

4. THE ISSUES AND THE NEXT PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

As the Decade of Women draws to its close there is a distinct difference in the orientation of women's bureaux, or equivalent, to be discerned in the six Commonwealth Caribbean countries discussed. On the one hand, Barbados, Guyana and perhaps in its own way, Grenada, are structure-oriented. They are realistic about the limited resources available and have come to regard the processes and machinery of operation as the greatest achievement to date and the most important development. Jamaica and Dominica, particularly the former, are project oriented and measure their progress by the number of activities in fact promoted by whatever machinery they have. Belize, the newest in the field, expresses both concerns.

The two positions are certainly not mutually exclusive. Those who are structure-oriented concentrate on organisation and coordination because they consider this the best way to get projects for women started by cooperating ministries and NGOs. The project-oriented also work for institutional changes to help them in expanding in particular the small range of projects started by women's bureaux. Whichever the bias the outcome sought in terms of a Woman in Development programme is the same. Working objectives need to show the specific on-going activities designed to meet them.

Two of the writers contributing to this book have independently realised the alternative emphases which have been expressed in the different case studies presented. Furthermore they have themselves both, without premeditation, taken up one of the emphases in discussing their findings. For this reason both are now given as the conclusion to the case studies.

It is not that the writers discuss different concerns, but rather that they show different degrees of concern for what they discuss. They also both point at omissions in the case studies; but they point out different omissions.

Development work can proceed by setting up machinery to coordinate offerings and provide supports. This might be termed the structural approach. On the other hand, development programmes can be initiated in their own right, mobilising the participation of those who are to benefit in each case and lending direct support for the activities as they develop. This is the programme approach. Obviously each country embarking on Women in Development programmes requires its own synthesis. Machinery without functions is merely cosmetic in its effects. Programmes that cannot rely on consistent supports from recognised machinery will have a short life.

Both critical discussions, based on interviews and careful readings of the case studies, now follow. The reader must make her own applications to her own community and to the direction sought for its Women in Development Programme.

A. THE STRUCTURAL EMPHASIS

The gap between explicit policy for Women in Development and actual implementation in terms of adequately resourced and efficient executing agencies continues to be wide, with indications of becoming even wider. It is quite clear that adherence to UN conventions, enunciation of the principle of women's rights and even of the importance of women's social, political and economic roles is simply not enough to ensure successful efforts to integrate women in the national development process. The lists of positive and negative factors in the force field analyses of the six selected Caribbean countries suggest that women's bureaux suffer from three major obstacles related to (i) institutional location, (ii) financing and (iii) the mandate given to the machinery for the programme. In addition, these case studies point to two other major concerns, one related to operational procedures and the other to performance evaluation.

1. Positive Factors

a) The Institutional Environment

There are positive factors in the same negative concerns which none of the people interviewed mentioned, but which nevertheless appear to be important sources of strength from which they can benefit, provided there is the political and administrative will to strengthen their operation.

Regardless of the specific ministerial location, the women's bureaux have been placed within a functioning bureaucratic system which implies that they have the right of access to available resources, of services, personnel, and machinery within the system. There is no valid reason why they should not make use of these resources. To do this the considerable arsenal of techniques traditionally used by men, who dominate the administrative system, must be made available to women who now occupy positions within the policy making hierarchy.

b) The Directors

Secondly, the Caribbean women's bureaux are fortunate to be directed by women who have a deep understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of their agencies and of the measures required for their improvement. The majority have had considerable previous experience in social work and training in management. They have nearly all either served their bureau before promotion or have assisted in its development. They in fact have insights and skills which could be seriously underutilised in a limited operation. All the directors display commitment to their job, acquisition and utilisation of new skills, willingness to be innovative. They have established a professional reputation for sensitivity to the concerns of the women in the countries they serve and a willingness and ability to manipulate the meagre resources at their disposal in order to achieve the stated goals of their programmes. These are assets which administrators should try to retain within the bureaux.

c) External Linkages

The women's bureaux, or their equivalent, have developed strong links with regional and international organisations, through personal and professional contacts, which, in turn, provide them with links to regional

and international resources. Through this connection they have been able to ensure that they participate in and benefit from regionally sponsored training programmes (e.g. Commonwealth Secretariat's management and community mobilisation workshop), research projects (e.g. ISER's WICP), and action programmes (e.g. WAND/CARICOM Communication Programme). They have also developed experience in a variety of activities, such as project preparation, collection of base line data, conduct of training programmes with different types of organisations (community, national, regional, international) and with different types of women. This is an advantage which needs to be maintained and pursued.

d) Rationale for Creation

The agencies have been instituted from above, in that their creation emanated primarily from political leadership reacting to demand from the international community. Such an approach can and has been interpreted as one stressing symbolism rather than problem solving and commitment to field activities. However, it may also be interpreted as being the legitimisation of activities in women's affairs. It is in the bureaux's interest to exploit national endorsement of international instruments to secure support of their programmes. It can be particularly used in public awareness programmes, not only in favour of current activities, but also to chart a course for future programmes through demands coming from the constituency of women which the bureaux serve.

2 Constraints to Performance

Despite the external and internal advantages discerned fundamental weaknesses predominate, most of which can be related directly to inadequate conceptualisation by the original policy/decision makers. Five major areas of constraint can be identified:

a) Policy Framework

While most Caribbean women's bureaux can cite documents which suggest that a specific policy of their operation has been implemented, the available statements have not proved sufficiently powerful to support developing activities. In assessing these responses it appears that what is required is a framework for action embodying (i) general statements about the need to improve the overall status of women in the country; (ii) specific statements about the goals and functions of the national machinery for women; about the relationship of the agency's work to other national imperatives being pursued by government; about the administrative structures necessary to ensure the adequate functioning of the bureau and about the administrative arrangements perceived as necessary to establish linkages between the bureau and other governmental agencies, and between the bureau and relevant non-governmental organisations.

