest of the Commonwealth Caribbean. As a result Belizian development tends to take different routes from the island countries, including some of the emphases of her Women in Development Programme.

SONJA HARRIS - Social Development Consultant.

A. The Development of the Woman's Bureau

The Belize Women's Bureau officially came into being in mid-1981. Prior to this point, however, there were many preparatory steps to institution building, which focussed on the needs of women in Belize.

The emphasis placed on women as a development force by the UN in declaring 1975-85 as the Decade of Women had a decided influence on Belize's growing awareness of the unique experiences of women in their country. While the impact of the force of women was broadly recognised, its potential as a tool of development was realised by only a few.

The Ministry of Social Services in Belize had long had in its portfolio programmes which touched women's lives. Many of these, however, had a welfare or training focus rather than a development one. From 1978/79, the Ministry recognised, along with the UWI Extra-Mural Department WAND, the need to co-ordinate and upgrade existing services for women, and to train a corps of leaders to carry out development programming to meet their contemporary situation.

Key Ministry personnel interviewed have indicated that the socio-economic climate prevailing during the pre-Bureau period (late 1970's) had the following features which particularly affected the conditions of women:

- 1 Both men and women were active in seeking better employment opportunities
- 2 Heavy migration to the U.S. continued, particularly among the Creole women and families, who had not had strong links traditionally with the agricultural sector

- 3 Family dislocations resulted from some of this migration, causing suffering, especially to small children and teenagers left behind with grandmothers
- 4 A growing dependence on government for social problem-solving (especially as the country prepared for independence), and a decrease in people-initiatives, e.g. among village leaders and village councils
- 5 A general unawareness nation-wide, regarding the impact and import of social issues related to youth, women or national development

It was originally intended in 1980-81 to establish a Women in Development Unit *within* the Social Development Department, which would co-ordinate existing women-related projects, and initiate new ones. The Unit would provide the institutional base within the government to achieve its objectives.

The Unit was to have the following components:

- 1 Public Education
- 2 Research
- 3 Planning, Policy Development and Advocacy
- 4 Projects
- 5 Training
- 6 Home Economics

A request was sent to the UNDP office in Belize in early 1981, proposing that funds from the UN Voluntary Fund, in the amount of US\$104,238.00 be allocated for staffing relevant to the above functions. Funds amounting to US\$ 45,000.00 were also requested from UNICEF, to be allocated to establishing an Income-generating Programme for women. Both have been granted.

The WID Unit thus started as a department within a department, that is, it fell under the Social Department, and the overseeing of the WID functions was the responsibility of the Chief Social Development Officer. Staffing was projected to be broad, drawing heavily on the Home Economics officers within the same department and to include additionally a Public Education Training Co-ordinator, a Project Co-ordinator and a Research Consultant.

Several factors caused the initial arrangement to be very short-lived. Some of the more important ones include:

- a) Lack of adequate preparation of Ministry staff to supervise matters which had national and international implications beyond anything the Ministry was accustomed to
- b) Power struggles concerning authority, management and communication between the traditional Social Service hierarchy and the new more avant-garde WID personnel

- c) An upset in the traditional communication network existing in the Ministry, with the entry of the Women's Unit
- d) Resistances and counteracting forces within the Ministry directed at the Women's Unit, for which there had been no national consensus. The Women's Unit with its UN funds and international support was a new power force to contend with
- e) Political pressures, from rival groups, affecting questions such as staff hiring and policy direction. The bureaucracy was caught in the middle, so to speak

The net result was an unfortunate level of fear and resentment directed at the Unit, which the international WID community desired and supported, but which the local senior staff saw as a decided threat to their well-established authority. The male/female implications in this power management dynamic only reinforced an already sensitive situation, as the person hired as Director of the WID Unit was a woman who seemingly had more power than her supervisor, the male Social Service officer.

Three dramatic changes occurred between 1981 and 1982. These had influence on the changing strategy for future programme implementation:

- 1 The removal of the WID Unit from the Social Development Department to a position in direct line to the Permanent Secretary
- 2 The concurrent creation of the Women's Bureau to replace the WID Unit
- 3 The departure of the first Director of the Bureau, and her eventual replacement by the only other senior staff member, the then Public Education Officer

This transition crisis which launched the new Bureau can be described as being of serious proportions for a country unused to confronting management and political conflicts head-on.

