

**LEADERSHIP PROJECTS AND
PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN IN THE
CARIBBEAN**

**TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING OF
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**PREPARED FOR UNIFEM CARIBBEAN OFFICE
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The interest of UNIFEM Caribbean in an analysis of projects and programmes aimed at influencing women's leadership in the Caribbean has to be seen in context of its commitment towards fostering a new direction in leadership in this region. This commitment is linked to UNIFEM's role to support the mandate of the United Nations to secure implementation of agreements to advance the human rights of women, and in particular to secure the advancement of women in leadership and decision-making. This is not a concern with numbers, although numbers are important. It is as Joycelin Massiah, UNIFEM'S Regional Director explained, a concern with "*devising a methodology to facilitate empowerment among women of all classes, ages and races. Most importantly, it means finding a way for women's perspective to be reflected in the social, economic and political changes that the countries of the Caribbean are experiencing as international forces increasingly dominate*".¹

As would be expected, the work towards this direction has been process-oriented. In this process, UNIFEM Caribbean has committed to learning from different individual women and groupings of women, about the nature and practice of a new kind of leadership, conceptualised as "Transformational Leadership". The following definition of Transformational Leadership has so far emerged from discussions:

“ Transformational leadership is a visionary process that starts at the individual level and transcends the personal to express itself at the group and institutional levels. It leads to the redefinition of gender and power relations and the strengthening of leadership that is bold and innovative and builds on the skills of women and men in society.

It is leadership that depends on people participation and challenges the beliefs, practices and structures of inequality, including gender inequality, that are detrimental to women's dignity, health, safety and well being. It is leadership that seeks to ensure the empowerment of women. The process should be grounded in the principles and values of equity, equality, justice, democracy, caring, non-violence and cooperation”.²

¹ UNIFEM. "Transformational Leadership Project Advisory Group Meeting". Savannah Hotel, Hastings, Christ Church, Barbados, 20-21 May 1999. p. 3.

² . UNIFEM Caribbean Office, **Transformational Leadership Project, Researchers & Gender Trainers' Workshop**, Bureau of Women's Affairs, Kingston, Jamaica, 13-14 September 1999, p. 10. Erna Brodber has proposed a modification which would adjust the second paragraph as follows: " It is leadership that depends on people participation and challenges the beliefs, practices and structures of inequality, including gender inequality that are detrimental to **peoples** wellbeing. It is leadership that seeks to ensure the empowerment of women **as a first step towards the empowerment of the human family**. The process

This paper seeks to contribute to the continuing learning and action process by examining the work of individual women as well as projects and programmes which have been or are being implemented to strengthen women's leadership in the region through training. Specifically, it is seeking to present the following:

- an evaluation of the aims, objectives and activities of projects and programmes, including new and ongoing initiatives, aimed at influencing women's leadership and assess whether or not the objectives and activities are/were transformational;
- an analysis and assessment of the impact and usefulness of the projects, programmes and training initiatives on women's leadership;
- an assessment of what, if anything, can be extracted or replicated from these projects, programmes and training initiatives as it relates to transformational leadership;
- recommendations for possible future action.

In the case of individual women, we would seek to distil learnings from their lives as leaders.

Confronting Limitations

As could be expected, the preparation of this paper has faced serious limitations. First, there was the difficulty of gathering information. Despite the availability of advanced technology, it has been almost impossible to gather the required information via correspondence across territories. Fortunately, the occasion of personal visits to Belize, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago and later to Barbados, provided some short time for discussion with some of the targeted persons/organisations.

The challenge has been compounded by the fact that generally we could not pinpoint in very precise terms what we were looking for in terms of projects/programmes which we would term 'transformational'. Selection of 'appropriate' projects would therefore rest on a good level of consultation, on weighing and talking through 'pros and cons' of a particular programme or project or individual's work for that matter. And hearing about a project by name would not necessarily denote its content. There was limited opportunity for the required level of consultation across the various countries.

Another limitation related to the difficulty of gathering information on the ground was that there were interesting personalities and processes which cried out for further exploration. Just to mention Belize for example: we would have benefited from learning

should be grounded in the principles and values of equity, equality, justice, democracy, caring, nonviolence and cooperation".

more about leaders like Dianne Haylock, Adele Catzim, Myrtle Palacio and of their organisational building work; about Donatilla Chun and her work in the Toledo Women Art and Pottery Association. It would have been beneficial to meet and relate to the members of the Chairladies Fajina Association, to have gone to the Mayan communities to begin to understand how the women negotiate their place in the family and community.

Other territories could have yielded other good example for deeper study. Suriname and the initiative of the Women's Parliament Forum and the Institute for Women Entrepreneurs comes to mind. So too do territories of the Eastern Caribbean and women and processes whose lives touched many. In this context the name of Earlene Hall is often mentioned; so too are experiences in GRENCODA of Grenada and WINFA- the Women in Farming and Agriculture in Dominica. Women like the Carib leader from Dominica who have done the Certificate Course in Gender Studies in Cave Hill merit some follow-up.

Secondly, while there is the paucity of written information on processes of development being undertaken in the region some documentary materials, published and unpublished, proved useful.

Thirdly, even where projects do exist, there is a still a strong tendency for these to be conducted as one-off activity-focused interventions. So although we will see references to training programmes, often these could be more accurately described as 'sensitization' activities. Even if we see participants moving through various cycles of 'training', there is generally no impact assessments.

These limitations have affected the investigation as follows:

- narrowed the scope of coverage to projects in Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago;
- resulted in unevenness in the presentation of information relating to the various programmes. For example, the information on projects in Dominica, Grenada and Suriname for example is quite limited and the probing of individuals from Jamaica has been deeper than was possible for the other territories.

However, there is still scope to upgrade the information on this project at a later stage.

Criteria for Selection of Individuals/Projects.

The selection of projects/programmes and individuals for inclusion in this stage of the investigation was discussed with persons in most of the territories. Projects or programmes and/or individuals selected were expected to reflect aspects of the emerging understanding of transformational leadership. They therefore should among other things:

- i. be anchored in and supportive of the core values and culture of community building, of people-centred development;

- ii. embed principles, value systems and ways of working that support and promote change towards women's individual and collective empowerment and gender equity and equality in society;
- iii. project an understanding of leadership not as position or positioning, but as affirming of individual possibility and responsibility for change, of becoming agency for change and demonstrating the change itself;
- iv. be individuals who are seen as bringing a special quality to leadership.

All these criteria are applied subjectively in the main and there is the real possibility that we can project that one is looking for perfection. This is not the case, for it is clear that in speaking about transformational leadership, we do not mean a pattern of leadership that has developed but an approach to leadership that is evolving. It is important to hold this distinction in mind. That is why in looking at individuals, we approach our task more by asking what in the values or practice or ways of working of that individual can we mark as transformational, rather than suggesting that she is a transformational leader- the finished product.

Discussing such criteria also brought to the fore the fact that spirituality is a fundamental aspect of the values of those who take a transformational approach to leadership- of leadership that reflects a sense or an understanding of the connectedness of the individual self (selves) within and without with the source and energy of life; leadership that seeks to elevate or raise that connectedness in the self as well as in others. Transformational Leadership then is being assessed as a process that supports fundamental change agency, at the personal level, in work methods as well as within institutions.

It must be stressed recognised that all aspects of this transformational process might not be fully manifested in any one person or project. Hence the approach to selecting examples for the project has been to examine them from a perspective of seeing what new they tell us about women's leadership in the making. In many instances, we see particular features and tendencies that show some transformational quality in some aspect that is worthy to be examined for lessons they hold.

Appreciation is duly expressed to all resource persons and other women who willing provided time and information to enable this study to begin to take some shape.

SECTION 11- NOTES ON RELATED LITERATURE .

- on transformation.

There is a varied body of literature on transformation. Much of this treats with transformation from the entry point of psychology and religion and with issues of human perception, personality, religion and spirituality. The main concern in this context is with ‘the awakening of the self’ and more from a spiritual perspective. Another genre of literature on transformation deals with promoting change in the culture in an organisational setting, for example, of a business firms, an issue to which some attention is given in this study. Two recent related publications- **The Transformational Leader: The Key to Global Competitiveness** and **Improving Organizational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership**-are said to provide models or frameworks for implementing organisational change to meet the current character of the global marketplace.³ The latter publication for example, according to the promotional review, stresses the importance of “leadership and vision in creating organizational ‘buy-in’ during competitive change and creating self-sustaining organizations through the growth of like minded leaders”.⁴

What is posited as processes of transformation in the political behaviour of individuals and groups is the subject of Edward W. Schwerin’s work- **Mediation, Citizen Empowerment and Transformational Politics**. According to the Internet-derived review, Schwerin, a Professor of Political Science at Florida Atlantic, based his 1995 publication on “empowerment theory in the context of community mediation” and “explores the linkage between community mediation and personal and social transformation”. The listing of the contents makes interesting reading, covering issues such as ‘transformational politics, empowerment and conflict resolution’, empowerment transforming power and powerlessness’, ‘the future of community mediation and empowerment’ and ‘ the future of empowerment and transformational politics’.⁵

Although we have only had reviewers’ opinions on the publications mentioned, it is evident that it is Schwerin’s work that touches most directly the issues of political engagement, broadly defined, that is the issue of concern in this discussion on women’s leadership training in the Caribbean. Unfortunately we have no idea of how any of the authors define transformational leadership or transformational politics and so it is difficult to have much discussion, outside of noting the existence of the broad trends in the literature on transformational leadership. It is however interesting to note that in all the works mentioned, the dimension of personal change, of collectively agency, of the engagement of the individual’s soul, spirit, behaviour and consensus-building are inferred. These attitudes and behaviours link with what are defined as “feminine

³ . Noel M. Tichy, Mary Ann Devanna. **The Transformational Leader: The Key to Global Competitiveness**. John Wiley and Sons, September 1999. Bernard M. Bass, Bruce J. Avolio Editors: **Improving Organisational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership**.

⁴ Book Review on Amazon.com via internet.

⁵ Edward W. Schwerin, **Mediation, Citizen Empowerment and Transformational Politics**. Praeger Publication, 1995.

energies” and ways of working. These are among the values so far identified in the working definition of transformational leadership.

Brasileiro and Judd, whose work- **Women’s Leadership in a Changing World- Reflecting on Experience in Latin America and the Caribbean**. - attempts to draw lessons from women’s leadership, sound a caution for balanced analysis. They agree that analyses can link women’s more participatory ways of working and the tendency towards consensus building with their more inclusive, family-oriented socialisation. Women also know that the more male-centred authoritarian modes of leadership have been disastrous for society.⁶ At the same time, they advise that we should be wary of the seeming re-evaluation of the very gender stereotyping that has been used to ‘justify’ the exclusion of women from decision-making and other resources. Followed to its logical conclusion, they would perhaps warn us to be wary of the language of “transformational leadership”, linked with this more holistic approach that women can bring, but applied in a context in which the relations of power in the firm as in the economy are not being transformed but more concentrated under globalisation. In other words, issues of institutional and structural transformation are as important as those of individual and collective change agency.

This is a central concern raised by Dr. Peggy Antrobus when she cautioned of the “problematique” that must be addressed in this Transformational Leadership project. In her analysis, there was necessity for transformational leadership to be seen as “leadership that seeks to transform the structures which now block us from pursuing an agenda of equity (including gender), democratization of processes and sustainability of livelihoods”.⁷

Reflecting on ‘Training in Leadership’.

There is a paucity of published works on women’s leadership and leadership training in the Caribbean. The terms of reference requires attention to leadership training initiatives in the present or past and programmes and projects “aimed at influencing women’s leadership”. While this is not the same thing as looking at transformational leadership per se, it is the only starting point that we have.

In a minority of cases we could distinguish projects like the Women’s Parliament Forum of Suriname or the Institute of Public Leadership (IPL) of the Jamaica Women’s Political Caucus which seek explicitly to influence women’s leadership engagement. In the majority of cases, we see ‘leadership training’ taking place more as a product of a broad level of engagement of women that might have little to do explicitly with training as traditionally conceived. Leadership training then has to be conceived more as social engagement that would release women’s (and peoples) spirit and energy.

⁶ . Ana Maria Brasileiro and Karen Judd, “Introduction: Can Women Change the World”, in **Women’s Leadership in a Changing World- Reflecting on Experience in Latin America and the Caribbean**. Edited by Ana Maria Brasileiro UNIFEM, New York 1996, pp. 3-16.

⁷ Dr. Peggy Antrobus. “**Keynote Address**”- Extract from Keynote Address. Transformational Leadership Project- Advisory Group Meeting, Savannah Hotel, Hastings, Christ Church, Barbados. 20-21 May 1999. pp. 4-6.

Discussion with Erna Brodber was useful in clarifying this issue:

*“When you talk about training”, she said, “ things like workshops come to mind which I don’t see as training. What I see as training is change of the human spirit, release of the human spirit...just plain and simple getting people to respect and to love what God has created. A lot of it has to do with inter-personal relations, and yourself as change agent involved in these interpersonal relations ”.*⁸

Brodber’s comment led us to reflect on the importance of interpersonal relations and the quality of such relations for training, or of learning by the force of example.

Training as a Process of ‘Becoming’.

From the literature that was reviewed , we have an understanding of themes related to training and leadership, and less of . Among these is the matter of training as a process of coming into one’s own, of maturing of ‘becoming’. Publications like SISTREN’S **Lionheart Gal** and **Blaze a Fire** by Nesha Z. Haniff as well as more recent publications like **Women of Belize** and **Guyanese Women in Focus** bring us into this understanding of ‘training’ experienced in the context of familial and other inter-personal relations and how this could link to leadership among women. These works illustrate in varying ways to what Honor Ford-Smith described as women’s “movement from girlhood to adulthood, country to city, isolated individual experiences to more politicised collective awareness”.⁹ This was in reference to SISTREN, but is a process more generally applicable. Training takes place through these stages and a sense of becoming a woman develops in the process. This is a central lesson from the narratives of the women of the working class who make up the composite **Lionheart Gal**. In many instances, their own mothers, or other women come to be the significant teacher trainers in the lives. It is older women mainly who help them to navigate and to draw meaning out the challenges of life of growth into womanhood. The core values associated with this maturation are self reliance and independence, being sensible, having respect for older people and for self, being thrifty, hardworking, owning and caring one’s own material things, among others.