(i) Goals/Functions

Statements outlining the goals and functions of the government's overall policy towards women and of the bureau's role within the policy would serve to give the rest of the public sector and the general public a clearer idea of what the department is expected to achieve and how. It would serve to draw attention to the multifaceted aspects of the bureau's operation, and the need to develop innovative techniques for reconciling

goals with resources within a constantly changing environment. It would force the bureau to develop a mode of operation which translates objectives into strategies and programmes based on adequate programme planning and development, monitoring, research and evaluation processes.

(ii) *Relation to National Objectives*

Statements outlining the relation of the work of the women's bureau to other national objectives within an overall development would permit other government departments to see more clearly how their own work can be enhanced by the inclusion of women's concerns. This would in turn create a more receptive environment for the operation of a new administrative device for the management of women's affairs, in presenting them as a vital component of an integrated development thrust.

An appraisal of the policy statements of women's bureaux under consideration reveals that no such attempt is being made. Rather, the onus for implementation rests squarely with the bureaux themselves. Yet the wide ranging and extensive mandate is clearly beyond their capacity. A policy framework which not only clearly articulates the interdisciplinary nature of the mandate for women's bureaux, but also forcefully stresses the role of all government agencies in implementing government policy in respect of women is urgently needed.

The need to do so arises specifically in poor economies in which competition for scarce resources is fierce, and in which innovative governmental initiatives tend to trigger resentment in a bureaucracy entrenched in traditional, compartmentalised modes of operation.

(iii) *Internal Support Mechanisms*

The administrative arrangements necessary to facilitate the work of the bureaux should include not only the administrative structure within the bureau itself, but also between the bureau and its parent ministry, and between the bureau and other governmental bodies. Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined so that all participants can understand their role in a specific administrative process designed to facilitate the operation of the women's agency. At the same time, the structure created should not be so rigid as to limit the bureau's capacity to innovate and develop.

Whatever the arrangement, the aim must be to keep ministries better informed of the work of the Women's Bureau and to give ministries a greater opportunity to share problems and exchange experiences as they seek to incorporate women's concerns in their own work programmes. To aid in this communication process and ensure more effective programme coordination, support processes should be instituted, such as steering committees, working parties, with records, minutes, accounts and exchange of planning papers. Over and above these routine administrative arrangements, there is need for an official statement validating the involvement of all ministries in executing the government's policy towards women and specifying the precise objectives of the grouping proposed.

(iv) *External Support Mechanisms*

Over and over again in the interviews reservations were expressed about the limited involvement in the bureau's work of the populations they

claimed to be serving. To meet this justified criticism some mechanism should be established by which representatives of various interests in the community which affect women's lives may have an opportunity to advise the Women's Bureau on their programme of operations. This could be a National Council whose functions could range from advisory to implementation, whose status could range from appointed to elected and from voluntary to government-paid employees. Such a policy framework should include some statements recognising the need for wide participation in ongoing long term planning of the bureau's agenda of work, close monitoring of the programmes and ongoing evaluation. To be effective such a council should include women and men, selected on a country-wide basis according to their expertise on women's issues, the Director of the Women's agency and at least one senior official from the parent ministry. Clear guidelines should be formulated on its terms of reference, duties, minimum meeting requirements, powers of co-opting, and communications procedures. A small secretariat could be provided either directly, or through the national machinery, as the mechanism for carrying through Council decisions.

The rationale for the creation of such bodies tends to turn on their ability to be more innovative, flexible and dynamic, free as they are from the inertia of traditional civil service procedures. On the other hand, because the policies and programmes of these bodies must be aligned with overall national policy objectives, they are required to function within the framework of ministerial and parliamentary control. In effect, they are required to function within the very administrative framework which is deemed to cramp their ability to be innovative, flexible and dynamic. These contradictory requirements frequently lead to problems which highlight the dichotomy between ministerial/political interference and agency autonomy.

Thus, there can be a real danger that advisory councils will be stacked with members who are there simply by virtue of their gender or their political affiliations. To avoid this the policy framework should include statements which go beyond the mere articulation of the structure and function of an advisory council. It should also present the advisory council as a mechanism by which conflicting demands of different groups which affect or are affected by women's concerns can be mediated outside of the arena of the legislature and of political parties, while at the same time providing those groups access, through the women's national machinery and its ministry, to the political centre.

b) Location

The question of the ministerial location of the Women's Bureau is very important as being reflective of (i) the extent of government's commitment to the notion of integrating women into national life, (ii) the government's ideological position vis-à-vis the role of women in national life and (iii) the government's perception of the role of the machinery itself. The machinery's access to the planning, policy formulation and funding sectors of the government determine to a large extent the extent of its ability to ensure an adequate impact on the direction of development in the country.

The three earliest Caribbean countries to set up their machinery for the promotion of women's affairs have each had four changes of location. These have undoubtedly diminished the programme. Not only do they reflect

the marginality of the women's bureau within the public sector, but the changes involve physical movement and often loss of staff. They cause redefinition of the programme to coincide with the interests of the new Minister and re-education of the new crop of bureaucrats. Always they lead to interruptions in the work programme, with the associated waste of time and dissipation of the energies and enthusiasm of the staff. These are very high costs to a programme which is young and inadequately supported.

The Ministry in which the bureau finds itself tends to reflect the Government's view of women in development. Where governments see women as consumers rather than participants in development, they are classified as a dependent welfare group; bureaux are then perceived as welfare-oriented agencies and located accordingly. Where, on the other hand, governments see women as participants in national development and their concerns are perceived as development issues, then the bureaux are perceived as development agencies and associated with development-promoting ministries.

Two aspects of the welfare: development dialogue invite comment. In the first place, the institutionalisation of women's concerns within the welfare sector represents the institutionalisation of women's subordinate status in society, and a denial of the primary objective put forward for the establishment of national machinery. Secondly, the welfare sector traditionally receives a small proportion of development funds and they are usually the first to be cut in times of economic crisis, such as those currently being experienced.

