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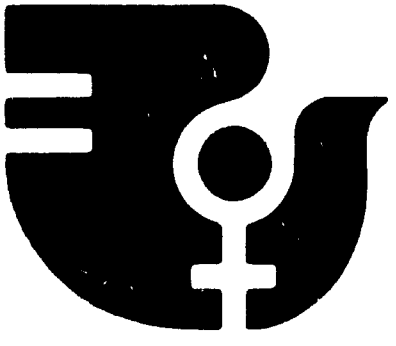

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CREATING A "WOMEN'S COMPONENT"

A CASE STUDY IN RURAL JAMAICA

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March 1981

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SUMMARY

This case study documents the design and creation of a "women's component" in the II Integrated Rural Development Project at Christiana, Jamaica. The project director, a Jamaican,[1] and the Rural Development Officer at the USAID mission in Kingston, Dr. H. Patrick Peterson, approached the Office of Women in Development at AID/Washington and asked for technical assistance in "doing something for the women." The invitation was open-ended, and did not prescribe ahead of time the substance of the women's component.

In March 1979, Dr. Elsa Chaney and Ms. Beverley Samuels began an "inquiry" among the women on the hillside farms in the project area, in close collaboration with Ms. Jasmine McPherson, public health nurse in the district who later would become coordinator of the IRDP women's activities. Ms. Samuels was the first (and at that time, the only) home extension officer. Thus, the goals and objectives of the women's unit were allowed to evolve, after many conversations with the farm women themselves.

In the next 11 months, the team formulated objectives for the future effort; prepared documents and job descriptions for the Ministry of Agriculture so that the project paper could be amended; recruited and trained in a one-month residential course a corps of young women, most of them from the surrounding area, to staff the women's component, and launched a program which involves the farm women in a "Family Food Production Plan" -- nutrition and health education through intensive vegetable gardening. Martha W. Lewis, the co-author of this case study, became involved during the weeks prior to the training course (which took place in September, 1979); she designed the garden and selected the project vegetables, chosen to complement the starchy cash crops in order to provide a complete diet. Twenty-one Jamaican experts and four U.S. consultants worked for periods varying from two or three days to two months on various facets of the effort: planning for the component; the training course; the followup.

The authors returned to Jamaica in September of 1980 to assess the program's progress. Nine months have passed since the launching of the unit, and 540 women and their families are developing vegetable gardens, following the Family Food Production Plan. The unit has 20 officers, who now are moving

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[1] The project directors changed between Chaney's first visit and the implementation of the women's component. Both directors, however, supported the effort. Dudley Reid is the present project director, under the Jamaica Ministry of Agriculture.

from one-to-one efforts into group work as more of the local farm women become active in the program.

Most of the new IRDP women's officers are very young, with no post-secondary education except for the training course of one month and inservice sessions (held in the first months for one-half day per week, now twice monthly). But they have matured and acquired a professional air on the job. In the selection of the trainees, emphasis was put on recruiting young women from the project area with the academic credentials necessary to be eligible for career mobility within the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Service, once the project has ended. This policy has paid off. The young women appear comfortable in and knowledgeable about the community; they seem to have its respect; they are growing in their jobs and profess to love their work.

During our September visit, the authors also were invited to assist the staff in developing several new phases of the "women's component." Among the initiatives under discussion and approved in preliminary fashion (pending funding) are the creation of a Farm Women's Centre to serve as the focal point for organizing the women's efforts; the transformation of a small craft workshop into an income-earning agro-craft industry for women in the project area, and the initiation of a child development centre in the project. This centre would take the women's activities several steps beyond nutrition, emphasizing early childhood education and the importance of creative play and mental stimulation -- as well as such notions as responsible parenthood, the role of the father in childrearing, and the importance of spacing children.

Invitation to the Office of Women in Development, USAID:
"Help Us Do Something for the Women"

Shortly after assuming his new post in the fall of 1978, as Rural Development Officer for USAID/Kingston, Dr. H. Patrick Peterson met with Arvonne Fraser, coordinator of the Women in Development office, and Elsa Chaney, then deputy coordinator. He proposed that the office design and provide seed money for a women's component in the II Integrated Rural Development Project with headquarters at Christiana, Jamaica -- a joint venture of the Government of Jamaica's Ministry of Agriculture and USAID.