Mothers of Belize, a June 2000 publication of the National Library Service Board, profiles 14 women of the middle class. We come to see from their statements that it is in their role in their families, in accompanying their children through their stages of development, that these women affirm confidence in themselves. This is the first important stage of their leadership development. These are women from the various racial and ethnic groups in the nation who had been honoured in 1999 by the Library Service for their contribution to wide areas of service and leadership in areas like

⁸ . Interview with Erna Brodber, October 2, 20000.

⁹ See **Lionheart Gal: Life Stories of Jamaican Women**, Honor Ford Smith (Editor) The Women’s Press Ltd, London 1986, p.xiii; Nesha Z. Haniff, **Blaze a Fire** , Sister Vision, 1988; National Library Service, **Women of Belize**, June 2000; Women’s Affairs Bureau, **Guyanese Women in Focus**, 1997;

education, health, business, community development and the church- to their ‘mothering’ of the nation.

Regardless of class, the journey into womanhood with maturity and self-confidence has many common features for women.. Working class women like Viola Staples of Rose Hall in St. Vincent who is featured in **Blaze a Fire** has a story which others share.

“ I was just a mere housewife, a farmer, a baker, a seamstress...all things. But you know what happen? I never realize that all of these that I had were ‘skills’, you know. I didn’t realize this until...in the 1981 workshop these things became real...real, real, real to me that I had been baking cakes for years”.... and even talking to people, I didn’t realise that is a skill I have. And now what is happening? I does talk too much now!”¹⁰

Here is a growth of consciousness and confidence in who she is and in what she brings to life in her family and community. It is a statement of a path to transformation because previously she could not imagine that she could look at herself in that new way, or that the reality of being a “mere housewife” pointed to many possibilities for her further development. A related aspect of this experience is raised by Meryl Sebro in her work, **“Empowering Women for Community Leadership: A Caribbean Case Study”**. She makes the observation that moving from economic to political autonomy rests on women acquiring an economic base outside the home. In many instances this work on the ‘outside’ is linked to skills hoaned on the ‘inside’. However, equally important is the consciousness of self and of ones contribution that stimulates that sense of autonomy. For as women develop the skills and attitudes to negotiate from within the home setting, they build that sense of autonomy. This is the transformatory quality that we can see in many of our “traditional “ training project, some of which are discussed in this study. For as Sebro observes, there emerges among women, a “leadership style that is as concerned with the journey as it is with the destination”.¹¹ In this sense we see ‘training’ as process, women gaining little victories day by day, moving from the personal and familial to the collective of community.

Take the case of Nisa Ally, who was interviewed when she was President of the Muslim Women’s Organisation of Guyana. According to Nisha Haniff, Mrs Ally admitted that with ten children to raise, her life was dominated by her family and her religion, although from time to time she did attend the Muslim Women’s Organisation. It terrified her, she admitted, when they told her that she was to be nominated for President and was elected to the position in 1965. She made a success of the responsibility, building up the financial base, the income earning capacity as well as well the services to members. Haniff commented:

¹⁰ . Meryl James Sebro, “**Empowering Women for Community Leadership: A Caribbean Case Study**”, in **Women’s Leadership in a Changing World- Reflecting on Experience in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Edited by Ana Maria Brasileiro , UNIFEM, New York 1996, pp. 17-30

¹¹ Sebro, p. 28.

*“On the surface, it would seem that she no training for a leadership position, but this would be a very narrow view of her life experience.. ...Raising and educating ten children requires not only leadership skills, but stamina and determination”.*¹²

As a Muslim woman, Nisa had been married at sixteen. Her husband had been chosen by her family. Although her own mother had insisted that her daughter complete primary school, her educational ambition for herself had been stunted. She herself ensured that this would not be the case with her own daughters. She saw their education as their “stepping stone to freedom”, Haniff stated, and nurtured them to accomplish goals for successful careers in the professions and in business. This was a position that was in Nisa before she took the position of President of the organisation.

What Haniff describes are not only physical but equally emotional and spiritual resources. Harnessing those resources, women often change not only within themselves, but also inter-personal relations and gender relations. Often, as the literature reveals, this is evident from the fact that the women come to view themselves in a radically different light, and act with that newly acquired consciousness.

Service as Training for Women’s Leadership

Mrs. Ally’s experience shows the link between issues of women’s training in the family their public service and leadership. This theme of training through service is evident In Rhoda Reddock’s study, **Women Labour & Politics in Trinidad and Tobago**. It explores this linkage by looking at the wide scope of women’s position within the economic, social and political development of Trinidad and Tobago. In this work, we have a sense of the process of training in leadership the context of how women extend into voluntary work from their service in the home, in a sense seeing themselves as “mothers” of the society.¹³ This social work, because it brought women into the so-called “public sphere”, opened the way for women’s professional growth, and involved them in formal organisational building from the 19th century in the Caribbean.

It is in this process that Mrs. Ally’s organisational affiliation was rooted. Social work was thus a path to leadership. However, it is interesting to note from Reddock’s work, how women’s struggle to ‘professionalise’ social work, coincided with their thrust to influence political decision-making in an overt manner. This was a lesson from the Coterie of Social Workers of Trinidad and Tobago, an organisation that became active from the 1920s. However, they strained the limits, but did not break the pattern of traditional gender relations. Because of this feature of our history which persists into the present, we seem to be asking in this Transformational Leadership project, what in our present context constitutes adequate and effective training for women’s leadership that will confront the limitations that we continue to face.

¹² Haniff, p. 140.

¹³ See Rhoda Reddock, **Women Labour & Politics in Trinidad and Tobago**, Ian Randle Publishers, 1994.

This was a matter that was debated in Jamaica in the mid 1930s by two of the leading nationalist feminists in February 1937. These women whose work emerged from the 1920s and 1930s themselves exercised leadership through the press as well as through social welfare and political organisations. Discussion of the issue of women's political leadership –“**Should Our Women Enter Politics**” was not contentious, both agreed women should. The discussion was about how women should prepare for political leadership. According to Una Marson who first raised the question expressed the view that..

... “ *Social work is the best training for a political career. In doing social work, women contact people and see conditions which are definitely educative*”.

It was her view that among women entering politics “the spirit of self-sacrifice must be at the forefront”.

Amy Bailey responded:

“ *...I take issue with Miss Marson as to the requirements for the women who wish to enter that field. Not only should they have the spirit of self-sacrifice and do social work as a preparation, but they should undergo definite mental training, so as to fit themselves for a difficult task*”

She recommended training in courses such as “economics, civics, sociology etc., and then hand in hand with that let them take an interest in social and community work”. Another requisite she said... “*is that of leadership....She needs to have independent thought as well as the ability to see the other man's point of view, courage, quickness of perception and broad views*”.¹⁴

It seems that Marson spoke to preparation for and attributes of leadership that are more empathetic and relationship based, whereas Bailey spoke from a more pragmatic standpoint to formal preparation through education in particular. As liberals, conscious no doubt to the realities of their environment, neither of these women touched the matter of changing existing gender relations in any fundamental manner. Una Marson seemed to promote the leadership training rooted in the politics of women's service, while Amy Bailey linked training to women's capacities. Yet building that capacity was possible only for a minority of women.

The 1979-1982 **Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP)**, which was coordinated by Joycelin Massiah was a path-breaking project from its attempts to capture women's own understanding of their reality and to influence policy making. In this way women could examine their own possibilities on a wider policy basis.¹⁵ The study spoke to the strength of the gender system, or to put it another way, the force of gender blindness

¹⁴ See **Voices of Women in Jamaica, 1898-1939**. Compiled by Linnette Vassell, Department of History, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1993, pp.29-33.

¹⁵ Joycelin Massiah (Editor). **Social and Economic Studies**, Vol. 35, No. 2& 3, 1986.

among women. Roberta Clarke drawing on the experiences of women in Antigua, Barbados and St. Vincent, looked among other issues of women's organisational life, the matter of their perceptions of gender relations. Women's understanding of these relations she posited were grounded in their organisational experiences rooted in their traditional kinship and friendship networks.¹⁶ It is perhaps the strength of these relations and the 'training' that women experienced in this context that influence to a great extent their "ideological outlook on gender status", and the fact that gender relations was not seen "as problematical to further development". This could explain why women's leadership at the public level has not in the main led a challenge to male authority and the structures that reinforce gender discrimination. The study confirmed that women had been trained more into the politics of "women's service" and not so much in terms of "women's rights", but did not treat with how this barrier could be breached .

Leadership- the journey and the destination.

When we reflect on Sebro's analysis of women's leadership as being concerned with the journey as with the destination, we can begin to value more the experiences of the past, despite seeing the weaknesses along the way. What is more, we can understand from the experience, why the journey at this stage must of necessity be towards transforming relations of gender and strengthening the politics that assert women's rights as human rights, even as so many women, and the system as a whole remained anchored in the liberal conception of women's service roles.

This is revealed in **Guyanese Women in Focus**, published by the Women's Affairs Bureau in 1997. This profiles some 89 women who are presented in three groups: participants in decision-making in parliament, government and in the justice system; promoters of the advancement of women; and women in the performing arts. The women are highly visible in the state and in society, but they operate within a framework set by the state which remains patriarchal. Significantly, the Director of the Women's Affairs Bureau, Hazel Halley-Burnett, described the women as the "building blocks" of that state organisation, which as in other territories, has not been enabled to effect fundamentally, the position of women in their journey towards leadership and decision-making in the country.

But if service, beginning in the home, is a medium for training for women, then the building blocks are located there, in the self, from the home. This is where the journey does begin. That is why, in examining the matter of transformational leadership has to begin to leadership that builds the home as a site for revolutionary parenting, a foundation for transforming gender and other social relations towards equity and equality.

Whether training for leadership embraces these tasks, is a signal test of its transformatory potential.

¹⁶ Roberta Clarke, "Women's Organisations, Women's Interests", in **Social and Economic Studies**, Joycelin Massiah (Editor) Vol. 35 No. 3, 1986, pp. 107-156.

SECTION 111:

TRANSFORMATIONAL POTENTIAL IN THE WORK OF SELECTED LEADERS AND TRAINING PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES IN SEVEN CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Across the region, this transformational leadership potential is assessed in the work of individuals, projects and organisations. In the case of Barbados, we draw lessons from the life and work of Dame Nita Barrow, we identify some lessons from Peggy Antrobus' experiences and we examine experiences from the offering of the **Certificate in Gender and Development Studies**, a training programme offered up to 1998 through the Centre for Gender and Development Studies on a two year cycle since 1992.

BARBADOS

i. Dame Nita Barrow.

In 1995, **Dame Nita, Caribbean Woman, World Citizen** by Francis 'Woodie' Blackman was published. Another work is being co-authored by Dr. Eudene Barriteauhead of the Cave Hill Unit of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies in Barbados and her colleague.

Blackman's work introduces us to Nita Barrow, born 1916. He speaks of her family background, her training as a nurse and her work in public health, and her advanced training of nurses and nursing administration expertise. We learn of her experience of leadership of international bodies- the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the International Council of Adult Education; of her journey into her work as Coordinator of the NGO Forum of the United Nations World Conference on Women in Kenya in 1985. After that she went into direct service for her country, Barbados, when she took the position of representative to the United Nations in 1986 and in 1990 became the country's first female Governor General. In between that broad outline is a detailed narrative of a full life spent in public service and in commitment to women's empowerment. She lived as an example in struggle for women's rights. Our task therefore is to discover some of what manifested in the character and ways of work of Dame Nita that signalled a transformational approach to leadership.

-cultural grounding

In the foreword to Blackman's work, Sir Shridath Ramphal, Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, made reference to Dame Nita's 'integrity and courage' and her work of "fearlessly promoting the cause of enlightened change"; of her sense of being "West Indian", which in his view "involves a deep emotional change...a maturing, really- which makes each of us a worthier person and prepares us for the next step on the path from 'otherness' ".¹⁷

¹⁷ Francis 'Woodie' Blackman, **Dame Nita Caribbean Woman, World Citizen**. Ian Randle Publishers, Kingston 1995.

In the interview which was conducted with Dr. Barriteau, she revealed some of what seemed the limitless pathways of Dame Nita's character, "a black woman from a tiny microscopic country", who was rooted in her 'Caribbeanness' and in the sense of the legacy of the anti-colonial struggle that shaped her generation. This defined for her the task of forging our identity and making our own mark as Caribbean people.

" She came from a lower-middle class family, which was extremely prominent in Barbados in the '20s and '30s...,who had a sense of pride as Black Caribbean people, a sense of their mission in the world-certainly a caring for people around them. Then she had a deep binding Christian faith that manifested itself in service. She was very aware of the inequities of race and class and you heard that very early".¹⁸

Understanding of self in one's cultural context is therefore a critical signal from her life.

-habit of reflection

Barriteau in focussing on Dame Nita character spoke of being struck by the fact that she returned phone calls as a matter of course. She had *"a legendary address book going back to the 1930s...and developed a network of being able to make contact and of putting people in touch with others"*. She saw Nita Barrow also as a woman who was "very good at reflection"; one who was "not afraid of conflict". These attributes Barriteau suggested are critical for women's leadership, for often "we run away in different directions in the face of conflict". To Barriteau, the matter of addressing conflict through reflection, individually and collectively, was very much a part of the leadership style among the "so-called old genteel women" who led organisations like the YWCA. She commented: *" Whenever an issue arose they had a period of reflection, of finding out what was wrong (and reflection is a way of monitoring the self)...in the period of reflection you consciously step into- 'what could I have said that could have been misunderstood' -?"*

This habit of reflection in Eudene's words, helps us to "construct check lists for ourselves", to ask ourselves what we are trying to do, building that inner dimension of leadership to links and draws on the external environment. It is a process that helps to prepare ourselves to be sensitive and compassionate, at the same time being able to ensure that the action of individuals (including ourselves) do not clash and thwart the goals and objectives of the organisation or of the larger collective. Being able to reflect therefore was linked with her ability to deal with conflict. In that process of engagement, she cultivated the ability to isolate the person from the issue that might have caused the conflict, and thereby preserve a basis for continuing engaging with people at the human level. Further, it meant that she freed herself to take "harsh decisions" in the interest of the organisation. As Barriteau commented, as women we sometimes avoid taking those so called harsh decisions because we "often think that we don't want to hurt somebody although the person has become toxic, not only in the organisation but for herself". Not Dame Nita. She learnt to separate issues.