Many of these disadvantages could be overcome by administrative arrangements aimed at emphasising the multi-sectoral aspect of the bureau's function and at ensuring the collaboration of bureaucrats and technocrats of relevant ministries and departments in the interests of integrating women's concerns at the sectoral level in promoting the national development plan. In the longer term political support for Women in Development may not be as important for progress as whether appropriate strategies have been devised to ensure that, regardless of location, the bureaux are supported by an administrative framework which permits collaboration with the top bureaucrats and technocrats in all relevant ministries.

c) Resources

It is clear that within the context of scarce resources, national machinery must compete with all other governmental agencies for government-based funds. It is also clear that the size of the budget indicates the strength of the arguments proposed by the relevant administrative personnel in the budgetary process, as well as by the government's perception of the importance of the work of the national machinery. All the bureaux are starved of funds and their participation in the budgetary planning of their host ministries is marginal. Only in Dominica has the Bureau won additional resources through a regular new commitment item on the annual budget. The participation of the bureau in the annual estimates is very important since most Commonwealth Caribbean countries realistically regard the Budget statement as the annual declaration of Government policy.

The other important aspect of the resource issue is securing of external funds, which has been used by all bureaux to fund project

activities - either their own or those of NGOs. Applications are made both directly and through the Ministry of External Affairs. The first method requires the Director's ability and time to develop appropriate inter-personal links with key individuals in the relevant funding agencies, as well as travel funds and back-up staff to oversee routine operations during the Director's absence. In the case of routing requests through External Affairs, once again the question of competing with other national claims arises and the availability of sympathetic personnel to take the request through the entire process is essential.

More external funds tend to be available for projects - usually income-generating projects - some of which fall outside the main priorities of the bureaux. There can be danger in this; the bureaux are seduced into developing projects as a possible means of obtaining "spill-off" funding for other aspects of their programme. In time, their focus begins to appear more project-oriented than their mandate suggests and than their own resources indicate is advisable. Too much time is then spent on project activity, thereby reducing the capacity of the agency to fulfil its other programme objectives. Further, project grants tend to terminate just as the project begins to gain momentum. With no assurances of further funding, the project becomes a further burden on the agency. In short, the attractiveness of external funding for projects needs to be balanced against the danger of altering in significant and undesirable ways the bureau's programme priorities, and perhaps even its direction.

External funds, on the other hand, can be used for development projects by the Bureau as leverage for attracting greater internal funding. Particularly is this true if the projects can be linked to priority areas of national development plans.

A resource strength which could perhaps be used more effectively is the network of regional institutions whose programmes are themselves funded by external sources. In Women and Development activities a strong personal and professional network system has developed over the years; it has become a broadly based mutual support system expressed in representation on advisory committees, boards and at the CARICOM ministerial meetings. A firm basis of cooperation and collaboration is therefore in place e.g. the CARICOM Women's Desk provides access to regional ministers of government; the WAND Unit provides access to training and documentation; the ISER provides access to research. But it does not appear that the national machineries make as much use as possible of these resources. For example, rather than wait for WAND to organise a special-purpose regional training workshop or for ISER to undertake a regional research project, individual bureaux could conceivably seek short term training attachments to ongoing projects in those institutions. Similarly, in order to hasten bureaucratic action on specific programmes, individual bureaux could make sure that their ideas are included in the reports of the CARICOM Ministerial meeting to which their ministers are committed and on which their bureaucrats will therefore be required to act.

A general impression gained in discussions about financial resources was that not much attention has been given to alternative, or perhaps supplementary, sources of funding to support programme delivery. Externally, requests tend to be made only to those organisations which have assisted in the past, such as CIM/OAS and CUSO. Internally, apart from trying to increase government support, no attention is given to raising

funds from such sources as annual donations from NGOs, covenants from commercial and private sources, service clubs, foreign property owners, sale of promotional, educational and training materials. It appears that the main difficulty in this area relates neither to inability to prepare and negotiate funding proposals, nor to lack of knowledge of alternative external sources. Initially the problem of pressure of routine work and insufficient staff appears to be a major and genuine impediment. But more fundamentally, there seems to be some resistance to fund seeking unless related to specific *ad hoc* projects. The notion of fund seeking as legitimate ongoing activity involving staff, training, time and expenditure appears to be outside the experience both of the agencies and their bureaucratic superiors. It is, however, a notion which needs to be explored and developed.

In effect, while the fact of limited financial resources critically affects the operation of the bureaux, there are a number of areas which they could try to explore in an attempt to fill some of the gaps. However, those measures can only be seen as supportive and do not replace the fundamental need for a secure financial base.

d) Operational Procedures

A striking feature in this review has been the wide range of functions which the ill-staffed and ill-financed bureaux are expected to perform. Taken together, these functions include the following:

Data collection and research

Identification and promotion of programmes and projects

Coordination of women's programmes

Advice to government and to women

Motivating and consciousness raising

Monitoring situation of women

Liaison between government and women's organisations

Liaison between government, regional and international agencies

Education and training

The extensive list of terms of reference points not only to the multi-sectoral character of the task with which these agencies are entrusted, but also raises fundamental questions about the extent to which they are equipped to execute those functions. Here are some of the issues:

(i) Staffing Arrangements

A consistent theme running through the interviews was that staffing was well below minimal requirements. The staff of the bureaux expressed a feeling of being constantly overcommitted. This has engendered considerable feelings of frustration and anxiety as staff find themselves

pressured by their inability to respond to the needs they see and hear expressed in the field; by the constant shifting from one task to another, each more urgent than the last; by an overwhelming burden of administrative tasks which prevent them from doing the outreach work which is necessary to underpin their programmes. There are simply not enough personnel to carry out all the tasks required.

This limited staffing prevents the bureau from operating in any but an *ad hoc* manner with the following consequences:

- 1 Staff are involved in only a limited way in such programme planning and reporting as is done
- 2 Where job descriptions exist they are hardly reflective of the work actually being carried out, nor are they reviewed periodically with a view to their updating
- 3 Staff appraisal procedures are not in place
- 4 Training is limited, available on an *ad hoc* basis as overseas opportunities arise, and unrelated to periodic individual or organisational needs assessment
- 5 While communication exists on a day-to-day basis it relates more to routine matters than to general programme matters
- 6 With no serious attempts at departmental programme planning and monitoring, there is a total absence of programme evaluation
- 7 The heavy demands placed on the Director have weakened programme management and operational capability, and have precluded the necessary staff supervision and systematic programme monitoring and coordination

These deficiencies demonstrate the need for strengthening the administrative and operational capacity of bureaux not only in terms of additional staff but also in terms of a more rational management system.