Contributing factors to the breakdown of the original structure, include, in our assessment, the following:

- 1 Belize's adoption of the UN and international rhetoric on women's issues, without introjecting what this rhetoric meant in terms (a) specific to the peculiarities of their own situation; (b) that ensured the country's readiness to move in this direction and (c) that prepared them to participate in this process reliably
- 2 An absence of procedural (process) steps after the workshop in 1979, which would build the WID Unit around the Social Service Department staff's ideas and needs, rather than impose a structure on them, which they instinctively resisted
- 3 An absence of up-to-date, location-specific research on the status of women in Belize

- 4 An under-estimation of the approaches needed to effect co-ordination between the women's related services in the Ministry of Social Services
- 5 An unclear strategy to effect a lasting collaboration between government and the principal NGO, BOWAND (the Belize Organisation for Women and Development) which spearheaded the WID role and concept, as predecessor to the Bureau. Both were geared to delivering comparable services and were getting support from common international sources

A workshop on "Participatory techniques for working with women" was held in June 1979. The workshop had twenty-three government and non-government participants, and lasted for two weeks. It focussed on programme and project development skills, as well as on sensitising participants to non-traditional income-generating skills. The workshop was intended as the preliminary to action in introducing a Women in Development programme.

B. Objectives

The Bureau set the following as its long-term objective at the outset in 1981:

To upgrade the economic, social, cultural, legal and educational position of women in Belize, thereby assisting them in becoming equal and full partners in the country's development process.

Short-term strategies/objectives can be summarised as follows:

Research; leadership training; an integrated development plan; dissemination of information among government and non-government leaders and community residents; project development and implementation; family life education; and income-generating activities for the most needy women.

C. Present Structure and Strategy

The chaotic situation which marked the Bureau's beginning, had clear impact on:

- 1 its changing strategies - to meet its objectives
- 2 its restructuring and current support network
- 3 its relationship with other departments and ministries
- 4 Intra/inter ministerial relations
- 5 Funding
- 6 Strategies

Whereas overall, the original objective remains; and the short-term objectives have changed only to include a new emphasis on advocacy, we

observed that the strategy being used is now more assertive and dynamic than simply bureaucratic.

The Bureau now has its own country-wide voluntary network and National Women's Commission formed in November 1982. This cadre of voluntary resource persons have a more far-reaching effect on the lives of women than a bureaucratic staff does. They are distributed widely throughout all districts and have been instrumental in hosting, with the Bureau, three district workshops to date, with others to come. These workshops serve to introduce the Bureau's functions to the public; to air the issues relevant to women's development in the different sectors; to emphasise use of local resources and establish the framework within which local contributions to the national development plan for women can be made.

It is our assessment that the National Women's Commission serves a vital function in a country characterised by diverse ethnic groups, varied district dynamics and a large geographical spread. This view is based on our observation that women are primary to culture-bearing; they also have a steady influence in closing cross-cultural gaps, where cultures vary and interlap, when the cultural process is indigenous or community-specific.

The Commission acting on behalf of a small Bureau staff (two) has carved out broader functions for itself that go beyond mere advisory or advocacy. It is beginning to define its functional areas to include supervision of village research, promotion of small village projects and training programmes. All of this requires a working budget and a larger on-going co-ordinative and technical role than has traditionally obtained with programmes on behalf of women in the Caribbean.

The Commission in Belize needs to be mobile, moving throughout all districts, and each Commissioner needs to train counterparts to work closely with them at all times.

The Bureau staff should be responsible for overall co-ordination, funding, technical and administrative supports, channelling requests from commissioned groups through the bureaucracy, and training of its voluntary personnel.

The integration of these development agents into a working unit, so that development planning for women can become operational, is the small Women's Bureau task. It is not easy.

The National Women's Commission is headed by a woman influential in the government, and a Deputy Minister in her own right.