¹⁸ Interview with Dr. Eudene Barriteau, March 1, 2001

Asked about Nita's "feminist consciousness", Barriteau responded:

"I think she was a feminist, but she would never say so. She also belonged to that generational mode and Caribbean that was very very wary of the word "feminist", and by the time of the articulation of the feminist agenda of the late 70s, unfortunately one of the things that the movement did was to attack, criticise very heavily, in some cases antagonised, the traditional types of women's organisations, failing to recognise that all were working towards the same things...working for space for women to get stronger, and quietly and very effectively taking on inequalities".

She pointed to the fact that many women, like Dame Nita who worked within these older organisations felt hurt by the attitude that suggested that women were only being found and dealt with in the 1970s. Her own work on the Nairobi Forum showed her commitment to issues of equity and empowerment.

promoting people participation

Barriteau agreed that Dame Nita Barrow, that pioneering woman of Barbados and the Caribbean was a transformational leader. She explained why.

"her vision was such that she started seeing the other side and looking at the other side...seeing beyond the obstacles she encountered"

She was an innovator. She pioneered community-type nursing, built on the participation of the client in the wellness process..

"so the professional would begin to see the diet of the women they were serving and the resources available to them and start planning from what they had....so there was the understanding you can't bring people and tell them. You have to go and understand that whole participation of the community and having people take responsibility and understand they have a part to play in their health care".

From this approach, Dame Nita Barriteau explained, "understood leadership as transforming; as involving all levels.

"To me, she added, "traditional leadership, as well meaning as it is, focuses on information in the direction from the 'expert' to the person we see as needing that information. Transformational leadership recognises expert leadership as existing, but also knows that that expert leadership is fed from the periphery from those you see as needing that (information) and this alters what you offer back. ...anything that is transformational has to have some avenue for things to feed in and come back out. It cannot just go in one direction alone. And that is what she (Barrow) epitomises".

Eudene revealed that she consciously engaged Dame Nita in analysing her life in order to learn for herself, approaches that would be relevant to her own struggles in her job, in her

life, in her relationships. “I think”, Barriteau said, in some summation on Dame Nita Barrow, “*that she understood leadership by the incremental actions required to make change. Some of us see the vision, but we can’t break it down. I think she also knew that these things required tiny steps in a process*”.

By her own example, she challenged those around her to make the change.

ii. Lessons from Peggy Antrobus

In her presentation at the University of the West Indies, Mona, of the Lucille Mathurin Mair 2000 Lecture, Dr. Peggy Antrobus reflecting on her selection by Lucille Mair for appointment as Jamaica’s Advisor on Women’s Affairs in 1994 said:

*“In her (Mair’s) eyes I was a good and dedicated manager and this offset my lack of a feminist background and experience in the field of women’s affairs. Perhaps she even thought the lack of these attributes advantageous: I had no preconceptions of what was required; no personal ambitions beyond doing a good job; no political agenda of my own; no labels to raise suspicions or create hostility. I was someone who could figure out what was needed to move toward the goals forged by those with vision. I could listen and turn ideas into action. That’s what I have done when given the opportunity”.*¹⁹

Today, twenty-seven years later, much of what she said then about herself no longer holds true. Many will agree that above all else, she is a feminist and has definite ideas on what should and must be done to bring transformation in the region in the lives and relationships of women and men. Further, she does not only work on others’ visions, she has some of her own and this is based on her understanding that the transformation rests on changing the structures that support and shape the prevailing economic, socio-cultural and political life of our world.

And it is in this aspect that the transformational quality of her leadership comes to the fore- her ability to lay down building blocks along the way, towards changing personal and collective consciousness, relationships and the oppressive structures that perpetuate underdevelopment. These building blocks are the organisations that she conceived, shapes and pursued with energy onto the next building block. These organisations had a definite mandate to determine and apply strategies for the change that she envisioned.

This organisation building began to take shape after Peggy left her position in Jamaica in 1977 and returned to Barbados and began to see what were deep gaps in the understanding of our reality as Caribbean women. Her initiative towards the creation of WAND- Women and Development Unit- in 1978 as part of the Extra Mural Department of the UWI was in her view an attempt also to define with the University a relationship

¹⁹ Peggy Antrobus, The Lucille Mathurin Mair Lecture 2000. **The Rise and fall of Feminist Politics in the Caribbean Women’s Movement 1975-1995**. Centre for Gender and Development studies, University of the West Indies, March 2000, p.3.

with its constituency. Whatever were the shortcomings, WAND under Peggy's leadership strengthened other organisations in the public sector as well as in the community through various forms of linkage support.²⁰

This helped to found other structures among Caribbean women's organisations, including CAFRA- the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action. She helped to strengthen others such as the Caribbean Women's Association CARIWA. This organisation had an long and impressive history from its formation in the 1950s in support of West Indian Federation. It had later lobbied for the "inclusion of an item on women's human rights in the article on functional cooperation in the treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the CARICOM", and had also worked towards establishing the Women's Affairs Desk at CARICOM.²¹

Peggy Antrobus' work contributed to and drew from these streams in Caribbean women's movements and it was this interconnection that inspired the launching on the three campuses of Women and Development Studies programmes- eventually resulting in the establishment of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies were all linked to the catalytic role of WAND and Peggy. Connected with and extended from this onto the more global level, Peggy was also instrumental in the establishment of DAWN- Development Alternatives with Women in a New Era (DAWN). This network of women concerned with putting forward an alternative voice on development and change from the perspective of women of the South, linked with DAWN through Peggy's leadership to bring some global focus onto Caribbean experiences and Caribbean perspectives onto the global stage.

It must be stressed that Peggy Antrobus did not fashion nor lay these building blocks alone. Far from it, and in any event, it is never the case that one can achieve alone. But, through her enthusiasm, conviction and energy she was able, as a catalyst, to play a fundamental role in shaping the vision for building these pathways to others. These organisations would open spaces for others to speak for themselves and enable women's movements to sharpen our analyses of our realities in a broader and more structural context. The November 2000 symposium held in Honour of the Work of Dr Peggy Antrobus was held in this tradition towards reflection and action..²²

iii. Certificate in Gender and Development Studies

This course was designed and first implemented by the Cave Hill Centre for Gender and Development in 1992. Four courses have been conducted up to 1998 involving some 120 persons, mainly women.

²⁰ Sally Yudelman, "Women and Development Unit, WAND". Hopeful Openings: A Study of Five Women's Organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean. West Hartford, Ct: Kumarian Press, pp. 79-92.

²¹ Joycelin Massiah, "Putting gender on the agenda: the next generation". Milroy Reece Memorial Lecture, Solidarity House, Barbados, 10 November 1999.

²² The symposium- "In Honour of the Work of Dr. Peggy Antrobus" was sponsored by the United Nations system in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in collaboration with CAFRA and the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the UWI and held in Barbados November 9-10, 2000.

The aim of the course is centred on the outcomes for the participants:

*“ By the end of the course, you should have an understanding of how gender developed by historical experience such as slavery, the politics of the state and of the church. You will be better able to explain how women networks expressed their concerns over several centuries to produce women’s movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Caribbean. From the information and insight gained you will be able to suggest strategies to advance the empowerment of women in the twentieth century”.*²³

The form of the course was as important as the content and what the Centre itself wanted to achieve. Eudene Barriteau, Coordinator of the programme, spoke of the course in terms of changes she wanted to see, first and foremost at the individual level and how this influenced the selection process:

“...one of the things we stress very heavily is that we not looking at academic qualifications (and ironically we have had very qualified women); but we looking at where you are and what you want to do, looking at the way you portray yourself on the paper”.

Training would therefore focus on systemic issues, looking in particular at what Barriteau describes as the material and ideological dimensions of the gender system.²⁴

The orientation period was also critical, Eudene explained. The participants spent a lot of time talking about themselves and their countries and they did so in an atmosphere which provided validation for each other, and promoted friendships and solidarity. Participants were encouraged to evaluate themselves against themselves and to accept that there was integrity around what each person could and did produce.

The training programme has drawn participants from across the Caribbean, including women from Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Suriname. Over three months of the course, participants lived and worked together. Two months would be spent doing a research project. The Centre therefore created through the Course, the space for women and men, active mainly in the NGO sector, including community-based organisations, employed in selected state agencies like Women’s Bureaux, to share experiences and to come to understand issues of gender relations in their own lives and in society.

Many of these persons had spent years grappling with the complexities of organisational work among women, men, the youth etc. Many had developed various skills- from project writing to advocacy- mainly on the job, through training workshops etc, but never had an opportunity to place themselves and their work in a broader socio-economic and cultural context.

²³ Certificate in Gender and Development Studies, Arts & Education? ND.

²⁴ Eudine Barriteau, “ **Theorizing Gender Systems and the Project of Modernity in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean**”, in **Feminist Review** No. 59, Summer 1998, pp. 186-210

“ The Course forces you to confront things about yourself. Some you like, some you don't like, but it forces people to look within. Women have come here and go back and interfere with their relationships ...and they think it happened here, but it start of course before they come”.

She referred to individual experiences:

“ A woman who come to me as epitomising transformation is Ida Black, who happens to be the daughter of Clothil Walcott leader of the Domestic Workers' Union of Trinidad and Tobago. Ida come to the course and Ida didn't used to talk. And at the end of the course Ida related how she had consciously made a decision to stand up for rights in some airport incident. She said ‘ Miss, I so fired up...this course change me...it just give me something to see how we can't take no foolishness’ ”.

Ida went back home and has become more active in the Union with her mother, pursuing an interest that, more than likely, had been there before. Another of the many memorable aspects of the course was the research done by this Carib Nurse from Dominica:

“She had minimal academic qualifications but you could tell that this woman was involved as part of the life blood of the Carib territory. And when she came and did her project on violence against women in the Carib territory, she had coloured pictures of women with their breasts bitten, of children hiding up in a tree because they tired of their stepfather or the father having sex with them.... apparently she too had an abusive relationship that she was able to end. Two years later she was getting married- apparently she was into something with a lot more respect and validation and women were coming to her, in a sense she was becoming overwhelmed!”

In such ways, the Course encouraged the ‘transformational leadership’ potential of participants.

The Course is said to be in demand by persons “with lower level matriculation”- and this is exactly what makes it so catalytic, because it links with the needs of the activists at the community level and lays a foundation for continuing development within this sector of workers. This course will for example continue to be a first stage (even as it may overlap in some areas) to the proposed Centre for Gender and Development Studies 30 Credit Certificate Undergraduate Programme. This is proposed to be a distance teaching model as of the academic year 2001.²⁵

This course creates a definite shift from the liberal feminist framework, onto the emancipatory women's rights agenda. It provokes change at personal and institutional levels as well as in the methods of engaging women (and men) in analytical and activist work.

²⁵ Proposed Undergraduate Certificate Programme.

BELIZE:

Looking in from the outside, there seems to be an orderly and coherent pattern of networking among women in Belize. Women interconnect to pursue specific aspects of a larger mandate which they seem to determine should become increasingly focussed on strengthening the policy framework for the advancement of policy to address issues of gender and development. The linkages are evident from the level of the individual and into the more collective level of organisations. They are revealed in aspects of the experiences of Mirlin Holliday-Plunkett and in the work of the Women's Issues Network (WIN Belize) among other bodies.

i. Women's Issues Network (WIN Belize)

This network of some 16 non-governmental organisations and 2 government bodies reorganised itself in 1997 as a network "with a special concern for women's issues and a commitment to the advancement of women".²⁶

WIN Belize brings together women from the wide spectrum of Belizean society from organisations like the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Women's Department, the national government machinery, the Chairladies Fajina Association, a body bringing together some 200 women from 21 women's groups in the Mayan Indian villages. WIN Belize focuses mainly on capacity building of members, policy development and advocacy.

developing a policy on women and employment

WIN's policy development process is a dynamic training experience. **The Woman at Work** policy conference in April 1999 was a case in point. Some 30 persons from a wide range of organisations attended the two day workshop.²⁷

Information sharing was a basic first step and presentations were made on employment rights, sexual harassment and the provisions of the 1996 Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act. One of the key issues of concern was the three levels of minimum wage which exist in the country- \$2.35 per hour for construction, \$2.00 per hour for agriculture and \$ 1.75 per hour for domestic work.

Small groups then brainstormed around issues of women and employment after which the participants in plenary identified the three main issues of concern which had emerged. The process resulted in the decision to focus on the following employee-related matters:

²⁶ United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, First and second Periodic Report with Supplemental Report, Belize, 1999, p. 39.

²⁷ Women at Work. A Policy Conference on Employment and Training for Women, Thursday April 22 and Friday April 23, 1999. **Conference Report.** The Women's Issues Network, Belize (WIN Belize)

- wages: equal pay for work for equal value; increase in the minimum wage;
- strengthening and enforcing labour laws: implementation of Anti-Harassment Law; issues of hiring policy.
- improved benefits: time for maternal care; right to basic health care; social security to address women's health needs ; level of social security.

Other issues raised were health and safety, right to information, non-traditional training and employment and unionization.

Opportunities for Women was then explored. This looked at what women were doing to improve their economic situation. Presentations included a case study of a rural employment project. This was followed by presentations on credit opportunities for women, challenges of non-traditional training for women, and the problems of urban women. Small groups then brainstormed around the issues affecting rural and urban women in respect of training and credit.

The second day of the conference was concerned with developing the policy. In this regard, facilitators presented existing policy positions of different organisations for review in light of the priority concerns identified by participants on the first day. In this context previous policy proposals of BOWAND and of the Association of National Development Agencies from 1994 were presented.

Proposals for changes were made and the policy on employment and training for women was refined around the following four (4) elements:

- the need for the minimum wage to be linked to the basic minimum cost of living;
- a single minimum wage across all sectors;
- indexing of the minimum wage to cost of living increases;
- a monitoring body to ensure compliance.

In relation to labour laws, eleven (11) specific proposals were made to strengthen their enforcement as well as to improve benefits.

Discussions also centred on developing a policy on opportunities to facilitate women's employment. In this aspect, the need for specific training, for the provision of childcare and for addressing marketing for commodities produced by the women, emerged as fundamental requirements. Equally, it emerged that dealing with women's self-esteem, their dependence and gender discrimination against women were vital concerns to women.

In all cases participants made proposals for lobbying and advocacy strategies.

The conference received a very positive evaluation, with many comments on the breadth of participation, the educational value, the handouts and the small group learning process.

A questionnaire dealing with participants' level of information on sexual harassment was also administered.