(ii) *Role of the Director*

Virtually everyone interviewed commented on the heavy workload of the Director who carries the major burden of administration, research, technical assistance and public relations. No job descriptions apparently exist, but a listing of the actual tasks performed demonstrates the massive time requirements from the Director in order to fulfil the Department's mandate:

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| Administration | - Prepare estimates | |
| | - Attend meetings (national and international) | - departmental; NGOs, regional, community) |
| | - Chair meetings | |

- Prepare and present papers at meetings
 - Prepare reports - departmental, progress and final reports to donors, post-conference reports
 - Negotiation at international meetings
 - Write speeches for senior officials
 - Compile data for inclusion in funding agency documents
- Programme
- Prepare project proposals
 - Seek project funds
 - Monitor sponsored projects
 - Conduct workshops
 - Counsel women referred
- Public Relations
- Develop and maintain links with other departments in Ministry
 - Develop and maintain links with other ministries
 - Develop and maintain links with NGOs
 - Attend NGO functions and meetings
 - Deliver addresses to groups
 - Radio/TV appearances
 - Prepare articles for newspapers
- Other
- Prepare for End-of-Decade Conference

This wide range of tasks requires a director with a broad range of development skills, varying from management and advocacy, through group dynamics, communications, international relations and public speaking. With no staff to whom some tasks may be delegated and without a back-up support system which ensures that delegation of tasks to other departments or ministries will result in action, directors experience considerable pressure and not a little frustration as they rush from one task to another with alarming rapidity. Clearly the quantity and quality of accomplishments must suffer from the relentless time pressure.

This is further exacerbated by the 'distance' which separates the director from the political head of the division and which governs the

extent of flexibility which she may be allowed. Theoretically, the director, as head of a department, is a professional charged with executing policy formulated by the political directorate, in the person of a particular minister. She is expected to participate in a process of initiation, interpretation and implementation of decisions related to the promotion of given policies. She is a part of the decision-making process. In practice, as director of a newly established department, whose areas of interest are outside the experience of the male-dominated bureaucracy, she is required to shape the policy and programme boundaries of her department and to exercise the leadership qualities necessary to generate support within the bureaucracy in order to implement the policies. She is a part of the policy-making process, hence the necessity to create the post of director senior enough to recognise the extent of the assignment and the status of its manager.

Women appointed to decision making positions requiring them to respond to the needs of a constituency of women, tend to develop a leadership style depending on participation, sharing and caring. It is a style consonant with the nature of the demands expressed by the constituency they serve. But such values exert strong pressures on women operating in a male-controlled bureaucracy in which a traditional authoritarian leadership style prevails. Senior male officials respond to this unfamiliar style of operation in various ways. They claim ignorance about the new unit's programme of work, devalue their efforts, provide little back-up support for decisions, delay action, block requests, rigidly adhere to formal procedures and systematically exclude the director from the powerful informal network which underpins the formal, hierarchical structure of authority. Such practices serve to undermine the autonomy and creativity of these women, limit their power and reduce their effectiveness as leaders.

The desirable alternative would be for senior ministry officials to enter into a collaborative process with directors of women's units to develop strategies for creating a more sympathetic work environment for the Director and thus strengthen the role of her agency. Such strategies could include a job description for the director, a revised management and communication system designed to make the director more visible in the public administration system, training for the director, other department heads and senior officials on the operation of the new system, and specialist training for the director in agreed areas. The particular choice of strategy must be based on a collaborative process grounded in a thorough documentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system, and the direction which any changes should take. Until such a process is implemented, directors of women's units will continue to be seriously disadvantaged within the public administration system and the work of their units will continue to be affected by unrealistic terms of reference and impossible work schedules.

(iii) Role of the Senior Administrator in the Host Ministry

Directors of women's bureaux are involved almost on a daily basis in an ongoing process of collaboration and consultation with their public which determines their own work programme design and method of response. But decisions on the final formulation of these programmes have to be taken by a male senior official acting in an area in which he has neither technical competence nor previous administrative experience.

The potential for conflict is obvious. Unwilling to admit that he is ill-equipped to adapt to the new demands, but feeling pressured to assert his authority, resort is taken to the kinds of resistance factors discussed earlier. Some of these actions may not necessarily be deliberate, but because of the context in which they occur, give the impression of being so. More importantly they reflect a real dilemma which senior officials face. On the one hand, resistance implies an inability to perform their primary function, which is to guide and advise the Minister on policy formulation. To do this the administrator should acquire competence in the area by gathering information, going into the field, liaising with experts, reading relevant documentary material in a genuine process of self-education aimed at initiating and sustaining innovative change. In effect he must go beyond the boundaries of conventional administrative practice and he must do this in an area which he has been culturally conditioned to consider marginal. Few male administrators have either the desire, the sensitivity or indeed the humility to do this in any of their programme concerns, least of all those concentrating on women.

Yet unless senior administrators are prepared to undertake the background work and make the personal commitment to change, the women's national machinery under their control will continue to be ineffective. Senior administrators must perceive themselves, and be perceived by others, as integral components of government policy concerning women. They must be involved in all aspects of policy implementation; they must be trained; they must participate in programme activity; they must attend regional and international meetings; they must assist with fund-seeking negotiations; they must lobby their Minister. In effect, they must cease to function as if they are unconnected with the national machinery for Women in Development and its operations.

(iv) *Role of NGOs*

The relation of the Women in Development agency to autonomous voluntary organisations is another aspect of the operations of the bureaux which can be improved.

It was felt that some organisations have not yet become attuned to the critical role which they should be playing as 'lobbyists' of women's concerns in a sustained, systematic and well-informed manner. Their activities continue to be superficial, undefined and unconnected with the serious development concerns of their countries. This view was expressed particularly forcefully in Barbados, where it was felt that women's groups have failed to capitalise on the excellent groundwork laid by the National Commission by neither implementing the recommendations nor using them to develop their own programmes or those of the Department which was set up specifically to support them.