The II IRDP covers the Two Meetings and Pindars River watersheds, about ten square miles, in the mountainous center of Jamaica, a region of small -- mostly very poor -- hillside farms. Designed to improve the lives of 5,000 rural families in the project areas, the II IRDP will run until 1982, with a possible fifth year extension.

Peterson was concerned that this model project, one of USAID's major efforts in the Caribbean, ought to include attention to women beyond those who were farm operators (and also to women farm operators who often have the double burden of carrying on the farming, and the work of the household and childrearing as well).[2] The project paper made scant mention of, or provision for women's interests and contributions. Peterson was convinced that the IRDP would remain strictly a soil conservation project unless women were involved in the planning and implementation

[2]In Jamaica, some 22 percent of the small farms are run by women. In some cases, women own the farms. More often, male partners leave their farms seasonally for wage-labor in agriculture; engage in wage labor as their principal occupation while their wives farm, or may be "long gone" to England, Canada or the United States.

of such elements as health, nutrition, education, housing, in order to make the project truly "integrated" in fact as well as in name. No prescriptions were laid down ahead of time on the substance of the women's component; the goals and objectives were allowed to evolve after many conversations with the farm women themselves.

Peterson's conviction was that a large project still in its initial stages would be flexible enough to accommodate efforts to integrate women. He suggested that the Women in Development Office collaborate on the following efforts:

- An initial, short term visit to learn about the project and to collaborate in planning a women's component;
- A longer period of approximately four months to assist in the implementation;
- A followup (to begin approximately six months after the initiation of the women's component) to assess progress and to report in detail on the results. The account of "building a women's component," it was agreed, might then be used when the project is replicated in Jamaica and later, with suitable modifications, might also assist planners in designing women's components in other integrated rural development projects.

All three phases were carried out on the schedule suggested. In March of 1979, Chaney made the initial planning visit, working close with Jasmine McPherson, the public health nurse in the region, and Beverley Samuels, the first (and at the time, the only) extension officer with special responsinilities for the women. In June of 1979, Chaney returned to lead the implementation effort, which extended to October. Then in September of 1980, Chaney and Lewis went back to Jamaica for the followup -- this Case Study is the result.

The II Integrated Rural Development Project is primarily -- and will remain -- a soil conservation project. This part of Jamaica shares with some 30 other watershed areas the common problem of tremendous soil erosion. The

principal project activity is to analyze the soil and crop mix, farm by farm, for those who want to participate. There is great interest in the project, once the extension staff members get beyond a certain skepticism on the part of the farmers who have seen more than one rural project come and go. Many farmers are older and sophisticated -- they have spent long years away from Jamaica, in some cases, in London, Toronto or New York, and have come back to farm the family land.

The II IRDP hopes to reach the poorest farmers[3] -- and most are poor in the Christiana and Kellits areas -- in three main programs. First, soil analysis and treatment, which can range all the way from intricate terracing to simply slowing the rate at which water drains off. Secondly, crop analysis, that is, what is being grown and can changes be made that would bring in more income to raise the standard of living. And third, credit to finance soil conservation treatments and changes in cropping practices.

Farmers are expected to do at least part of the work themselves. By the end of four years, it is estimated that 70 percent of the farm families in the region will be participating in the project. Many project staff expect to move on to other watersheds to help replicate the effort, and for this reason there is a great deal of emphasis on staff development and training.

The II IRDP is part of a larger Jamaican government effort to improve the standard of living of the country's poorest 150,000 farmers by increasing their

[3]The immediate group to be served includes the 4,000 farmers of the two areas, principally those with holdings of 5 acres or less, but also including some whose low income puts them in the target group (even though their holdings may be larger than 5 acres). Per capita income of the potential project participants is estimated at less than $200 per year (in 1976 prices) (Project Paper: 12). Also included are some 1,000 landless rural families.

incomes and providing improved roads, housing, electricity and water. Some 80 percent of small farmers in Jamaica cultivate lands on steep hillsides, and thus soil conservation is the necessary focus around which other components of the project must revolve. Without careful restoration and conservation of the soil for the next generations, Jamaica will be increasingly unable to feed its people, and agriculture may well be permanently impaired, if not altogether doomed.