The results fed into policy deployment and training, namely, WIN's 2000 Advocacy and Organisational Development programmes. A report in the January to April issue of **Winning Women** referred to the "our ongoing campaign for fair wages for women".²⁸ The campaign it was said was seeking justice "for domestic workers and shop assistants the two categories with the lowest minimum wage in Belize".

WIN Belize had been accustomed to this type of advocacy work. It had been named as a member of the Political Reform Commission which was established in 1998. WIN Belize submitted nine (9) proposals to the Commission, including the call for "the need for the constitution and legislation to be written in gender neutral language" and for inclusion of "sexual orientation, medical status and reproductive freedom in the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed in the constitution".²⁹

The March 2000 report of the Commission supported one of WIN's proposals and recommended gender-neutral language in the constitution, and that gender awareness education "be included in the curricula of all levels of education in Belize".³⁰ Their other issues were still bracketed for dialogue .

This work in policy and advocacy development is training in practice, involving persons from various others organisations, among them the **Women's Department** which falls within the Ministry of Human Development and Women and the Gender Integration Network. The Women's Department, in areas of research and monitoring of the legal reform agenda, has brought strong support to the Network. Gaps are being identified and filled and this has shown itself in the formation of **the Gender Integration Network**. This body brings together governmental, non-governmental, and private sector interests including the National Women's Commission, Social Investment Fund, the Ministry of Human Development and Women, WIN Belize, Society for the Promotion of Education and Research,(SPEAR) and the Belize Agricultural Producers Association towards developing the expertise within the country for engendering policies and programmes on a national level.

This gap in expertise in gender analysis and planning came to the fore when it was recognised that issues of gender equity and women's empowerment were not included in the political reform agenda formulated by the civil society movement which regrouped and became a political force towards the last elections in 1999.³¹ The absence of a gender perspective within the civil society movement and attempts to correct the situation

²⁸ "A Fair Wage for Everybody!" in **Winning Women**, Vol. 1 No. 2, Jan. – April 2000, p. 12

²⁹ **Winning Women**, Jan-Apr 2000, p.14.

³⁰ Summary Report of Recommendations of Political Reform Commission, March 2000, p.12.

³¹ Dylan Vernon, "**Spear on Target? Lessons in Empowerment from the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research**, in **Spitting in the Wind**. Lessons in Empowerment from the Caribbean. (Suzanne Francis Brown , Ed).p. 42.

is therefore a strategic intervention. It is envisaged that the establishment of the GIN will lead to the enhancement of skills in gender sensitization, analysis and planning.

i. Mrs. Mirlin Holliday-Plunkett

Mirlin Holliday-Plunkett is a mother of six children. She works part-time with the Women's Issues Network (WIN Belize) and is a member of WINNERS, a volunteer support group. She also sits on the Government appointed Wages Council and is an experienced community worker and counsellor.

Now in her early 40s, she had a defining moment as a young adult life which shaped her life's work. When she was nearly 19 years old, her partner, the father of her first child, tried to kill her, by cutting her throat. She fought back, with the help of her young brother.

*“ When I got up, my head was flat on my shoulder because my tendon muscle and my jugular vein on my right side was cut. I received 356 stitches in my head and that was because I was too nice, too proud. There was abuse, but I did not say anything”.*³²

Drawing on the miracle of her survival, in the months of medical treatment, of self-therapy, as her body became stronger, so did her voice. The keloids around her neck forced her to speak about the violence and abuse she had faced and this helped her to grow emotionally.

*“ I told myself, if I know of anybody that that happen to, whether they are flesh to me, or anybody, I am gonna make sure I get up and talk about it”.*³³

The experience shaped her everyday activity as a community worker and counsellor, standing up with women particularly those struggling with violence in their lives. This in her view was her training in leadership- moving for her 'inside' experience to action on the 'outside'.

From Merlin's perspective this linkage is important in building leadership.

“Leadership has experience that gives empathy, that way people share with you”.

Asked whether she saw herself as a leader she responded:

*“ Yes, because I am not like some of my other sisters who won't speak or afraid to speak, afraid to say the wrong thing, or afraid to make a mistake; because you say a wrong thing, somebody corrects you. I learn...so I feel that I have the potential and am a leader”.*³⁴

³² Interview with Mirlin Plunkett, July 20, 2000.

³³ Mirlin Plunkett

³⁴ Mirlin Plunkett

Determined to make herself independent, over the years, she got several jobs, built up her family, got married and raised her children. She matured in her personal spiritual life and in service in her community. She counsels families which face abuse, she advises people about getting jobs, land, securing loans, about facing grief and loss.

“ I don't have a desk per se...where you can come and see me, but people call me all the time, even 3 in the morning, with their problems”.

She had held for a number of years, various positions in the Village Council, the nominated local government body in Belize. She was Secretary, Treasurer and for three years from 1993-1996, was Chairperson. She declined to take any more official positions, feeling the need to give space for others to serve at that level, she said. Now she works organisationally mainly through WINNERS, a group of some 25 community-based women who are coming together to work as volunteers to support WIN Belize's work. Members explore issues being addressed by WIN and sit on the various issues-based subcommittees. WINNERS will be a reference point among women for working through some of the policy issues of concern to WIN Belize. The group also supports fundraising for WIN Belize.³⁵

A Muslim by faith, Mirlin relies on her spiritual experience, “getting the message from inside” (was the way she expressed it) to guide all aspects of her life. She practices meditation, claiming her space in the quiet of her room at home, or going away to the cays by herself.

“ Your inner core is most relaxed when you are making a decision and everything is just right...that inner being, your core then gives you signals...it is your spiritual conviction”.

However, this leadership from the inner core does not come easily:

“It comes with experience, it comes with years behind you. It comes with actually being in difficult, difficult situations and stepping off- I mean using that to step off to a higher level of decision-making, whatever that difficulty was”.

Her colleague, the Director of the Women's Issues Network, Gayla Fuller, spoke of Mirlin's leadership:

*“ Mirlin has a heart. She truly has a heart to relate to what people's experiences are and because of her openness to deal with it, it makes her different from the typical leader. And she is not in it for her gain...she is in it for what she can do for somebody else, the positive impact she can have on someone else's mind”.*³⁶

³⁵ See Winning Women, Vol. No.3, May 2000-August 2000, p.12

³⁶ Gayla Fuller, WIN Belize, July 2000

Mirlin's faith provides the anchorage, but for her as for some others, the inward reach to self was fed by pain- of disappointment, aloneness, loss, abuse, and discrimination. It is also nurtured by caring for and in relationships with others.

The experience in Belize, points to:

- leadership formation (training) processes as they unfold at the personal level and are shaped by the wider social context and how this leadership is exercised to nurture others and support social change;
- creative and participatory training strategies that enable participants from different strata and base of experience to teach and to learn from each other. This was not a case of only using expertise of one section of the population to design the policy and soliciting participation by information sharing from those who would benefit from the policy. It was one of transformational participation of women from wide cross sections of the national community and this is the context within which Merlin Holliday- Plunkett's membership on the Wages Commission needs to be appreciated;
- partnership building among the key interests - civil society, government and the private sector- towards sharing understanding on issues of gender and development;
- a framework within which gaps can be identified and strategic interventions can be pursued women and men together to strengthen the policy framework.

DOMINICA

The Small Projects Assistant Team (SPAT)

In small societies with great potential, underdeveloped resources and daunting problems, every contribution towards national development counts. The contribution is more so valued if efforts are made to do things differently and in a way that harnesses the energy of the people towards their self-development.

The **Small Projects Assistant Team** is an example of that valued contribution.

It defines its method of work through community animation as follows:

*“ A development process, implemented under the direction of inspired leadership, whereby selected people with effective communication skills and a desire for continuous learning and education, working very close to the grassroots utilizing participatory approaches, and collaborating with other development workers in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes, improve the social, economic and cultural quality of life through the building of strong community institutions ”.*³⁷

The activities of SPAT revolve around training:

*“training for women and men in all aspects of life including health, adolescent awareness, construction, computer, participation in program development, needs prioritization, leadership, developing income generating activities, ensuring gender equity on all organisational structures, collaborative activities between SPAT and other NGOs and Government Departments working in each community”.*³⁸

The very limited information available on SPAT, gives some insight into the transformational potential of its work from what is said to be **a desire for continuous learning** and its ways of working in communities through **collaborative activities** with other civil society actors and government. Continuous learning in the broader context of its animation methodology is a challenge to self critical analysis of what is being done and the results (positive or negative) being achieved. Further, by using participatory methods, SPAT is opening up spaces that can stimulate peoples acceptance of their role as partners in their development.

Further, collaboration on the ground with other NGOs and government is something that is a hope rather than a reality in many of our Caribbean communities. Yet it is a fundamental requirement for moving our communities forward.

The question is – What are the lessons being learned by SPAT?

³⁷ Francisco Esprit, Coordinator SPAT. Letter to Linnette Vassell :UNIFEM'S Transformational Leadership Project, 4 January 2001.

³⁸ Esprit.

GRENADA

i. Grencoda

From its inception in post-revolutionary Grenada in 1985, the Grenada Community Development Agency (GRENCODA) has faced tremendous challenges, but also realised some good outcomes. For example, its open and transparent approach established an important principle in the workplace which served as well to stem suspicion concerning its agenda and work conduct. Further, its work in poverty reduction through education, training and economic projects interventions has been cited in a recent Caribbean Development Bank National Poverty Assessment Report.

Its contributions come in the form of a mix of programme initiatives relating to provision of books and uniform to children, parenting education, skills training, operation of a small production enterprise based on local fruits (Grenfruit), legal aid and counselling, environmental protection and capacity building of staff and community members. One of the high impact programmes has been that dealing with schoolbooks and uniform to children. This programme is funded by local entrepreneurs.

On the face of it, it would not be unreasonable to ask whether the organisation sees itself substituting for the state and what its operations have to teach concerning transformational leadership. To answer we have to remind ourselves of the context of post-revolutionary, post-invasion Grenada, with high unemployment, particularly among women, growing abuse of children, many of whom are not able to go beyond primary school; an educational system which is grossly underfunded and therefore a society with tremendous pressure on parents, and single mothers in particular.

In that context, as one Grenadian explained, the provision by GRENCODA of school books, uniforms and part-scholarships for children, opened possibilities for families that otherwise could not be realised under present conditions. The development of education is a vital stage in the journey towards the destination of a developed Grenada.

A related strategic departure in GRENCODA's work was that its focus has been to mobilise local private sector funding for the programme. She continued:

"...traditionally NGOs have tended to look to funding agencies who have like-minded objectives, goals and policies for funding their work. Traditionally the private sector supposedly provides funding for more private sector oriented organisation. What we see is that... private sector organisations ...support them (GRENCODA) a lot".³⁹

³⁹ Interview with Ms. Valerie Cornwall, February 26, 2001.

GRENCODA's involvement in work with fishermen which combines issues of livelihood with environmental protection as well as its legal aid programme are also built on promoting social partnership in development. In the context of Grenada this approach is a critical path to which government as well as other partners are increasingly opening themselves.

GUYANA

i. Red Thread and Andaiye.

Andaiye is known throughout the Caribbean for her long involvement in politics over nearly thirty (30) years, her struggle over recent years as a cancer survivor, her work on women's unpaid labour and her cynical Guyanese humour. The experiences we bring from Guyana are mediated by her voice, not only because we finally interviewed her, but because she had been linked to the main projects we had examined on the ground.

Her recent work, "**The Red Thread Story**" is written with clarity and insight about how "an income generating project became a springboard from which working class Afro- and Indo-Guyanese women, together with middle class women of several races, began in a small way to work together to organise 'against the narrow interest of the broader political struggle'."⁴⁰

Red Thread conceived more as a women's development project, than as an organisation, was started in 1986 by Bonita Harris, Jocelyn Dow, Vanda Radzik and Andaiye herself, all leaders in the Working People Alliance (WPA). Women in four (4) communities, two (2) with a concentration of Afro-Guyanese and the other two (2) with an Indo-Guyanese population began to organise around needlework, embroidery to be exact. Not only in Guyana as Andaiye points out, (but certainly this would have happened in Jamaica also), women of the so-called "progressive" left questioned the 'ideological correctness' of organising women through sewing. Quite uncritically, many saw needlework as bound up in the strategy that the colonial-minded and reactionary forces of the women's movement had used from the 19th to conform women to their 'sub-ordinate' roles as housewives. However, sewing as used within Red Thread brought into light an entirely new focus on women's unpaid labour and was a medium also for consciousness raising. The strategy was explained to evaluators as follows:

"Starting with the needle and thread was therefore an attempt to emancipate and reinstate an area of women's work relegated to the status of unpaid and/or undervalued labour and to use it to transform the lives and consciousness of women within their communities, by opening opportunities to begin the process of their economic independence".⁴¹

For some time, the sewing project provided a good part of the regular income of a number of women, but there were difficulties, especially with marketing. Other economic

⁴⁰ Andaiye, "**The Red Thread Story: resisting the narrow interests of a broader political struggle**", in **Spitting in the Wind: Lessons in Empow, Coordierment from the Caribbean**, Ed. Susan Francis, Ian Randle Publishers in association with the Commonwealth Foundation, 2000.

⁴¹ The Red thread Story, p. 75.

ventures emerged including the production of educational materials. Within their groups, the women came to share issues relating to their lives and relationships in the context of their economic activities they came to explore the value of their labour- to understand more fully the matter of women's unpaid labour. Some learnt to do research, others to use drama to explore issues of their lives. Women came to extend relationships not only within and among their groups in Guyana, but with others in the country and the wider Caribbean.

It was in this process that cross-cultural links were established among the African and Indo-Guyanese women. This involved also a sharing of their personal and family histories. They shared experiences of re-constructing their own images of themselves in their art, discovering together "that they shared conditions". Of added importance was the fact that they could experience how they were themselves changing some of these conditions and relations in their daily lives. In many instances, through the personal testimonies of the women, we share how personal autonomy was being claimed, especially by Indo-Guyanese women.

The training in Red Thread which assisted women to put value to their labour linked with similar efforts of organisations like the National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) of Trinidad and Tobago. It supported the Caribbean region's contribution through Andaye's work, to the debate at the global level for counting women's unremunerated work. The leadership that the Caribbean gave at the 1995 Beijing conference and after, around this issue, has been a direct contribution from the Red Thread experience.