In other cases, where organisations were involved in clearly defined activities, those activities were not necessarily directed towards any significant alleviation of the problems of women. Specific mention was made of the women's arms of the various political parties, especially those in control of the government, which were perceived as having the greatest potential for drawing women and their concerns into the mainstream of national and political life. It was felt that these 'women's arms' saw themselves essentially as fund raisers, election campaigners and mobilisers of other women in party membership drives; that, although they claim as one

of their main objectives 'the promotion of the full participation of women in all aspects of national life', they do not in fact function as advocates for women's issues within their own parties, except in so far as certain welfare type activities and, more recently, income-generating projects are concerned.

Other respondents recognise that membership of women's arms is a small fraction of overall membership in the political parties, that female representation on the party Executive remains minimal, and that leadership within the women's arms may not be adequate. They feel that this prevents the women's arms from being an effective force both within and outside of the mainstream parties. They are furthermore hesitant about attempting to elicit the cooperation of these groups for fear of being branded 'too political'.

The interviews also reflected an awareness that such women's organisations are not representative of the interests of the majority of women and are not therefore equipped to speak or act on their behalf. The interviews also reflected the wide ranging contribution of individual women who prefer not to be associated with a particular organisation, but who are prepared to make their talents available. Efforts to include such women in some aspect of the bureaux's work should also be made.

The contentions about the women's organisations are borne out by a recent ISER research project which demonstrated that the majority (over 65%) of women studied in three project territories, were not members of any organisation, even though they themselves state that membership of such organisations is important for self-development. Further, it is shown that sizeable proportions of those women had never heard of organisations offering projects for women. Where they had, even smaller proportions actually participated. Those who belonged to organisations tended to be older women and to belong mostly to church groups. They all felt that programmes concerned with skill training, income generation and job creation were the main ways in which organisations can function to benefit women.

These findings hold clear implications for the restructuring and general overhaul of the organisations. But they also carry implications for the coordinating role which the formal governmental machinery must play if it is to enhance its own ability to transform the status of women. The work of these organisations must be seen as complementary to government initiatives. If that complementary role is not possible without some form of assistance, then that should be provided through the bureau in order to permit these organisations to become an effective part of the institutional apparatus. The mobilisation of support among potentially supportive elements of the population in order to overcome expected resistance is critical.

The women's bureaux should review their approach to dealing with women's organisations and groups. So far that approach has tended to concentrate on the provision of project funds, technical assistance and training. More attention needs to be paid to involving those organisations and groups in the actual programmes of the bureau through (i) participation in the administrative support arrangements; (ii) functioning as resource persons on agency programmes and (iii) mobilisation of their support as lobbyists for strengthening the capacity of the agency.

(v) *Programme Planning, Development and Evaluation*

The agencies for women's affairs do not operate a planned timetable of defined activities for target groups. Rather programmes appear to develop on an *ad hoc* basis as pressing needs arise or special requests are made. There can be little argument that the bureaux have demonstrated their responsiveness to these needs within the limits of their resources. Neither, however, can there be much argument that such an approach is too fragmented to represent any meaningful solution to the problems encountered.

In a sense, it may well be unrealistic to expect the administrative head of a one or two-person unit to undertake a detailed, time-consuming planning exercise when such exercises are at best marginal at even national level. But some ongoing planning of medium-term priorities is necessary. Reference has already been made to the frequent requests made for assistance; responses to these requests are scheduled according to staff and funding availability and the urgency of the request. Such a response reflects a degree of flexibility which should always rest in units of this nature; but it may well be that with internal planning, the unanticipated, heavy and competing demands placed upon the agencies' limited resources could be classified and related to appropriate programmes to maximise the assistance of the bureau.

(vi) *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Formal periodic assessments of agency activities are non-existent. Yet the innovative nature of their structure and function suggests that they need to incorporate into their regular activities periodic performance evaluations. During the interviews, although the term "performance evaluation" was not actually used by respondents, it was evident that bureau staff seem to be constantly involved in an ongoing process of informal programme evaluation. The process is unclear and unstructured, but if staff perceptions of the strengths and inadequacies of their programmes are to be taken as indicative, then some process seems to be at work.

There seem to be three impediments to systematic monitoring and evaluation in the bureaux. Firstly, evaluation is a minimal activity in public administration so that working models are not available to the bureaux. Secondly, because of the absence of clearly articulated goals, or of any coordinated plan of action, there is nothing on which to peg such indicators as may be devised. Thirdly, directors feel hesitant about adding another task to their already onerous burden, particularly in yet another area in which they feel somewhat diffident about their own competence. Unless some attempt is made to link objectives with resources, to identify successes and their reasons, to account for failures, and to do so regularly and systematically, then departments will have no valid measure of their effectiveness. Further they will have no convincing argument to persuade others of their utility and of the need to strengthen their ability to function.

Here again, however, it would be unrealistic to expect the bureaux to adopt a particular mode of operation in the absence of qualified and appropriately trained staff. There must be suitable arrangements for providing a staff member with training in evaluation techniques. Programme

monitoring and evaluation reports could then become an integral tool in the preparation, execution and review of ongoing plans and work programmes.

B. Conclusions

The case studies of Commonwealth Caribbean Women in Development programmes show that agencies and individuals, both within and outside of the public sector, perceive the need for some form of institutional machinery within the government sector to deal with issues affecting women in the society. However the achievements of the national machinery have been limited, indeed have been outweighed, by the constraints which inhibit their operation. Their main achievement has been in the area of sensitising the public in general and government bureaucracies in particular to women's welfare concerns. They have, however, been unable to persuade those bureaucracies of the fundamental need to link those welfare concerns with the major economic, social and political concerns of their countries. Some individuals within some government agencies do perceive and understand those linkages, particularly in the area of unemployment. However, the translation of that perception to positive governmental action has been slow, almost stationary.

