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Women in Development Committee

Indiana University

Annual Report 1981-1982

The WID Committee at Indiana University continued its activities in the areas of networking and dissemination of information, particularly with regard to job and research opportunities. It also encouraged collaborative research projects involving both faculty and students. WID was especially active in the areas of research, curriculum, and conferences during the past year.

Research:

In the summer of 1981, a research team of 2 faculty and 4 students went to Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico to conduct research on Household Economic Strategies among the Isthmus Zapotec, a project funded by a NICIA grant of \$5000. In addition to this project which will be discussed below, both the students and the faculty were conducting research in areas important to the understanding of women's and men's roles in this rapidly changing area. One project, which will result in a dissertation, concerned the hammock-making business, one of the important cottage industries that follows the traditional pattern of economic cooperation. Another, also a dissertation, explored the importance of flowers and flower symbolism in Zapotec society especially as it illuminates male female relations and relations. Professor Della Collins Cook continued her research on fluxé, males who form a third gender identity, testing sociobiological and evolutionary theories. Anya Peterson Royce continued her research on patterns of marriage and family organization that will be part of a forthcoming book on Isthmus Zapotec social organization.

In the first semester of 1981, data were analyzed from the summer project and Royce completed the first article based on this research, "Isthmus Zapotec Households: Economic Responses to Scarcity and Abundance," Urban Anthropology 10 (3) (in press). The subject, set in a broader context, was the focus of an Indiana University Interdisciplinary Colloquium, "Responses to Scarcity and Abundance: Comparative Perspectives on Economy and Society," held April 20, 1982.

Recognition of outstanding research on the part of one of the MID community came in the form of the Esther Kinsley award for an outstanding Ph.D. dissertation that was given to Dr. Cynthia Pearlman for her dissertation, "Women and Men in Transition; The Iazatec Sierra". Another of our graduate students, Ms. Cathy Vinkler, continued her research on women in the Olinala, Guerrero Tacquerwork industry, supported by grants from the Interamerican Foundation and the Veigier-Gren Foundation. Ms. Rosanne Shapiro won a Sigma Xi fellowship for her summer research on women's roles among the Yucatec Maya.

#### Curriculum:

In the Spring of 1982, we had a Visiting Assistant Professor, Dr. Jeanette Sherbondy, who taught courses in Nutritional Anthropology and Agricultural Systems. Both in terms of the courses and the individual attention she provided to students interested in these areas, especially as they involve women, Sherbondy was a great asset to the MID program. Work also continues on developing modules on women in developing countries that could be used in courses not specifically on issues of women in development.

#### Conference and Research Colloquium:

The Indiana MID group hosted a conference, "Economic Roles of Women: The Latin American Perspective," April 15-17, 1982. The conference was supported

by part of the MUCIA grant that funded the Juchitán research, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Latin American Studies Program. The focus was a comparison of the research findings and methodologies of the Eastern Caribbean project, the Oaxaca project, and the Mexicali project. These projects were designed and carried out by WID groups within the MUCIA network. Related topics were the subject of presentations by Dr. Melody Trott, Office of Population, AID, Dr. Elyce Rotella, Department of Economics, Indiana University, Dr. Cynthia Pearlman, Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico (Las Cruces), and Dr. Claire Robertson, African Studies, Indiana University

The Interdisciplinary Research Colloquium mentioned above provided a context for comparing economic strategies of the Isthmus Zapotec with those of the emerging mercantile period in China and similar features of sixteenth century Spain.

#### Future Research:

As a result of ideas developed during the April WID conference at Bloomington, the Illinois WID group and the Indiana WID group collaborated on a research proposal, funded by MUCIA, to extend the collection of data on household structure and strategies to other world areas for comparative purposes. The initial funding supported the testing of survey instruments used in Juchitán in rural settings in the Philippines. In October I will go to Illinois to discuss the results of the comparison. The next area we will examine is Zambia where the University of Illinois already has ongoing research.