Another important contribution for the building of transformational leadership relates to the analysis being provoked around questions of building the autonomy of women in face of the differences of power relations that exist and are played out in their organising efforts as women in different economic situations. This is a critical issue in a region in which a large percentage of women are in employer/employee relations as householders and household workers, a relationship further complicated by race, colour/shade the legacy of a long history of slavery. The power relations arise in the household as in the organisation.

The call for thinking around 'autonomous' organising of around their 'different levels of power', hold out challenges for new organisations like Women Working for Transformation in Jamaica as well as for older organisations across the region in which the working class must still struggle for influence.

A third level of contribution of the Red Thread experience to the discourse on transformational leadership training relates to the matter of "enabling new relations across race". The participation of Indo-Guyanese women in Red Thread, it was said, was for cultural reasons, more influenced by race, than was the case with Afro-Guyanese. More Indo-Guyanese women left their groups as the economic aspects of the project became more fragile, and less of them participated in workshops for a variety of reasons. However, their experiences in the organisation brought some changes in how the Afro- and Indo-Guyanese women viewed each other, as relations were built among them. These

were the small steps being taken across the divide of cultures. The strengthening of such relations would fundamentally reshape the political landscape of Guyana with implications for the Caribbean as a whole.

From Andaiye's analysis of Red Thread, the tasks for women are essentially those of transforming relations and establishing "solidarity across differences".

ii. **Women Across Difference (WAD)**

It was in continuing pursuit of that vision that **Women Across Difference** evolved "some five (5) years ago". Andaiye said that the idea emerged at a broad based meeting of women and arising from a wish she expressed for "a woman thing" to be formed" to attempt to work across race, political party and class difference. Some members of Red thread joined WAD "because they were looking for what Red Thread had been prevented from doing", Anadaye said.⁴²

According to their own definition, "members of WAD are individuals who belong to different communities. Some live in different geographic locations, belong to different organisations and engage in different occupations. Their aim is "to promote fuller understanding of the differences which result in women's lives as a result of their being members of a variety of communities".⁴³

The aim of the organisation is to undertake public education and training to stimulate and equip community members to become involved in and implement collaborative actions for development. The organisation's work is directed to supporting the implementation of poverty reduction programmes and strategies.

Over the years, the group has focussed on training in facilitation to support work in communities. The outline of a three-week part-time training programme for members contained the following learner objectives:

- Participants would explore the dynamics of various communities;
- Participants would facilitate a community needs assessment intervention;
- Participants would be able to apply the tools for working with communities.

Issued identified for training included:

- i. nature and characteristics of various types of communities;
- ii. types of resources;
- iii. identifying community resources;
- iv. understanding community dynamics;
- v. identifying community needs and interests;
- vi. working with community groups;
- vii. decision-making and action-planning;

⁴² Interview with Andaiye, Barbados, March 1, 2001

⁴³ Women Across Differences. Member Training Programme 2: Building Community Partnerships. (ND)

viii. the role of WAD in facilitating change at the community level.⁴⁴

Other courses planned included:

- Training Programme for Facilitator in Positive Parenting Skills. This was advertised to be conducted by WAD in collaboration with Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers;
- Personal Development and Workers' Rights -for women in trade unions.

This latter course involved training around issues of exploring self; the socialisation process; gender socialisation; sex and gender and gender roles and gender stereotyping; human development; human sexuality; communicating with others; visioning and goal setting; domestic violence and its effects; managing stress; women as workers; women, leadership and empowerment. This latter module it was indicated would address 'taking leadership; supporting women leaders, preparing yourself for leadership and lobbying and advocacy'.

The programme outline indicates the methods that were used in training. These combined in-house teaching with field work/visits. The use of participatory methodologies, for example techniques associated with the family of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) were also mentioned.

Facilitators of Non-Governmental (NGOs) and of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other professionals operating in the social sector are among the main participants of the work of WAD. WAD operates in the community at the level of the citizens as well as among trainers from various sectors. There is no information currently available on the main clients served and the impact of the work being done. At a more basic level, one is not even sure that these courses have been implemented. However, the value of the information is that it indicates the needs perceived and the approaches proposed in training. The training content integrates gender analysis as a core element . the proposed direction in training is one that would take the knowledge, skills and attitude that support women's empowerment and transformation in gender relations to the broader civil society sector.

According to Andaye, the group tried to have a Women's Truth Commission, but this "was stymied by Guyanese politics". WAD she said is "less across difference now- it is totally Afro-Guyanese and the only difference they face is that against class".

The search for building across differences of race remains a major challenge, but such a process is again being shaped, Andaye feels, in a new body- **Women In Black**.

ii. **Women In Black.**

Every Friday, around the mid day lunch hour, a group of women dressed in black appear on the sidewalk at one of the busy thoroughfares in Georgetown. They bear pictures of loved ones, mainly of younger people who have been killed on the streets. Friends and

⁴⁴ . See Women Across Differences, member Training Programme 2: Building Community Partnership.

supporters, including Andaye, often stand in solidarity with the women, passers by stop to ask questions and/or take literature.

The group appeared is sometime in mid 2000. It started with the protest of one mother whose child had been killed by recklessness on the streets some four (4) years previously. The motor car driver who mowed down her daughter had killed someone else some months afterwards.

With her daughter's death, she had wanted to 'do something', to express her rage. She and Andaiye had spoken about that; about the persistent protest of Las Madres de la Playa of Argentina who had demonstrated for years for their children against the dictatorship until its collapse, but she could then only mourn her loss. Over the period of a growing friendship and of rage, her "sofie, sofie" friend, in Andaye's words, had come to take a public stand, along with other women. It happened when another mother had two of her children killed by the road recklessness.

The explanation?

"It's about calling for accounting for her daughter, but it also has something to do with a great sense of outrage at the state of things on the streets of Guyana and the fact that people could do things with impunity- you could raise your child for eighteen years and a man could lick her down and go through the airport", Andaye explained.⁴⁵

The protesters have begun to take shape in people's consciousness. They are mentioned in the Parliament, they had a meeting with the President. But these women had first to claim their own consciousness, moving beyond the place in which they would normally see themselves and taking action, managing their pain towards their own transformation. Now the group is planning how to make its actions more effective in dealing with what is seen as the problem of reckless driving.

As for Andaye, did she see herself as a transformational leader? Well, she said, she did not understand what being a transformational leader meant. She understood some of the changes that had taken place in her own sense of what politics and leadership had to be; she from what she understood saw herself as an 'enabler'. She was clear, she said, of the need to "incorporate the personal and emotional...and to be empathetic nice and gentle.... I think I am still quite hard", she concluded.

iv. Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI)

The guiding philosophy of the GWLI, established in 1997, "is to provide training for girls and women to enable them to be confident, assertive, economically independent, more involved in decision-making at various levels and leaders in their communities, sectors or particular areas of work".⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Interview with Andaye, Bridgetown, Barbados, March 1, 2001.

⁴⁶ Woman Powah: promoting gender and development. Inaugural Issue, October 1999, p.12

With its motto, “Enhancing capabilities and increasing choices”, the GWLI has mainly targeted unemployed young girls and women. According to Women’s Affairs Minister, the idea for its establishment was shaped by the concern to translate issues of the Beijing World conference into practical outcomes by building leadership skills among women aged 16-65 years old from the level of the community.

The Institute offers a year long training programme in three phases. Students attend classes three times weekly for 3-hour sessions, except for computer courses which requires 4 classes weekly.

Phase 1, covers 70 hours over 3 months and offers compulsory courses, namely:

- healthy lifestyle- learning to take care of the body, the correct names for body parts, health issues.
- effective communication:
- understanding the self:- exploring socialisation, behaviours etc;
- gender and development : exploring where the women’s movements is coming from; debates/issues in the local and regional movement; women’s leadership in trade unions; young women in the movement etc.

This latter course is said to be very popular, opens up many questions and issues.

Participants also do one of three optional course- either Introduction to Marketing, Business Management, or skills training in craft or computers. The Institute has a small computer laboratory.

In the other two phases training is offered on conflict resolution, mentoring, time management, small business management, hospitality management, understanding the laws and history of the country, leadership skills. Classroom work is combined with site visits.

Participants pay a registration fee of GY\$500. There is a higher charge (GY\$1500-\$GY 2500) for computer training. Students bear the cost of transportation and meals- although the latter is subsidised.

Some of the achievements cited in the programme are that:

- Women from various regions, racial and ethnic groups of Guyana, come together and learn to share;
 - Women develop a sense of self-awareness and take steps to enhance their lives.
- One participant on the first day of the current school year related how she came into the programme:

“ There was a lady in the papers, Ms. Chesney, and they were talking about how you could change your life and get powerful and be ahead. Ahead over your home, and ahead different ways. And I was thinking ‘I could be ahead, not only over my home, but

*ahead of people and go out and be ahead in areas and in work and I think 'well, yes, this is a good school and this is a good opportunity for me'.*⁴⁷

She had been challenged to take the journey to self-development and responded positively.

iv. Jocelyn Dow and Liana Cane Interiors Ltd.

*"I have been in business all my life and have never earned a salary. In 1991, with some ideas from friends from the Dominican Republic who were in rattan furniture, who were looking for regional substitute, I got interested."*⁴⁸

Jocelyn has for years been active in the national, regional and global women's movements. She is a member of the Working Peoples' Alliance (WPA), a co-founder of the Red Thread and Chairperson of WEDO- Women's Environment and Development Organisation. That organisation is currently implementing the 50/50 campaign for equal representation of women in Parliaments.

Liana Canes in which she is co-owner and worker in an enterprise which employs some 60 to 80 persons, over 50% women. "We don't have a deliberate policy to ensure gender balance, but I would prefer that", she commented in an interview. In the context of Guyana, where according to Jocelyn, many people see life as "futureless", training for women's leadership has to be underpinned by the people's need to make a living.

*"Because of the prevailing poverty and divisions, the factory has to speak to all these things, to gender empowerment, to women's empowerment".*⁴⁹

The factory has:

- a racially mixed worked force;
- as its raw materials, a renewable resource, harvested in the forests by the Amerindians in an environmentally friendly manner;
- women are trained in a non-traditional skill area of furniture making and in a sense provides a bridge into other possible areas of non-traditional skills.
- a team approach to management and production;
- provisions for each worker to purchase materials at cost and to help each other to build any item of furniture he or she wishes. This is provided for once per year.

These realities of the workplace lay the basis for leadership training around a variety of issues and skills. For example, the enterprise as it is, presents an evolving model of alternative values associated with running a business. These values include teamwork, care of the environment, understanding and respecting cultural differences, the functioning of the economy, securing women's reproductive rights etc.

⁴⁷ .Interview with Ms. Fiona Stewart, July 2000.

⁴⁸ Interview with Jocelyn Dow, July 2000.

⁴⁹ Interview with Jocelyn Dow, July 2000

From Jocelyn Dow's perspective, the Liana Cane Interiors and its wide –ranging line of furniture, also points the way for Caribbean producers to confront globalisation by producing high quality products that have a cultural stamp and message and rely on women's traditional skills for quality as a value added element. Training for transformation also means bringing women to understand these factors in the context of the workplace.

There is much, from the personal to the corporate and organisational that can be learnt from Guyana. In a very difficult national context, women chose optimism and struggle over pessimism and apathy; a searching for solutions in project after project for the way to build bridges to the future. The specific training programme undertaken by GWLI, in spite of the difficulties and politics, has many of the components of the WAD community based programme. This perhaps points to a good degree of networking among Guyanese women.

The issue of working through power relations in organisations of working and middle class women and especially how working class women can raise their influence and pursue their interests in these organisations is placed squarely on the agenda for fuller analysis. This is at the heart of the politics of a transformational leadership approach. It is one that challenges the self as well as the structures that embed inequitable relations.

JAMAICA

i. Erna Brodber of Woodside, St. Mary

Dr. Erna Brodber lives and works in the district of Woodside in St. Mary where she was born some sixty years ago. She had travelled and studied widely- she is a historian, sociologist and novelist.

Erna had experienced the racism and ‘levelling’ of the United States in the 1960s, only to confront on her return, the class and colour sickness of Jamaica. Rastafari and Twelve Tribes began to give her some ‘grounding’ in the experience of “uptown and down-town talking and being together”. But for her, it was going home to Woodside that really helped to settle her spirit.

“ I knew I had to develop before certain other things could happen. I had to reach a stage where I could lift up any child- I could use the non-verbal cues which are loving and physically interactive with anybody, and not putting it on- relating to the human spirit...to commune with the Spirit, to begin to understand my relationship with the trees and the man whistling up the road”.⁵⁰

That relationship building nurtured her spiritual development which was grounded in locating within her own environment, the journeying of our African ancestors and their lives of enslavement and struggle. Woodside itself had been a coffee plantation “from slavery days” and the people of the village had been there for generations. By researching and presenting information on those inter-connections and inter-relationships prepared her to offer what she had to the community, namely, her education. That engagement, dialectically, built her own understanding and directed the way her work would unfold in the village.

First, the link with the Youth Club and teaching the history, Black people’s history and Woodside people’s history. Often there would be reading aloud to the gathering, sometimes having “people who wrote about us coming to talk to us, like George Beckford”. Men and women together were learning, and this for Erna was important because as she has said, training has to be done in the cultural context where Black men and women together have been ‘injured’.

This stage broadened into more research being done on the village itself by students and faculty from universities in the United States and from Australia. And the “give back” would follow, where Villagers responded to the research to validate the output and in the process, the integrity of their own lives. In this process, another aspect developed- the community tourism project and the strengthening of the Woodside Development Community Action Group. Broader leadership training and engagements followed as

⁵⁰ . Interview with Dr. Erna Brodber, October 2000

community members, men and especially women, took on tasks related to their community tourism enterprise- education of the community, accommodation, health, entertainment, food and refreshment and of touring of the community.

‘Woodside Day’ observed in January each year and Emancipation Day, observed in August, have become important markers for the community. The publication by Brodber of The People of My Jamaican Village in 1999, supported the establishment of the Ancestor Park and the honouring of enslaved fore-parents whose descendants are still today identified in the village.

Community members continue to build on the foundation they have laid with plans for continuing social and economic development. Erna herself sees the other stage as one of continuing the “giving back”, to a wider audience of Black people and to the youth in particular. This is to facilitate the strengthening of a new generation of leadership so that they become more directly involved in shaping the continuing development of the community. This perspective on development, of anchoring our social engagement in an understanding of our culture, and of the dynamics of race and colour and gender, is revealed in the proposals she has made for the extension of the definition of Transformational Leadership.⁵¹

ii. **Donna Duncan of the Jamaica Money Market Brokers**

The death in 1998 of Joan Duncan, a pioneer in the financial market, brought a big challenge to her daughter, Donna Duncan.