Small farmers in Jamaica produce most of the domestic food crops and about 25 percent of agricultural exports. They represent about one-half of all farmers, although they occupy only 13 percent of the acreage devoted to agriculture. About 60 percent of the Jamaican population lives in rural areas, and 30 percent of the total workforce is in agriculture. One-quarter of the farmers are women (USDA 1978: 74, 89, 94).

Women play an important role in the rural economy of Jamaica. Throughout the island, in addition to performing traditional household tasks, they also actively participate in agriculture. A survey carried out in the project indicated that 22 percent of the holdings are managed principally by women (Project Paper: 56). Even when they are not the principal farm operators, however, spouses of male farmers participate regularly in farm production activities. In the survey, 47 percent of the male farmers interviewed said that their spouses assisted them in most farming operations, while another 21 percent reported collaboration at least in planting and harvesting (Ministry of Agriculture 1977: Table 156). Many other women participate in marketing -- 83 percent of the "higglers" or market traders of Jamaica are women (Smikle and Taylor 1977: 32).

It is interesting to note the high degree of agreement between men and

and women on whether spouses are consulted when major changes (for example, in crops or farm practices) are made. In the farmer survey mentioned above, 64.9 percent of the male respondents said they usually consulted their wives on such changes. In a 10 percent sample of female spouses of participants in the farmer survey (male spouses of women farmers were not included), 65 percent of the women also reported that their husbands consulted them on major farm decisions (Ministry of Agriculture 1977: Table 171; Project Paper: Appendix R-3).

In spite of the fact that Jamaican women already are heavily involved in most key farm operations, as the Project Paper notes

> little has been done to draw them more directly into the change process. Of those extension activities which do exist, the wide majority are directed towards the men. Only occasionally is assistance designed for women and that which is constructed (sic) usually deals with home economics topics (Project Paper: 57).

Phase I: Planning the Women's Component

The project had been underway for five months when Chaney arrived in Christiana for the first planning of the women's activities. There is a bit of "campus atmosphere" around the IRDP. Most staffmembers are young, have had little practical experience before their arrival (but are put through month-long training courses in their specialities soon after they begin work), and in the main are recent graduates of the Jamaica School of Agriculture -- a three-year post-secondary training school. These young people are backed up by technical experts, assisted by American counterparts in credit, marketing, soil conservation, agricultural extension and horticulture. In March of 1979, as we began planning for the women's activities, 11 of 68 professionals on the staff were women -- predominantly working

as agricultural extension officers; one was a soils scientist and another a water expert. It was not possible to determine to what extent these women were aware of the farm wives and their needs -- one agricultural extension officer did tell us that she always made a point of talking with them. However, we found several good allies among these women, and several made it a point to sit in on some of the training sessions for the women's component officers during the following summer. One ag officer thought seriously about transferring to the home extension service, but in the end she did not do so.

The IRDP already was highly visible in March. Morning and evening big pick-up trucks rumbled up and down the hills, around sharp curves (one called "Shake Hand" because it's so tight that two drivers can reach across the intervening hillside), loaded with young blue-jeaned men and women who keep up a fast-paced repartee -- dropping in and out of the local patois (incomprehensible to us). If extension officers, they will help a farmer draw up a farm plan (the basic project document), develop documentation for a credit application, or advise on farming practices. If conservation officers, they might help lay out a terrace or check on land treatment work in progress.

The first priority in the planning was to go out to talk with the farm women. It was a great advantage that the project advisors believed in this approach; they did not want outsiders to come in and impose their own ideas. Rather, they wanted us to act as a kind of catalyst, and to work primarily with the two Jamaican women who had been hired with the title "Home Extension Officer," to find out what women in the project wanted. The adult farm women in the IRDP are in two categories: the female farm operators and the wives of male farm operators. In contrast to many

rural development efforts that ignore women's role in agriculture, the project included those women who were nominal heads-of-household and were doing the farming. An analysis of Farm Plans showed a proper proportion of the participating farm operators were women.

It was the wives of the male farmers about whom the project leaders felt most concerned as to whether the project was reaching them. They were also concerned that the project was not addressing problems of the female farm operators related to their responsibilities for running their households and caring for their children -- those who work a "double day." The challenge was to figure out how we could link in these women. All along we emphasized that we did not want to create a little sub-project off on its own: we were very aware that building an effective women's component meant linking the women to the main project goals and activities.