Evidence suggests that the major impediment confronting the operation of the Caribbean women's bureaux lies in the administrative arrangements in which they are embedded. Presumably, such arrangements emanate from existing policy directives, but the current level and style of operations suggest that if real policy lies in bureaucratic practice then policy in this area of women's affairs can be said to be non-existent. It is true that policy statements exist, but they contain no clear definitions of goals and priorities and the associated arrangements for the provision of proper levels of resources and imaginative management support structures, which can transform those statements into creative and dynamic action programmes. Rather the bureaux have emerged as weakly structured, ill-defined units whose ability to function as the sole implementing agency for the government's policy on Women in Development is seriously compromised by the absence of appropriate support and resource provisions.

As these agencies approach the end of the decade, and indeed of the century, critical decisions have to be taken in a number of areas. Governments have to decide whether the issue of women and development is sufficiently important to remain on their development agenda. If it is, then they have to decide whether existing policy objectives are realistic, and if so, whether the allocated resources are commensurate with successful achievement. Once these issues are seriously confronted, governments will then be better placed to choose the particular machinery appropriate to its available financial, institutional and human resources. Until these decisions are made, and appropriate action taken, governmental national machinery will remain relatively powerless to transform the condition of women.

Table 6 : The Composite Force Field Analysis of WID Programmes in
Six Commonwealth Caribbean Countries

Negative	Positive
No budget or inadequate funds	Support from National Commission
Lack of staff in bureaux	Commitment of women attached to agency
Inadequately trained staff	Supportive international bodies
Bureaux unable to meet demands	Availability of international aid
No cooperation/understanding from Ministries	Cadre of trained/committed women
No national advisory body	Pool of volunteers available
Unclear policy	Realistic role & programme emerging
Bureaucratisation of the bureaux	Achievement of income generating projects
Unclear status of bureaux	Emphasis on socio-economic development of women
Competitive forces	Regular contact with PS and cooperating ministries
Political pressure	Link with official regional policy
Dependence on international finance	Specialised sub-committees valuable
Funding agency pressure	Government commitment to WID
No/few support staff	
Inadequate transportation	

B. THE PROGRAMME EMPHASIS

The case studies show that a programme for Women in Development has been launched in each of the six Commonwealth Caribbean countries presented. Only in the particular case of Grenada is there any danger of its collapse.

An examination of the forced field analyses of the case studies shows considerable limitations in the achievement, but assets also have emerged and been developed. Both offer important guides for the future.

The combined list of negative factors in order of frequency is as follows:

- 1 No budget, or inadequate funds for projects
- 2 Lack of staff in women's bureaux
- 3 Inadequately trained staff
- 4 The bureaux therefore unable to meet demands placed on them
- 5 Poor cooperative relationships with other ministries of government
- 6 No national advisory body
- 7 Unclear policy and status for Bureau
- 8 Bureaucratisation of the bureaux
- 9 Competitive forces
- 10 Political pressure
- 11 Dependence on international finance
- 12 Funding agency pressure
- 13 No support staff
- 14 Inadequate transportation

Virtually all the constraints described in the case studies are structural weaknesses and deficiencies in support. The exceptions, namely unclear policy, unclear status of the bureau, competitive forces, and pressures from political and international sources, are largely the consequence of the structural weaknesses as stated.

The positive outcomes reported by the combined group are to some extent also structural, particularly the supportive features which in practice have emerged outside the governmental machinery. These factors, in order of frequency, are as follows:

- 1 Support/cooperation from National Women's Commission

- 2 Commitment of women at large to the work of the Bureau
- 3 Supportive international agencies
- 4 The availability of international aid
- 5 Existence of a cadre of trained and committed women for the work of the Bureau
- 6 Pool of volunteers available
- 7 A realistic role and working programme emerging for the Bureau
- 8 Achievement of income-generating projects
- 9 Growing emphasis on socio-economic development of women as the main aim of the programme
- 10 Regular contact with Permanent Secretary and other cooperating ministries
- 11 Good potential in link with Government's policy of regionalism
- 12 Value in specialised sub-committees of personnel from government departments and NGOs
- 13 Government's commitment to women in development

To a considerable extent the positive factors are a demonstration of the negative factors overcome or compensated for. The lack of staff in the bureaux and the poor understanding in the government bureaucracy is in the majority of cases contrasted with support and cooperation from NGOs, women at large and the international agencies. The value of a national women's commission to mobilise these favourable forces in the field is well understood in the case studies. Since many women in the communities have appreciated the potential of the Women's Bureau and its links, regional organisation of any sort is a promising strategy. The specialised sub-committees, planned and just started in Guyana, are another way of recruiting experience and ability from all sources to tackle ongoing problems.

Only one case study reported a satisfactory situation of regular contact with the Permanent Secretary in the host ministry of the Women's Bureau and with the cooperating ministries. This has yet to be achieved in most cases. The apparently better links with NGOs cannot be a substitute for neglect of the Women in Development programme in the government machinery to which the bureaux belong. The officers of the bureaux will require persistence firstly in finding a regular place in planning sessions for projects in human resource development, which on definition must incorporate the women. Secondly they must now systematically communicate their priorities so that other hard-pressed public servants consistently form the habit of considering the role of the women concerned in any project which they are promoting.

It is perhaps because working objectives have been so little expressed that the staff of women's bureaux have found it hard to attract

the attention of programme managers in other ministries. An inter-ministerial council is suggested as the remedy in some studies; in Grenada's Ministry of Women's Affairs the largest staff of our sample participated in the management committee meeting of most of the other ministries. Contact with Permanent Secretaries is an essential formality, but regular association is as much needed with officers responsible for programmes or services in which women are involved. Since women in fact participate in the activities of most ministries it would help if the Women's Bureau could be placed in the most multi-functional ministry of the government, so that it shares with other staff of the ministry the need to maintain relationships with such single-purpose cooperating ministries as agriculture, construction, health and education. The Grenadian precedent of placing all human resource development portfolios under the Ministry of Education, with deputy ministers for Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs might be given another form. For example, Jamaica for a period had a Cabinet Council for Social and Economic Development which embraced all relevant ministries - their ministers, senior administrators and professional officers meeting together, and separately, at regular intervals. This enabled the Minister for Women's Affairs and the Director of the Women's Bureau to participate in socio-economic planning in an integrated fashion, rather than to seek a women's component in projects originally designed without their participation. Some case studies have advocated a national plan for women; others are becoming more specific in their statements of periodic operational objectives. Whichever method is adopted it will reflect the growing priority for women in development to undertake income-generating projects and the necessary skill training to promote them. The kind of self-employment, small business and cooperative organisation which would be required to expand productive employment can well be adapted to the demands of the other working life of women, namely the maintenance of families, the majority as heads of their households.