*“I took over in August 1998 ... I felt like I was drowning. I couldn’t fit into the mothering role because I don’t have children. I am the same age as the rest of the senior managers. Plus my sister and I couldn’t see eye to eye in the same company”.*⁵²

The Jamaica Money Market Brokers (JMMB) was founded in 1992 by Joan Duncan to open up the money market to a wider body of investors. The company is owned by a number of institutional investors, but the firm is widely identified with the Founder and two of her children who hold responsible positions in the leadership. On her death, she left what was regarded as a significant legacy- A Vision of Love. In 1995, the entire staff of forty five (45) persons collaborated in a process to write the Vision of Love- a statement of principles to guide the organisation’s development. That vision embraced an affirmation: that *“each person is loving and respectful of each other, and represents an important link in a chain of Love serving each other; sharing ideas; building up each*

⁵¹ . Erna’s proposals relate to re-formulations on paragraph 2 of the definition of TL as follows:

a). “practices and structures of inequality, including gender inequality that are detrimental to **people’s (instead of women’s) dignity; and b). To** “ It is leadership **that seeks to ensure the empowerment of women...add “ as a first step to wards the empowerment of the human family”**.”

⁵² Interview with Donna Duncan, August 2000

other".⁵³ The company was being shaped on this vision and it was the challenge of carrying the process forward that frightened the daughter.

Her ability to carry the vision depended on moving the roadblocks in herself and raising her own consciousness, Duncan revealed.

'I went on this course...this was a course on ontology- the study of human beings. My number one priority in going was wanting a breakthrough in my relationship with my sister. At the end, I got to see that i wasn't supporting my sister and i chose to honour Tricia for the first time in my life. That was the beginning of the transformation in the relationship between my sister and I'.⁵⁴

Considerations of personal and interpersonal issues are reflected in the mission statement which reads as follows:

" To be a dynamic, international, multifaceted investment institution that operates in a caring, loving, and "fun", environment where employees are creative and content. Ensuring customer satisfaction through optimum use of technology and continuous improvement on a path of excellence where solidity, ethics, credibility and openness are hallmarks of our existence as experts in all aspects of our operation ".⁵⁵

These principles show themselves in the life of the organisation in practice:

- A nursery for employees' children is provided free of cost to users
- A meditation room is on site- a quiet space for reflection.
- A gym exists on the premises.
- A share-ownership scheme (Employee Share Ownership Programme) exists. Ten percent (10%) of company is owned by employees; ten percent (10%) of profit is shared monthly.
- Some seventy percent (70%) of employees are in training in the philosophy and values of the JMMB, for example, in personal development, self-awareness and for taking responsibility for lack of results.
- Standards of professional conduct have been established. "Gossiping is not on at JMMB- people get suspended for that".
- The employee contract which is a partnership agreement operationalises the Vision of Love.

These measures serve to engender a strong sense of family within the organisation.

According to Duncan, a recent internal organisation survey showed that ninety percent (90%) of team members, now over one hundred (100) members, felt that their experiences were consistent with the principles of the firm; eighty four (84%) felt that

⁵³ A Vision of Love, JMMB. Card. See Appendix 2.

⁵⁴ Interview with Ms. Donna Duncan, August 2000.

⁵⁵ JMMB Company Profile.

there was good transparency. There was still room for more work on accountability issues, she said.

The external clients' evaluation has been equally positive. They express the view that the company is "visionary, friendly and approachable".

The company has also grown. It currently has five (5) branches in Jamaica and has operations in Trinidad and Tobago. Its net profit for the year ending February 2000 grew sixty four percent (64%) to one hundred and eighty six million (J\$186 million), improving its rate of return on equity of thirty nine percent (38.89%) and forty percent (39.68%) in the years ending in February 1999 and 2000.⁵⁶

The decision of the JMMB to found the Joan Duncan Chair of Finance and Ethics at the University of Technology is part of vision to influence the practice of ethics in business. This has been seen as a timely venture since "the collapse of the Jamaican financial sector ... has brought to the fore the issues of ethics in business".⁵⁷ The organisation has also been sponsoring annual training seminars with the theme 'lessons in leadership'. These support the central objective. An increasing number of persons are participating, signifying a growing openness to ideas of transforming relationships and practice within the corporate world.

iii. Jamaica Women's Political Caucus

Challenged by a female member of Parliament to help to build support and solidarity among women in politics, the Kingston Chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Club launched the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus in March 1992. Its goal is to increase the level and quality of women's representation in politics.

The objectives of the 8 year old Caucus are stated as follows:

- "to provide training for female political candidates;
- to provide to female political candidates selected in accordance with criteria established by the JWPC, financial and other assistance to conduct their political campaigns;
- to provide public education programmes to encourage women to become involved in frontline politics and acceptance of female politicians in society;
- to establish and operate a data collection centre which will provide information for campaign issues and matters relating to women".⁵⁸

To date, the Institute of Public Leadership (IPL) is the sensitization programmes regularly conducted for women involved or interested in running for political office. This

⁵⁶ JMMB Company Profile.

⁵⁷ "Joan Duncan Chair a good move". Editorial. *The Daily Observer*, Tuesday June 20, 2000, p. 6.

⁵⁸ "The Case of the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus, 1989-1998". Discussion paper prepared for the Caribbean Regional Symposium on Gender Politics, Peace and Conflict Prevention and Resolution, November 23-26, 1998.

has been the most developed aspect of the Caucus' work. The IPL, modelled off a USA National YWCA programme and modified for Jamaica is implemented through an intensive two-day work programme covered in 3 modules. Information in the modules is designed for political candidates or managers of candidates operating within the existing constraints. It does not address, to any extent, the structural issues of gender relations and how these may be addressed in a strategic manner.

However, the programme has been rated highly by participants.

The content of the **Candidates'** modules of approximately 9 hours is as follows:

Module 1: 3 ¼ hrs.

- So you want to run for office
- The elements of a political campaign
- The planning process
- Framing your issues
- Organisation, budget, fundraising
- The role of the candidate

Module 2 2 ½ hrs.

- Message delivery through the media
- The elements of charisma
- Presentation techniques

Module 3 3 ¼ hrs.

- Video training workshop
- Issues management (joint session)
- Mock Press Conference (joint session).

The content of the three Modules for **Campaign Managers** over 9 hours is as follows:

Module 1

- Research, strategy and planning
- Framing your issues
- Message development
- Delivering your message through organisation

Module 2

- Message delivery through media
- Media production: print and radio- exercise

Module 3

- Systems for effective management

- The finance plan- budget and fundraising
- Issues management (joint session)
- Mock press conference (joint session)

Since 1994 three local trainers have been prepared to deliver the IPL programme. Over this same period, some 137 women have participated in the programme. These have mainly been female politicians operating at the level of the Local Government system. Women in Parliament have also participated as well as leaders from NGOs, including the churches.

The Caucus has been able to make only token contributions to the political campaign of women. There is wide agreement that the JWPC's most effective contribution, has been the bringing together, in the context of the tribalised political culture of Jamaica, of women from all the political parties into some level of dialogue. There is therefore great need and some scope to build on this initiative and prepare women across parties to make a change and reduce the divisiveness of partisan politics as an important step in initiating a process of national consensus on the key development issues that are of concern to women.

iii. Women's Construction Collective

Formed in 1983, the Women's Construction Collective, despite falling on challenging times over the years, has never closed its door nor deviated from its mandate of training women in construction skills. It has provided a space for women to share about the challenges of building their careers in the so-called "male occupations".

The WCC began as an "experimental" project in 1983. Ten unemployed women from a political enclave in Western Kingston were identified for training as trade workers. The project design and training were coordinated by the Construction Resource Development Centre (CRDC). Resource persons from the government's Vocational Training Division (VTDI) were contracted to train the women in basic construction skills- basic carpentry, masonry, block laying and rendering a wall.

After that initial training the WCC continued to identify women for training by the VTDI. Specifically, the organisation aims are:

- "to promote and develop building construction skills among women;
- to develop strategies for women to deal with obstacles involved in working in a male dominated field;
- to promote the participation of women in the construction industry;
- to provide a support group for women in the construction industry through regular monthly meetings".⁵⁹

⁵⁹ . Angela Heron, "Women Construction Workers, Jamaica", in Women Constructing Their Lives.

In the period from 1983-1995 some 287 women were trained mainly in the core areas of carpentry and masonry. In this latter period some training in other areas, notably electrical wiring and plumbing has been done.

Although the downturn in the economy and the construction sector has adversely affected the availability of jobs, and therefore training, the WCC has continued to keep itself in the market. However, the information on the numbers trained over the last five years is not available, because of problems of administrative capacity within the WCC. Still, some members of the WCC network have extended their training to new skills areas. One graduate from the basic level is currently doing a diploma in construction technology at the University of technology; another is doing a 3 years draftsman course at the VTDI; a third graduate has begun to do training not only in Jamaica, but in Montserrat.

The other critical aspect of WCC's training is in preparing women workers to cope with the realities of work in this male dominated field. Because most of the training takes place not in the classroom but in practice on sites, women have to be prepared to enter this area of training and employment. The challenges are formidable and include:

- some hostility from some men who resent what they claim is 'women taking over'. The influence of 'don-man-ship' on sites is an additional aspect that brings the threat of violence close to women;
- women under constant surveillance and 'testing';
- lack of/inadequate facilities- changing room, toilets etc;
- sexual harassment
- cursing and fighting on site
- women getting low pay than men for the same work.

In addition to these, some women have to confront other gender-based challenges from their homes and families, in terms of childcare, and in low support services to facilitate their entry into the construction industry.

The WCC seeks to respond to some of these issues. Certainly through its support group of some 30 members, the opportunity for sharing experiences is available. The Support Group has continued to meet monthly over the years, with average attendance of 15 women. This is also a forum for sensitization and training on various matters, for example, legal rights and protection, coping strategies, conflict resolution and gender socialization. It is a space for information sharing on available jobs, training opportunities and broader personal development issues.

The Inter- American Development Bank Regional Project in Non-Traditional Skills Training for Low Income Women is a new project being implemented in four (4) territories in the region- Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.. The plan is that under this project, some 1200 women will be trained in skills of construction, automotive repairs, industrial maintenance and computer repairs. In addition, sensitization in small business development and gender and occupations are provided to the trainees. These latter areas of training are done by support institutions- WCC in

Jamaica, BOWAND in Belize, Red thread in Guyana and Workingwomen in Trinidad and Tobago.

The work of the WCC and the possibilities of this new project for strengthening women's autonomy have far-reaching possibilities. The presence of more women across the region working in these traditional areas of male concentration, can present a picture, more powerful than words, and strengthen the struggle against the systemic barriers of gender discrimination that confront women on all sides.

The initiatives from within the JMMB speak to values in business which form part of the thrust towards new and transformative approaches to governance as well. The process underway in Woodside linked to the community's history and heritage point to transformation in terms of approaches to local economic and social development. These bring new impulses into our considerations on how transformational approaches can bring forward new possibilities on the economic front.

With the exception of the WCC however, the Jamaica experiences do not, as in other countries, embed issues of gender relations at their core.

SURINAME

In Suriname, training to expand women's participation in decision-making at the level of the national and local political systems has been seen as a priority issue. A group of some forty (40) women in 1994 debated according to parliamentary rules, issues of women, population and development. In order to participate in the three day meeting, all the participants had to undergo training in parliamentary procedures in order to prepare themselves for the Women's Parliament Forum (VPF) of Suriname.

The conclusion of these women who had come from all over the ten (10) electoral districts of Suriname was that unless women were part of the decision-making systems and structures, they would have little influence on the priority issues that their discussions had identified. Ten (10) resolutions, speaking to these issues were unanimously adopted and officially presented to the President as a women's agenda of demands towards the then upcoming national elections of 1996.

Focussing on the priority of increasing women's influence in decision-making, the VPF organised in four (4) commissions- mobilisation, media, neighbourhood meetings and political monitoring, each charged with specific aspects of the campaign to influence women's participation in politics in the work towards the elections. The work was co-ordinated by one NGO- Projekta. All the Commissions were said to have worked fairly well in their respective areas, except for that on political monitoring because there was said to have been too little contact with the political action on a day to day basis. The Neighbourhoods Meetings took the issues to the rural communities. Members of NGOs and activists from political parties took issues of women's concern to seven regional meetings .

The VPF generated much public interest and focus on women and politics. Its meeting with women candidates from all parties was a rare sight. " It was even a rarer occasion to hear women politicians from all political colours refer *to their common goal: to ensure an sustainable development process in this country, to which women and men equally contribute and from which women and men equally benefit*"⁶⁰.

The results of the campaign were considered very significant. In that period into the 1996 elections women candidacy for parliamentary office moved to twenty two percent (22%) from five percent (5%) in 1991; the woman/man ration of national candidates went from 1:17 in 1991 to 1:5 in 1996. In terms of seats, women increased their position in parliament from six percent (6%) in 1991 to sixteen percent (16%) in 1996- from three (3) to eight (8) women. Among the women elected were two indigenous women from the interior of the country.

⁶⁰ Case Study of Participation of Women in Political and Decision-Making Processes. **The Women's Parliament Forum (VPF) in Suriname**. Paramaribo, 27 March 1997.

The work of the Women's Parliament Forum was extended through weekend training but was not sustained and the organisation is presently dormant. Its work. The reasons are not clear. It's influence however did spread to Trinidad and Tobago, with good effect.

The significance of the VPF lies, among other things, in the focus it placed on building women's political participation, with broad support as a strategy towards addressing the broad concerns of the women's human rights agenda, and the results. This is said to have been the approach taken in the Nordic countries with positive outcomes. The process of its formation, work and demise should be revisited.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

i. Merle Hodge and Workingwomen

Now in her 50s, Merle Hodge, a noted academic, educator and creative writer has a great ability - to get along with all kinds of people. She brings that valued resource to sustaining the organisation she co-founded with two other women some sixteen (16) years ago in 1985, Women Working for Social Progress (Workingwomen).