This has contributed to two consequences for the Bureau:

- 1 It reinforces the power position of the Bureau within the Ministry. Not only does the Bureau have direct access to the Permanent Secretary, but it can also bring to bear the political influence of the head of the National Women's Commission to promote any measure that the Minister may be advancing.
- 2 The Bureau is perceived by some people within the Ministry, who are affected by the political influence of the

commissioner, as depending too heavily on political decisions, rather than relying on the normal bureaucratic or popular process. This results in the Bureau being viewed with some awe and some resentment, which leads to its being in a potentially isolated position within the Ministry hierarchy.

Whereas the relationships within the Ministry of Social Service are fraught with questions and doubts, because of this new power within a new department, other necessary relationships are being formed between the Bureau and other ministries. For example, a representative from the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Finance has been recruited to the Commission. This unit can provide valuable inputs to the Bureau in the future in the areas of macro-planning and analysis, relevant to a National Development Plan for Women.

The Bureau is funded for a two year period, through early 1984, by the UN Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women. The UNDP representative in Belize has been instrumental in assisting the Bureau in documenting its funding proposal. However, there are now areas of difference between these two organisations, which have to do with (a) strategies used by the Bureau e.g. to get research done; (b) the autonomy of the Bureau and the timely support by the Government of its Bureau, rather than extending the support from the UN; and (c) differing perspectives between the two agencies on the Bureau's management style and authority, and the role and authority of the funding agency's local office.

D. Methods of Operation

The management style used by the Director is business-like, but not authoritarian. This style allows room for flexible interchange and inputs.

The Director is a strong advocate for women's development, so will sometimes tend to manipulate or lead a group discussion, for example with Bureau's district volunteers. The Director is a decisive person, who is able to resolve issues at the end of a meeting, so that people are clear what decision is being taken. A tendency to advocacy, however, could result in her underestimating the value of process-analysis or in her having an incomplete understanding of all the forces at play in a problem-solving dynamic. This could be a setback in the evolving group process as far as self-determination in the groups is concerned.

The nature of the dynamics in a young Bureau with a vibrant new director does call for strong advocacy. However, this force if not balanced against the groups actively determining the process of their own development, can lead to greater dependency of the groups on the Bureau's management and the group feeling little accountability for an eventual outcome.

One aspect of her decision-making style, furthermore, is that she relies heavily on her own mental capacity to lead the development process, rather than making notes and referring to them. As more decisions are made over time, this could put stress on her ability to hold increasing information together.

The director's approach to training her new Public Education Officer is to lead by example, rather than by process. That is, she does not seek

her colleague's input on the spot in meetings, but the Education Officer's support for the directors's approach and decisions could seem to the onlooker to be assumed. Our own inquiry did reveal that this support is definite and that informal exchanges are consistent between them. However, in terms of leadership effectiveness and administrative clarity, our concern is that as the Bureau's management component becomes more complex, this decision-making style, which now seems unilateral, could be challenged.

Because the Public Education Officer is new we were not able to see her carry out all her duties fully. They include supervising the Peace Corps volunteer in setting up the Resource (Documentation) Centre and co-ordinating and implementing district workshops. It is at the point when the Public Education Officer assumes full responsibility for her portfolio, that the decision-making dynamics between herself and the Director may conflict. However, their present support for each other indicates that they will structure tasks so that their common assertiveness will lead to balanced power-sharing.

It is our observation that all government departments with which we had contact are in a state of crisis management and are pressured by a sense of urgency. The crisis is related in our analysis to the changing needs of the country in the 1980's and the inability of old approaches to resolve present day issues. The bureaucratic machinery is not geared to meet the new socio-economic initiatives of the people at large, nor new development programmes of government. They are inexperienced and hesitant in dealing with such pressing matters in Belize as the complex administration required in multi-ethnic and multi-language communities, the in-migrant refugee problems, the out-migration to USA of skilled "Creoles" and the pressure of income generation projects from all groups.

The Women's Bureau, on the other hand, is new and is dealing with new development emphases in women's affairs. There is no immediate pressure on it to become institutionalised. The Bureau at this point commands international funding and promotes an internationally supported emphasis on development. In the Ministry of Social Services only the Income-generating Department shares a concentration on development with the Bureau. Their alliance, however, if developed at the expense of other departments, could lead to both of them being isolated in the Ministry.