Although the case studies report successful projects in production, the recruitment among women has so far been small. Any widespread change in their economic position will require an impetus of campaign proportions. Furthermore, the access of women to trade unions - or their formation of their own - may prove to be a key feature in bringing them into modern sector employment. The development of women conceived in realistic terms can be found to affect all ministries and projects of government, the trade unions, the business and commodity associations, the banks and credit unions. The first decade of work for women in development has been more associated with long traditions of social welfare than with socio-economic development. The first small successes and the popular appeal of the latter should now encourage the staff of the bureaux, with their allies in the community, to state their objectives unequivocally and on a much longer scale in socio-economic terms.

The Caribbean governments have so far been largely impressionistic in their support of women in development. To be effective they need clear objectives which include timetabled and specific proposals for action. Unless this is done it is unlikely that the cooperating ministries will redistribute their resources to give women an equitable share in their development programmes unless this is done. Furthermore, policy concerning women in development needs to be related to that for men and children; otherwise women can appear to be developing themselves independently, or even competitively.

Two categories of women can readily be identified for emphasis in development programmes without raising questions of gender as such. In the first place opportunities for heads of families, in both income generation and services, are a priority in socio-economic development on the obvious grounds that the benefits reach the greatest number of dependents. Since a majority of families in the Caribbean are headed by women such a considerable need could be met on functional rather than on simple gender arguments.

Secondly, unemployment falls most heavily among young adults between 15 and 25 years old, the overwhelming majority of unemployed being young women. If the schemes for training, income generation, cooperative production and small business enterprises could reflect the actual distribution of men and women in this heavily unemployed group, a considerable inequity would be removed in Caribbean countries. This does not mean training school leavers for the traditional depressed occupations of domestic service, dressmaking and laundry; it means opening training, credit, access to equipment, land, distribution resources and developing markets to young women, in the proportion that they exist in the catchment area of any development. If the project really offers no work for women the alternative is a parallel women's development. This should surely become a series of routine considerations in development planning if the movement to integrate women in development is to be anything more than rhetoric. It must be pointed out that these considerations have only been stated in a generalised way in the case studies.

The governments, if they want a modern WID programme, will have to staff the bureaux adequately and give them full support. However, no bureau staff will be able to conduct the work required throughout the country for the socio-economic development of all the women, any more than any Ministry of Education staff can conduct the children's daily schooling. The expansion of activity with women is dependent on the efforts of women with each other, with training staff of NGOs and of ministry projects and with individuals who share their experience and skills when they are needed for a new project. These resources have to be mobilised on a regular basis if socio-economic development is also to be mobilised. It is clear that advisory boards, women's auxiliaries, a specialist sub-committee and the long-experienced NGOs have been the greatest support to the new women's bureaux. They have advised, canvassed opinions, trained and organised. Where they have not yet been institutionalised into the WID programme it is without doubt advantageous that they should be, in the form or forms most appropriate to each country.

Last but not least, is the need to mobilise "Woman Better Woman" herself. The Grenada National Women's Organisation and the long-term objective of the Belize Women's Organisation realise best that the appropriate membership of a women in development programme is simply all the women in the country. It was in Guyana, however, that the first workshop was held to canvass women's ideas on what their programme should encompass. This is a grassroots proposition in proposal-making which begs for repetition and modification.

Dominica's use of radio to reach women's groups is a technique to be further explored. Since there is only one newspaper a week in Dominica the radio is virtually the only public medium of communication. As in most third world countries the radio travels to the fields, in public transport as well as anywhere in the house. Debate and discussion can be conducted

over the air as well as in person; in Dominica all the proceedings of the House of Representatives are broadcast live for instance. For women's development Dominica has mostly used radio for purposes of consciousness training; a good development could be its use for testing ideas, holding opinion polls and exchanging experiences. Much could be learnt, for instance, from a short daily report in story form on the management requirements of a small business project. Jamaica radio has soap operas and performing groups which could present ideas, experiences and questions for discussion. Dominica has already given banana growers food for thought in such a series.

The lessons of the Caribbean experience in this discussion so far advocate the strengthening of the positive factors observed to counter the negative. This is obviously the purpose of learning from experience. The scope of the task, say by the end of twentieth century, is nevertheless enormous in face of the world's growing poverty and inability either to control or distribute equitably the products of science and technology. It is no exaggeration in poor countries to regard as crucial the potential participation of women in development, both as homemakers and as producers. Most women in the Caribbean countries know the difference between survival and development as a way of life, and act emphatically in favour of latter. This important distinction is not at this stage as clearly discernible in the Women in Development Programmes. The negative factors cited in the forced field analyses include reference to "unclear policy" and to "unclear status for the bureau". They do not include inadequate conceptualisation. It is indeed a gain that the case studies report "a realistic role" for the Women's Bureau; but one suspects that this is a realism dictated by the limited resources of the bureaux rather than by a preoccupation with the magnitude of Third World development needs. Both are important, but the latter is the inescapable context and perspective for all the work.

The national aims for women in development now go well beyond the removal of discriminatory laws and practices. The traditional welfare aspect is also giving way to a concept of socio-economic development of women so that they can enter modern sector employment and no longer require welfare measures. Above all the most positive factor is that the contribution of women is critically needed to achieve socio-economic development of the community at large. These aims have not been fully understood and do still need advocacy. The project manager who in his training and employment practices forgets that for the absolute majority of families the woman is the breadwinner is one example; the social welfare worker who encourages women to remain in "home economics" or cottage industries, notoriously non-unionised activities, is another. The forum to discuss the role of women in development, and consequently the functions of the agencies concerned, needs to be a broad one, led by a strong policy commitment from government, replacing rhetorical aims with objective statements of intent. The limitations of staff shortage, poor staff training and lack of support for the women's bureaux appear in all the case studies. The staffing ranged, at the time the case studies were written, from two in place, without secretarial help, in Guyana, to twenty-six, with office staff and drivers, in Grenada. The norm is an establishment of two or three with at least access to a secretary, but with no operational budget.