The name Workingwomen was to convey that understanding of the common ground of struggle among women, regardless of differences. It was to open the way for struggle so that the issues and viewpoints of women, and of working class women, would come to the fore. Writing in 1987 as editor of the women's newspaper which the organisation had launched, she called on women to unite- "we cannot do anything about the ketch-ass until we band together".⁶¹

Merle in many ways represents that "common ground" among women. She is accessible and presents herself as the same to all- a woman of depth and humility through whom one can understand the value of simplicity of living. She has been a central part of the core of stubborn "hardened" women who have worked to keep Workingwomen and its work and vision alive and visible. She is a catalyst for the organisation's public agitation and education campaigns to rally women's opinions on issues of gender discrimination and other social inequities-, from violence, to parenting, to issues of wages and employment. Through her influence and active involvement, innovative programmes for women's training, education and consciousness raising have been implemented and many have come to know and trust the opinions of Merle Hodge and through her, of Workingwomen

Her reflections on the changes in the organisation have been useful in tracing the challenges of the early years and to inform action. In 1989 for example, she spoke of Workingwomen growing...

*"like weeds that you cannot stamp out"; that the members "rush about organising national programs while we give little attention to ourselves as a group of women sharing all this work but seldom managing to share anything personal".*⁶²

She was among those who had made it a point of duty to insist that the sharing on a personal level would be done on the fairly basis, through 'pot luck' meetings and through the yearly weekend retreats where members would take their children. The nurturing and positive upbringing of children is a fundamental aspect of the advocacy

⁶¹ "Need for Women's Voice in the Media". **The Workingwoman**. Issue No. 2, November/December, 1987.

⁶² See Evaluation Report of the Women Working for Social Progress . By Linnette Vassell and Theresa Ann Rajack, January 1999. Revised May 2000.

agenda of Workingwomen and a passion for Merle. It is through them that she has seen a crossing of the divide of difference in Trinidad and Tobago.⁶³

That building of bridges across cultures are among the many challenges that Workingwomen has to confront deeply at some time. Holding the strong core of women who will continue to struggle to advance women's interests and confront these deep issues is itself a continuing challenge.

In a simple setting, away from home, a sharing of tasks assists members of the organisation to relate on a more personal level, to talk sharply, to disagree and also to suspend the hurts and affirm their solidarity and commitment to keep trying. It is commitment to sustaining this type of space for sharing which has helped to keep Workingwomen alive and active and meaningfully making a contribution over the years. This is the Workingwomen's way, and Merle has done much to sustain that spirit.

ii. **Teacher Cathy of the United Brotherhood of Time Spiritual School**

Although the church is seen primarily as a place of worship, it is also a space for training-training also of women into assuming leadership in the male dominated domain. This is how Teacher Cathy sees her church- the United Brotherhood of Time Spiritual School, a body operating within the Spiritual Baptist Faith. Teacher Cathy is active as leader and is also seen as "a guiding light" among members in her community. She is a grounded person, 'knowing' herself through the influence, from an early age of her spiritual teacher, Shepherd Isaac:

"...at the point where I was now beginning to understand myself, he led me into the depths of spirituality...to begin to ask the right question, about who I am, what my greatest fear was. And I went from stage to stage in that process".⁶⁴

She grew up, she explained in a large family of 12, but in her words, "was different". *"I was always to myself...I liked to meditate from an early age"*⁶⁵.

That meditation and training for self-knowledge are fundamental aspects of what she is trying to achieve and the fact that this coming together of the congregation is named 'school' and not 'church' is perhaps indicative of this focus.

She explained that the goal of the **United Brotherhood of Time Spiritual School** is ...

"for persons to better understand themselves first. Because in order to understand others, you must first understand who you are and how you fit into the scheme of things. So there is no way you could go about trying to make things right with other persons without making it right with your own self first...what we hoping to achieve is, we want

⁶³ See Merle Hodge, **For the Life of Laetitia**, Orion Children's Books, 1995.

⁶⁴ Interview with Teacher Cathy, July 2000.

⁶⁵ Interview with Teacher Cathy, June 2000

*every individual person to be at peace with himself first. Once you have achieved that, then you can achieve anything”.*⁶⁶

Interestingly, she did not place the goal in terms of religious conversion, but more so of personal self discovery. It is not easy to lead such a process, it requires, she said, the approach of being ‘ both leader and follower’, of not being afraid to confront all kinds of challenges, including traditional male resistance.

*“First you come up against male dominance and the fact that they feel they are the bosses in this thing. Because the faith itself is male dominated where the leadership aspect is concerned. The followers is totally female dominated, they always there...they come to clean the church, you know to do whatever, but to hold onto the leadership aspect...the men feel they own the right, they have the right to be the leader, to be the boss. We come up against that from time to time, but I am not disturbed, because society is who made it like that, because when they come into society, they come in innocent, very innocent...and at a stage where they feel the women have no part where leadership is concerned”.*⁶⁷

She is not complacent towards this challenge and sometimes has to *“boldly go out and make a statement about what part I play, and it is not a good thing sometimes. You don’t get a good feeling out of it”*, she said. (In order to change that) *“set pattern where man feels he is the dominant force, born to rule...a transformation must take place....a transformation of your whole attitude towards things”*, she concluded.

The church focuses on Bible study, counselling, and wider community outreach towards *“creating an awareness that life is just not about what I have achieved, but it is about what we as a whole can achieve”*. She is of the view that more training workshops among members, bringing in people of different class positions and experiences could be useful in extending understanding on these issues of development.

Two other lessons she felt were important in moving forward in society are: one, a lesson she was taught by Shepherd Isaac, namely *“ that the simple way of life is the better way of life and that holds true now more than ever”*.

The second lesson is *“to acknowledge each other, simple”*. She explained: *“ No matter what level or how confident a person you are in your ability...without that acknowledgement from somebody, you may get to a point where you say, ‘well, I wonder if I am on the right path, how I’m doing this thing’. You need to get acknowledgement”*.⁶⁸

And one needs to give acknowledgement as well, she said.

⁶⁶ Teacher Cathy.

⁶⁷ Teacher Cathy.

⁶⁸ Teacher Cathy.

She spoke about the “road-blocks” in her workplace where in her assessment, the leadership approach, “work-driven” and “transactional” needs a cultural change, for people to work to their “highest level”. The goal she pursues in the church is the same she seeks in the workplace as in the wider society.

iii. Engendering Local Government Project

This project involving research, training and documentation, was implemented from mid 1997 into 1999 by the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago. The project took its cue from the recommendations of the symposium, “Engendering Local Government”, held in St. Lucia in 1996. The project was targeted at women who were planning to enter electoral politics at the local level, to women already in the field, as well as women from other sectors of interests.

The project was to “prepare women to participate in the local government process as councillors, but also in an advisory capacity to the councils as provided for in the legislation and at the same time prepare the environment, of a predominantly male government process, for their acceptance”.⁶⁹

With this aim, the project expressed an intent to contribute to the “transformation of politics” in Trinidad and Tobago; to encourage “participation” and “accountability”, and prepare the Network of NGOs to take part in this process.

The programme content had several components:

- Research- collection and display of data relating to local government and on women in local government;
- Materials development and documentation- resulting in the preparation of the Women’s Campaign Workbook
- Training Workshops using adult education principles, including audio-visuals, popular theatre and training materials. The issues covered in the training workshops drew on materials in the Campaign Workbook, viz:
 - The Candidate- things to know, candidate’s sanity, things to do
 - The Campaign- campaign plan, key people, campaign objective, campaign theme, campaign strategy, effective campaign tips
 - Voter Contact- strategies for voter contact, door to door vs. telephone contact, etc
 - Election Day Activities
 - Media Contact
 - Money and Fund Raising
 - Working With Volunteers
 - The Wind Up

⁶⁹ Case Study: Gender Sensitivity and Awareness-raising. Engendering Local Government in trinidad and Tobago.

One aspect of the principal objectives , namely raising awareness among candidates and encouraging the participation of women in local government politics was accomplished.

There was an increase in 1999 over 1996 in the number of women running and winning seats. A total of 124 seats are on the Councils.

- in 1999, 91 women contested seats, an increase over 1996, when 48 women contested

- in 1999, 28 women won their seats, (23% of Councils) compared to 1996 when 19 women seats (15% of Councils)

There has been some collaboration across party lines. This is seen as presenting a new departure that can bring some influence to change the divisive political culture. This divisiveness is one factor that constrains women's participation as candidates for political office.

A second quality of the programmes is that they raise very explicitly issues of gender relations. They bring to the table discourses about the nature of politics, of democracy, of women's citizenship rights. Dealing with gender sensitization and analysis as a core element of training is an important aspect of the Trinidad and Tobago project .

Thirdly, the matter of citizens' participation in governance has been raised. In all these aspects there is wide scope for continuing work towards more fully reaching the potential evident in the project.

v. Clothil Walcott and the National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE)

Clothil Walcott's mother, Manuelita was a household worker. She herself , when she set up the domestic workers' organisation in 1982, was a production worker in a chicken processing plant. Her daughter, Ida LeBlanc, one of her five children, who is among the graduates of the gender course of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies in Barbados, is set to take over the organisation when she retires.

Clothil Walcott's is a household name in Trinidad and Tobago, because of the cause she defends with clarity, effective analysis and consistent activist political undertakings.

*“What I am working to achieve is for all to consider that every woman in this country of Trinidad and Tobago (regardless of) colour, class, creed, or race is a worker. But some people don't consider themselves as a worker because they don't want to consider the value, they don't know the value and this I want to push”.*⁷⁰

The cause that Clothil Walcott has been pushing since the formation of NUDE

⁷⁰ . Interview with Clothil Walcott, July 2000.

“ is for a good quality of life” for household workers. NUDE has been pushing for recognition and valuing of the contribution of household workers, without whose labour, women owners and managers of businesses and many families would not be able to pursue their dreams.

NUDE confronts many of the central issues that touch the core of relations between women, among them, especially when we talk about and commit to a politics of transformation. These include:

- the extension of the private space of the householder into a work site for the household worker: issues of conditions of engagement.
- the insider/outsider role of the household worker : the employer/worker relationships.
- issues of class, race/ethnicity : mediating conflict, building solidarity.

It is only by organising household workers, a significant section of the female labour force in the Caribbean could these issues come to the table. It is only at the table that relations closeted mainly in the private domain could be mediated by public opinion, organisational action and policy through the state to address concerns of a most vulnerable section of the labour force. The difficulty NUDE has faced over the years in being recognised and accepted within the Trade Union movement in Trinidad and Tobago, perhaps points to the particular challenges of transformation of selves and of structures.⁷¹

Building leadership in the context of the work of NUDE is about building women’s access to tools to mediate their positions as workers in the labour market and being able to pull on the support of the employer class in a new kind of partnership. In this context, the following are very noteworthy achievements towards women’s empowerment, gender and social equity:

- the inclusion of household workers in maternity leave provisions
- that cases of non-compliance to minimum wage standards go to the industrial and no longer to the civil court.

“ The previous situation has resulted in unfair treatment and injustices... Together with that, our recognition as a trade union had been denied”, commented Ms. Walcott.⁷²

- The passing in 1996 of the “Unremunerated Work Bill”.

⁷¹ It was surprising that NUDE and Walcott were not among the trade unionists covered in the recent work on women trade union leaders in the Caribbean. See, A. Lynn Bolles, **We Paid Our DUES: Women Trade Union Leaders of the Caribbean.** Howard University Press, 1999.

⁷² “Walcott the warrior”, in **Express**, Monday, May 15, 2000, p.43.

Commenting on the Act, Ms. Walcott said:

*“ This is an historic change and we are proud to have been part of it. This legislation would give official recognition to women’s tremendous contribution to the economy. It will also require the Central Statistical Office to conduct time use surveys of the unremunerated work done by both men and women, including child-care and other care services, work in agriculture; work related to food production and family business; volunteer work and community work in both the formal and informal sectors of the society”.*⁷³

In this letter appealing to the National Trade Union Centre to “close the gap between waged and unwaged work”, she added:

*“ Valuing unwaged work will raise the value of all work, including waged work and according to the Beijing platform, ‘contribute to a better sharing of responsibilities’ between the genders....Unless this unbearable unwaged workload which undergirds and subsidises all other kinds of work is included in national accounts, government cannot claim they are addressing the fundamental question of poverty, justice, social integration, and sustainable development”*⁷⁴.

Enabling domestic workers to promote and secure their rights as workers and women is a powerful contribution to the agenda for women’s empowerment and for transformation in relations among employer and employee, represented mainly by women, locked in traditionally antagonistic relations.

v. Caribbean Association of Women Entrepreneurs (CAWE).

The Caribbean Association of Women Entrepreneurs, based in Trinidad and Tobago, is a region-wide network of some 80 female entrepreneurs founded in July 1998.

Its vision is “to propel women entrepreneurs into economic, and social spheres of influence world-wide”.

The mission of CAWE is “to create a regional network of support and advancement opportunities in the global marketplace for the Caribbean woman”. It defines its vision- “to propel women entrepreneurs into economic, and social spheres of influence world-wide”.

In keeping with this mission and vision, its objectives are as follows:

- To bring together all women who own or manage a manufacturing, service or retail business;
- To foster communication and trade on local, regional and international levels;
- To grow professionally through continuing education;

⁷³ “Women cheated of their rights”, Letter to the Editor by Clothil Walcott, President, National Union of Domestic Employees. **NEWSDAY**, Friday, February 7, 1997, p. 9.

⁷⁴ “Women cheated of their rights”, Letter to the Editor by Clothil Walcott, President, National Union of Domestic Employees. **NEWSDAY**, Friday, February 7, 1997, p. 9.

- To provide networking, social support, business standards, and economic opportunities internationally;
- To cultivate business ethics;
- To encourage young entrepreneurs and mentor their progress;
- To recommend visibility of women entrepreneurs.⁷⁵

CAWE operates through networking. Quarterly meetings are held, but regular sessions are convened among members in Trinidad and Tobago for various activities, eg in 1999;

- training on business management, accountancy, personnel relations and human resources;
- discussion on savings and investments instruments. The CAWE Investment Club was recently launched. A professional Investment Manager was to be appointed to supervise the investment fund which was being opened to members.
- helping members to develop project proposals and to prepare bids on projects.

The hosting of MegaMarket – **a forum for women owned and operated businesses**– since 1999, has become a major yearly activity of CAWE where women showcase their products, seek buyers and learn through the many seminars mounted.⁷⁶

According to Dolores Hendy, president, the establishment of a business development centre is a priority for CAWE. This will enable the organisation to extend its services to existing members and attract new partners for development.