The Income-Generating Unit is similar to the Bureau in its development focus, but with a more specific aim. It came into being as a result of a UNICEF study which revealed that women had low access to credit and that their traditional roles restricted their entry into the business world.

The four-year income generation programme has similar conditions to the work of the Bureau; its target group is low income and single mothers; its focus is on groups rather than on individuals. Both have similar limitations in staffing to service all six districts of Belize. The Unit's service delivery approach is more direct than the Bureau's in that training skills, management skills and interest-free financing are provided directly to groups. Thirty-two projects are now being managed by this unit. Much has been learned about the development process as it relates to group size, group composition, available research data and overall feasibility factors.

Like the Director of the Women's Bureau, the Head of the Income-generation Unit has easy access to the Permanent Secretary, although he is structurally under the Social Services Department. The unit is more accepted than the Bureau, possibly for the following reasons: (1) the Unit is headed by a competent and technically trained man, and (2) the projects in income generation are attractive to politicians who can use them to make promises to constituents.

The nature of the Bureau's present goals and structure, its National Women's Commission, its voluntary network, collaboration with Home Economics personnel, and support from international development agencies are all factors which can relieve the Women's Bureau from bureaucratisation.

In summary, the Bureau is different from other departments in the following ways:

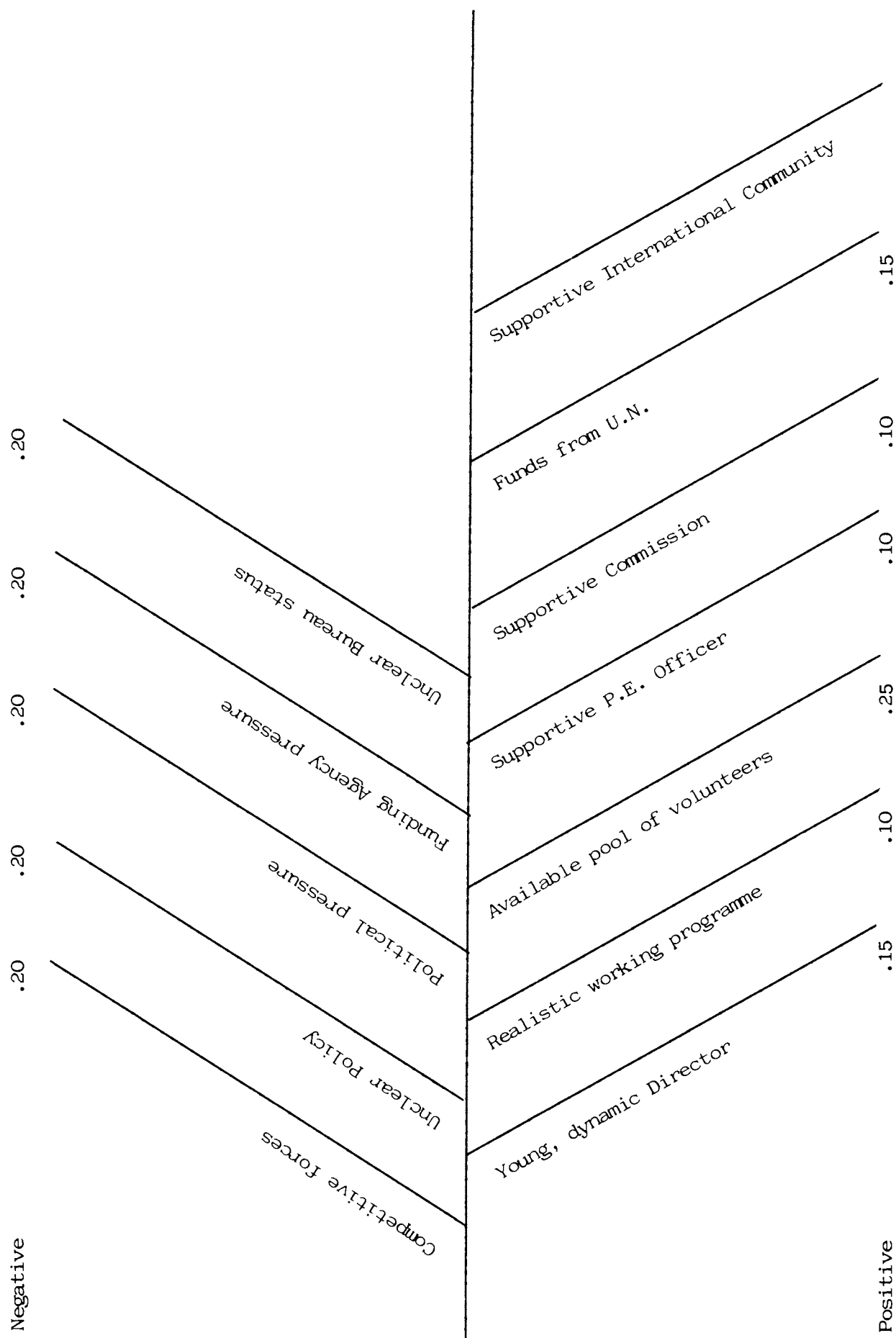
1. It is freer to be more *innovative*
2. It can explore *Research factors relevant to the development process* and evaluate them more spontaneously. Thus the Bureau can achieve a more research-oriented approach to its work, which could give Belize a model for systematic project development with components of formative evaluation. It would be different from the trend analysis, macro-economic research and forecasting which, even with computers, takes years to complete in large departments and in fact rarely leads to project development
3. It is *unencumbered* by an organisational network which is heavily hierarchial and consequently hinders communication flow