Apart from the fact that the affairs of half the population can hardly be attended to by two people, there is little hope of two people

having between them the range of experience and skills required for the task. It has been suggested that for the small Caribbean countries there should be a minimal staff of three in the women's bureaux - a director, a deputy and a research/formative evaluation officer, with a secretary. This assumes that the Bureau will be monitoring and supporting the projects of cooperating ministries and NGOs rather than conducting programmes of its own. The priority tasks then become mobilisation, policy formulation, planning and management, monitoring and evaluation, fund raising - namely, broad development skills. There have also to be productive relationships with many different groups in the community; for without cooperation there will be no achievement. These skills and attitudes are hardly taught in social science courses or even for social work diplomas. A further lesson from the case studies is therefore that there must be specific training for the staff of women's bureaux and their colleagues in government departments and NGOs, preferably at the time of appointment. On-the-job seminars and workshops are needed for a variety of skills which could be practised on actual programmes. For example, the writing of objectives, with built-in methods of evaluation, could be practised in a regional workshop attended by officers who in fact have objectives to write.

Other factors which may need short-term, on-the-job training sessions are:

Monitoring and evaluation

Advocacy and negotiation

Group dynamics

Use of media

International relations

Proposal and request writing

Communication skills - popular speaking, role playing (and reversing) simulations, and discussion.

The case studies brought up the problem of lack of training of bureau staff. They did not mention training for local production staff. In the field on-the-job training for project leaders) is needed as a built-in part of every project, from its local planning and acceptance, through implementation and functional evaluation. Training has been given in the technical skills of work projects, but little has been offered in grass roots project management. This is particularly important for women where production is a second activity and must be articulated with their household responsibilities. The introduction of new economic activities in Third World communities has more often than not left the women in a worse position than before. Except in Belize where new sugar production has threatened food crops and so nutrition, this dimension of disaster has not yet been prevalent in the Caribbean. The size of projects, as indicated in the case studies, has been too small as yet to have large-scale effect on the socio-economic position of women either way. This enables the new plans to incorporate the social role of women into the economic projects and train the very special kind of local leader to secure their participation.

Perhaps many of the implications of making reasonably sized income-generating projects into effective modern sector employment for groups of women are missing from the case studies simply because the women's bureaux have had no government resources to start them. Where the bureaux have had to seek international funding or a place for women in general production programmes, they lack the initiative to control either the activities or the scope of the programme. It is quicker and easier to achieve relatively small sums of money from the bilateral agencies which tend to back individual projects. The project is then limited both by money and the requirements of the international agencies who finance them. The latter have not to date been strong on small business management, marketing or even production choices, as elements of training to be learnt in the action. These are nevertheless vital if the object is to get women into modern sector production and employment.

One of the most important objectives of projects in income generation is simply that they must generate income. The finance which is so deplorably lacking for activities in the women's bureaux is therefore not, unlike international seed money, for individual projects, but for supports which are needed to launch any project. Working women's notorious lack of assets, such as land and collateral, for raising credit, need to be addressed on the broad front, not project by project. Self-help projects which match materials with promised labour, revolving loans for equipment, acceptance of group collateral for loans at credit unions or banks, finding guaranteed markets for guaranteed supplies, are all measures which can service women in all production projects. These enabling procedures were mentioned in none of the Caribbean case studies; without them the emphasis on income-generating projects will be implemented very slowly.

The impression left by the omissions in the case studies is that there is still a lot of ambiguity in the women in development programmes in the Caribbean. Many of the deficiencies in the staffing and support of the women's bureaux, or their equivalent, can be explained by the economic stringencies of the time in which they have come into being. However, the fundamental point of the women in development campaign is to mobilise women's participation in the socio-economic development which alone can overcome the economic stringencies. This is hardly stated, let alone reiterated, in the case studies.

Since they are dominated by the generalised international rhetoric of the Year and Decade of Women, the aims, goals and objectives, variously termed, hardly reflect the development aspects of the programme. This original model for objectives has only been modestly adjusted in national objectives, although the writers of the case studies report awareness that the priority in the programme, at least for women at large, is income generation. The limitations imposed in most cases by less than adequate staffing and poor financing of bureaux has led the case studies to be more concerned with structure than with objectives and functions. Perhaps as a consequence the answer to the limitations of the majority is to reduce the defined functions of the bureau, omitting direct participation in the socio-economic development of women which is now the priority of the NGOs, and of the cooperating women themselves. It is not clear where the catalyst is supposed to be.

Without the sustained work of the trained and/or experienced women in each country, both those selected to staff the bureau and those in the

NGOs, and the encouragement of international bodies it is hard to see how some of the bureaux would have survived. After 1985 the governments themselves will have to decide whether they seriously wish to mobilise their women in development or not; the impetus from now on must be the national initiative.

If, as one suspects they will, the Caribbean governments do try to develop their womanpower, there is much ground breaking needed by the professionals, in association with as popular a front as they can mobilise. The priorities seem to lie in:

- (i) Government commitment to the mobilisation of womanpower into the labour force for production-cum-household management, as aspects of economic recovery and development.
- (ii) Fresh objectives reconciling the aspirations of Caribbean women with the working plans for socio-economic development of the country at large.
- (iii) Enabling legislation and programmes, such as participation of women in credit, land use, self-help and business training.
- (iv) Participation of women's bureau staff in the inter-ministerial machinery for policy making and implementation of human resource development.
- (v) Formation of a steering committee or working party drawn from government and NGOs, to advise on, investigate and implement developments in women's affairs.
- (vi) A country wide organisation - using radio as well as face-to-face communication - to canvass women's opinions, communicate news and views and to facilitate distribution of training, materials and experience of other groups.
- (vii) Development of on-the-job training at all levels of the Women in Development programme, from bureau staff at time of appointment to every women joining a production project in her village or district.