This is in line with the principles of the **Investment Club**:

- create wealth
- empower yourself
- contribute towards the upliftment of women

The mission of CAWE is very relevant to the leveraging of women's influence in the decision-making process within the Caribbean.

The experiences from Trinidad and Tobago mirror those raised but have their own specific qualities. CAWE, for example, comprised mainly of middle strata women example is setting out on a journey to strengthen women's economic base, but with a consciousness of related responsibility to women of a lower economic position; NUDE composed of working class women mainly is seeking to build a bridge moreso within the broad trade union sector and less so, it seems among the women's sector, more broadly. In neither of these cases for example, do we see the linkages with the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago which has been spearheading the campaign to increase women's representation in decision-making. In both Sister Cathy and Merle Hodge, we see other

⁷⁵ Caribbean Association of Women Entrepreneurs: from aspirations to achievements. (Brochure)

⁷⁶ CAWE News, Vol. 2, Issue 1, June 2000.

departures towards relationships building. Yet as unconnected as these all seem, they all consciously operate within what seems as an ideological framework that is explicitly combative to the gender system- a quality that is weak in the Jamaica experience for example.

SECTION 1V **LESSONS ON TRAINING AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP.**

Our review of the various training initiatives have shown that either through processes of ‘informal engagement’ or through formal structures or programmes, women’s leadership potentials are being stimulated and shaped. In all these contexts, while there have been no explicit reference to training for transformational leadership, the training processes, in varied ways, some small and tentative, in others, more pronounced, open the spaces for the journeying towards change and transformation to proceed and in some instances accelerate.

The examination of these various initiatives, has led us to review our understanding of training and how we view the concept of transformational leadership itself. We have come to realise for example, that while training is legitimately seen in the context of formal and structured instruction and practice to bring about specific desired results, we need to also look at training in the context of women’s leadership moreso as process of engagement of the individual towards a sense of empowerment- that is, towards release of the spirit.

Leadership training through service

As we have come to examine training in this light, we have seen that for women, training for leadership has been rooted in service, in a sense and an exercise of personal responsibility for others. The literature review in particular, drawing on the narratives of women, has shown how service and a sense of responsibility in the family have opened the path to the development and expression of leadership into the community.

This sense of service has been stimulated by various impulses such as a religious and spiritual conviction, or a specific ideological orientation to women’s empowerment. Often these two aspects go hand in hand. The deep spiritual conviction of Dame Nita, who was christian came to the fore, so too did the conviction of Merlin Plunkett of Belize who is Hindu.

At another level, for example, in the case of Peggy Antrobus and Andaiye, training for leadership is rooted in a more ‘ideological’ perspective. In the case of Antrobus for example, the focus on organisation building can be seen as one way of working for women to themselves learn to serve their own cause, to build their own voices, to change their world. In the case of Andaiye, it is also based on a commitment to a way of serving, a way of providing information but generally enabling people to participate, doing it themselves.

This is an approach being learnt out of her own experience that also influences her conception of leadership:

“ It came through a number of things including what happened in Grenada. If you didn't come out of that and change....

....if you came out of Grenada without knowing that you could not have a style that was blind to what other people were thinking and feeling and where they wanted to go.. ..if you didn't believe that politics had to incorporate the personal and the emotional..

....if you didn't believe that leadership had to be something different from the way we conceived it then...”

Her unfinished ending suggested that her conclusions were still being weighed. She went on more to reflect on what she saw as her own shortcomings, but in the end agreed that the way she conceives leadership now is that it must be of service that is enabling. That conception of leadership speaks to the personality of the leader as to the methods of leading, and at heart the method has to be highly and deeply participatory. That is service that is not maternalistic but transformational.

Meeting practical and strategic needs.

The initiatives which were examined showed training focussed on meeting practical and strategic needs of women and their families and leadership that is stimulated in that context. For example, the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI), the Caribbean Association of Women Entrepreneurs (CAWE) and the National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) all address the core issue of women's livelihoods, of economic empowerment- both critical aspects of women's human rights.

Two of the entities- GWLI and NUDE approach the issue from the experiences of grassroots women and general working women; the issue is poverty and exclusion. CAWE 's approach is from the perspective from the top- of “wealth creation” by women. Reducing poverty among women and the building wealth creation into our hands are strategies that can help to build women's sense of autonomy, reduce and remove the harsh impact of the structural barriers that stand in the way to the development of women's leadership and decision-making role in the family, the community and in the nation.

In general, training that enhances women's abilities to confront and respond to the challenges of their lives through practical programmes in income generation or consciousness raising, might not be seen as transformational. We might have a different perspective on the more deliberate interventions, for example, on the programmes that were directed to enhance women's participation in the decision-making structures.

However, we need to assess this matter in the particular contexts in which they obtain. Take GRENCODA for example. For the particular woman, engaging in that project could well lay a valuable groundwork towards her autonomy and empowerment and therefore towards transformation. In such projects, to one degree or another, women's level of awareness, their self-esteem and activism could be nourished.

Beverly Anderson Manley in her presentation to the Symposium on the work of Dr. Peggy Antrobus, to which reference has already been made, spoke of the distinction between change and transformation. As she expressed it, change occurs predictably as part of everyday life. Transformation on the other hand, revealed and brought into being a future or state not seen before. This is indeed an important distinction to make and to hold, graphically illustrated in the caterpillar transforming into the butterfly. Another important dimension however, is the connection between change and transformation. In both, process is at work and it is the possibility for change that predisposes transformation. Therefore in change there are energies towards transformation.

At the individual level, and in practice, transformation demands a deeper engagement of the self in a dynamic and active relationship with one's Spiritual Source. It is that engagement that enables the individual to confront the personal and institutional barriers that would hold the individual (or the institution) onto the accustomed path. It therefore rests on cultivating and nurturing within the self as within the organisational setting, the values, attitudes and behaviours that deepen one's sense of empowerment and personal leadership potentials, qualities and responsibility for transformation.

Approaches to Transformational Leadership

We make a distinction between speaking about the qualities of transformational leadership and for transformational leadership. At our present stage this is an important distinction. To speak of qualities of TL, implies that transformational leadership is an accomplished fact; in other words, that it is a style of leadership that has ripened, with attributes tried and tested. To speak of qualities for TL, implies, a 'work in progress' type of leadership, manifesting qualities of a new vision, a process (implying experimentation) that is yet to come to fullness. It is this reality which showed itself in the fact that specific tendencies denoting transformational approaches to leadership were scattered across the initiatives and in the lives of the individuals. There is none perfect, no not one.

From these individuals and from the work of groups of persons in action, were identified the following attributes that are said to support the transformational leadership that is in the making. These we refer to as values for a transformational approach to leadership:

Values for a Transformational Approach to Leadership:

- the habit of reflection- to learn from one's actions and for action to be informed by information;
- linking with one's Spiritual Source;
- fearless pursuit of honesty in ourselves and in dealing with others;
- taking and exercising personal responsibility;
- simplicity of living;
- listening to and hearing others;
- acknowledging other people;
- empathy towards others;
- determination and commitment ;
- being rooted in ones cultural reality and context

These qualities for transformational leadership that were identified by various persons come out from the engagement with self and society: qualities of courage, strength of conviction, integrity, a sense of a vision, empathy, the mental stimulation of people, the stirring up of positive energy among people. Individuals were therefore defining a concept of leadership that first and foremost required that each person should take responsibility for adapting to the approaches towards that new expression of leadership.

These attributes spoke of connections ‘on the inside’; of the engendering of self-knowledge as the basis for action. It is in this context that women spoke of the experience of spirituality, of a relationship with the Divine, with Spirit. This was for many, the foundation of self-discovery, of growth and of leadership directed to sharing with others.

We see emerging from this foundation, developments towards social and institutional transformation. The idea that the manager must see himself/herself as a ‘worker’ is one that is transformational bearing in mind the reality of the labour market. This is the concept of the ‘team’, as opposed to the ‘boss’, and speaks to issues of equity and a sense of equality, including the practice of equality between women and men

The challenge will be to ‘train’ ourselves and each other into living these values privately and institutionally.

Ethics in Business

This is the tendency we see in the focus on ethics in business which emerge in the case of the JMMB and Liana Cane Interiors of Guyana. Again the new approaches are grounded in a sense of personal responsibility and bringing into the workplace and the ‘hard’ area of finance, and to mainstream in business, the ‘soft’ concepts of nurturing, caring and love; so-called, ‘feminine qualities’. And this extends to care of the environment. For taking account of economic and environmental sustainability as demonstrated in Guyana, is an important aspect of training for transformational leadership. It links the interests of the Amerindian family in the forests (who provides the basic raw material) with those of the worker in the family and the consumer in the city. These linkages also help to establish the rights of ownership among the indigenous peoples.

Confronting differences

The attempt to understand the out-workings of these qualities that support that new approach to leadership in our communities for a start, bring us face to face with the challenge of organising across differences of race, colour and class in the Caribbean. Differences in sexual orientation are hardly acknowledged in women’s movements or in the larger community in CARICOM Caribbean territories. Many persons will say that these are critical issues only for certain territories, because of their racial and ethnic composition, for example. While particular challenges might be more acutely felt in certain territories, it is true to say that how these issues are addressed have implications for the region as a whole. For example, organisational development of women’s movements in the Caribbean, rests on dealing with these and other aspects of difference

that are raised. And they will not be dealt with until we conceive the new cross-cultural relations.

The Challenge of Evaluating ‘the Change Process’.

Another challenge that emerges is that of developing the new content for training for transformational leadership as well as new approaches to evaluate different quality and levels of change in ourselves, relations and institutions.

One thing is clear and that is , we have to be prepared to ask new questions. For example, to take our first example of the **United Brotherhood of Time Spiritual School**: Are the individual members of Sister Cathy’s church aware that her main goal as their leader is for each of them to understand himself and herself? What are we to look at to see whether this ‘understanding of self’ is taking place? What do we use to measure in practical terms? How do we come to decide on what and how to measure? What will the results be in terms of changes in the Church itself, and the Church’s relationship within the wider community? And we could go on and on.

But this is just the beginning.

SECTION V **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

The following represents some of the areas within which possible options for action can be considered.

i. Linking with “Learning Communities”

One of the components of the Transformational Leadership Project was that ‘Learning Communities’ would be identified within which it was expected that some appropriate teachings/learnings processes were possible on the practice of transformational leadership.

In the present context, it is proposed that consideration be given to how best to ‘learn’ about the qualities and values for TL. It is important to consider how we best learn these qualities- that is the best research tools.

ii. Discourse among Informants Towards a Theory for Action

There should be an encounter among the participants identified in this study (among others) to meet in order to do the following:

- discuss some of the main issues of transformational leadership project that arise from the project to date;
- consider and put forward “a theory for action”, in Erna Brodber’s words, that would seek to assess and share experiences on the validity of our findings in the project overall, and how to develop action to advance the values in leadership that can lead to renewal, development and transformation.
- identifies some of the individuals and projects which permit learning at deeper levels;
- conduct exchanges among various clusters of projects /initiatives towards possible collaboration across the region;
- identify and agree on follow-up on projects/initiatives in the study that merit deeper attention.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ These could include selected participants in the Gender and Development Studies Course (Barbados), Women in Black, Women in the Non-Traditional Training in various territories.

iii. Bring the Public into the Discourse on Transformational Leadership Approaches - the Values for Leadership in the 21st Century.

iv. Promote Transformational Approaches to Leadership in the Home: Focus on Employer/Household Worker Relations.

There is also need to bring to the fore some of the challenging issues related to women's human rights and leadership in the Caribbean. In practical terms, transforming the condition and position of household workers by strengthening their organisational capacity and rights as workers should be considered a priority. UNIFEM could use its influence (e.g with ILO) to encourage the formulation of policy on work in this sector. The related issues of valuing of unremunerated work and of relations among women across the class divide, will also come onto the agenda.

A policy conference among the main stakeholders such as was held by WIN Belize could be a good way to start.

Our history of slavery and colonialism have brought certain deformities in our culture which need to be challenged and changed. We have to take on board the matter of "emancipation from mental slavery" and the implications of this for the negotiation of rights between the employer and employee in the setting of the household. Unless women can commit to work through these difficult relationships, that are both personal and structural, it is going to be extremely difficult to construct and advance the transformation which we claim.

iv. Promote a Caribbean Dialogue on Women Working Across Differences of Race and Class Towards Action-Research in Selected Territories to Facilitate Inter-Racial/Ethnic Collaboration.

It seems that the time is ripe for some serious sharing around challenges in organisational building among women looking at factors of race/ ethnicity and class .

This issue needs to be tied to political action to enable women to enlarge our citizenship rights and to work through strategies for widening and deepening our role in decision-making at the local and national levels. Countries to be involved could include Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname. (A small working group could be constituted to work on this).

vi Education and Training on Exposing the Gender System in Caribbean Women's History.

The search for a new definition and practice of leadership is rooted in the long history of our Caribbean peoples. If we examine this more closely, we will see elements of the

understandings that are evolving rooted in our diverse cultures. This is how we need to view our current struggle towards transformational leadership.

Women and men and children need to learn about this history. We have the experience and much of the resources to influence and utilise the proposed distance teaching programme which is to be implemented through the UWI network into one that can promote widely that knowledge of Caribbean women's history and culture. This is an important medium to use to include men and speak to how the gender system continues to perpetuate women's subordination and their own marginalisation from themselves.

We will be in a better position to define the ideology of our struggles as women when we understand our history and the tasks that it defines for us today.

vii. Strengthening Training Programmes for Women's Leadership.

Programmes which have explicitly sought to influence women's political leadership should be invited to a collaborative review to see how they can be collectively strengthened. Particular attention should be paid to how the programmes can integrate and support the promotion of the values and attitudes so far identified with building Transformational Leadership and sustain the dialogue on these issues.

The programmes of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Barbados; of the Jamaica Women's Political caucus; of the Women's Parliament Forum of Suriname and for Women in Local Government of Trinidad and Tobago among others, already have strong common purpose and content. The need to deepen gender training can be met in this context of collaboration.

ix. Mainstream the Involvement of Young Women.

Young women were visible in many of the projects and initiatives cited; in many instances, they were the main participants in 'formal' training courses. They need to be accorded the space to reflect their interests in the context of all issues under consideration. This requires that a proactive affirmative approach be taken to their participation.

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