E. Achievements

After two years in existence, the Bureau, a small organisation, has achieved the following:

- 1 A sense of presence in the Ministry of Social Services in spite of personality differences in the earlier stages
- 2 A firmly established structure and a development focus
- 3 A working relationship, with the minimum of wasteful conflicts, with other ministerial departments and non-governmental organisations
- 4 An open communication network with the Permanent Secretary, with related Ministry departments and with voluntary personnel in the field
- 5 Moderate level of contact with NGO's including BOWAND, who had spearheaded efforts to bring WID issues to national attention prior to the establishment of the Bureau

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- 6 A balanced position between objectives and programme output, that is, the public seeks out the Bureau at a pace appropriate to the objectives the Bureau has defined for itself and to the services they can actually deliver
- 7 A sufficiently regular contact presence in all districts and in some villages. Through their workshops, they have become fairly well known in the main towns and villages

F. Problems

These can be summarised as follows:

- 1 A still unintegrated policy direction for the Bureau in the Ministry of Social Services. This needs to be clarified with the Permanent Secretary so that Ministry personnel is available to service WID projects in home economics, income-generation, and community development
- 2 The structure and support of the National Commission needs more urgent and constant attention than the Women's Bureau alone can offer
- 3 There is less than free interchange of ideas and documented data between BOWAND and the Bureau. The Bureau tends to underrate the strategies needed to work with BOWAND and to underestimate the Bureau's own relative position of strength
- 4 The influence of the funding agency at times acts as a pressure, steering the Bureau into policy directions which could lead to greater dependence of the Bureau on UNDP, and less effectiveness in decision-making in the Bureau
- 5 There is a carry-over of the tendency towards unilateral decision-making in the Director, from the time when she was alone at the Bureau, to the present, where the input of the Public Education Officer in the decision-making process is now critical
- 6 The "magic" of political support may quickly overshadow the systematic administrative steps needed to establish the Bureau's development network

G. Summary Analysis of Development Forces

a) Constraining Forces

- I Competitive forces and feeling within Ministry
- II Unclear policy re field workers' collaboration
- III Too much reliance on political pressure
- IV Too much direction from the funding agency's local office

- V Unclear status of Bureau in Ministry i.e. in Ministry's
 assuming full budgetary responsibility for Bureau

b) **Driving Forces**

- 1 A young and dynamic director
- 2 A supportive Public Education Officer
- 3 A realistic working programme
- 4 An available pool of voluntary workers
- 5 A supportive policy-making and co-ordinative body - the
 National Women's Commission
- 6 A supportive international community
- 7 Funds from the UN