Because of government emphasis on production of staples for market sale and crops for export, the IRDP project had an almost exclusive "outward" focus. As noted above, the small farm sector in Jamaica plays an important role in the economoics and politices of the country. Small farmers provide a great deal of the food for the cities, and food is a political as well as an economic issue. Jamaica spends large amounts of foreign exchange on food imports, and self-sufficiency in food is a recurring theme among government officials and politicians. The smallholder sector also earns foreign exchange by producing one-quarter of Jamaica's exports, principally bananas, nutmeg and allspice.

It soon became evident to us that the outward focus of the project had obscured consideration of the 5,000 project families themselves. Many of the needs of the people in Two Meetings and Pindars had been overlooked in the concentration

upon how much those people were expected to contribute to the rest of Jamaica. Of course, the project paper assumed that benefits would "trickle down" eventually, as incomes increased and the standard of living improved.

We took this situation as our starting point. We asked, "What about the families here? What are they going to eat? What do they eat now?" It didn't take us very long to find out that the people were eating part of their starchy cash crops, and almost nothing else: yams, cassava, Irish potatoes, bananas, platains, bread fruit. This diet was what the children got twice a day. For many, the first two meals of the day were even more restricted: to bananas and bush tea. In the evening, they might sometimes have a meal with a little protein, perhaps a stew with chicken backs.

How does this translate in terms of nutrition? It means that 20 percent of the children under 4 years of age in Jamaica are significantly underweight for their age. Mortality rates for 1-to-4-year olds are twice that of Barbados, Puerto Rico and Trinidad-Tobago. Forty-five percent of women are anemic; weights and heights of school children from low-income families are significantly lower than those of children from middle- and upper-class families, and agricultural workers lose weight during periods of heavy labor (USDA 1978: 218-19).

These are all indicators of definite dietary deficiencies. We know from a growing number of studies that consumption in rural households is not necessarily related to production. Even if small farms increase their production of crops for sale, the proceeds will not necessarily be invested in better food for the family. Our aim was to incorporate into the over-all project, for which increased production was the major goal, activities for women that also would be productive and that

would address the nutrition/food consumption issue. As a direct response to this question, we invented the "Family Food Production Program" which is vegetable gardening by another name. We wanted to include the idea of "production" because we thought it essential to underline that the farm women were not knocking on the door of the project director and demanding, "Give me, give me," but that they had something to contribute to the project, that they could help further the project's goals.

The Family Food Production Program is a continuous rotation of nine nutritious vegetables which, if planted in the recommended cycle and combined properly with the starchy foods, will give a family good nutrition with only occasional animal protein.[5] The vegetable garden design is based on intensive gardening/raised bed techniques. Flat land is scarce in the IRDP, farms are small and terracing is expensive so the principles inherent in intensive gardening apply as well to the cash-farming activities. As the vegetables are intended for family consumption, the garden is designed to produce some food for the pot every day rather than large, one-time harvests.

Only nine vegetables were chosen for the plan in order to demonstrate

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[5]We are asked frequently why we did not include rabbits, chickens and pigs in the Family Food Production Program. For one thing, nutrition experts say that if cereals and staples such as yam are eaten in proper combinations with vegetables/legumes, people need little animal protein. For another, we felt that it would be difficult enough to teach the new officers the rudiments of health, nutrition and vegetable gardening in one month, without taking on small animals as well. Rabbits are difficult to raise -- the project rabbits all died of a mysterious disease one night, and the women themselves complained that building dog-proof rabbit hutches was difficult and expensive. As for chickens, commercial feed is essential to fatten them for eating purposes, making it cheaper for families to buy frozen chicken backs and wings in the market. What is useful for a household is to raise a pig or two, and to have a few chickens around for egg production. Many of the farm women already do this.

how to get the most nutrition from a small space with moderate effort, and to simplify such gardening practices as rotation for plant nutrition, and pest disease and weed control. Before making the selections, the local diet was analysed to evaluate its contribution towards adequate nutrition. Then vegetables were chosen which if grown in a continuous cycle would complement the basic diet. A key aspect of the system is continuous planting and transplanting to get maximum production; when a vegetable's production declines, it is removed and transplants of another unrelated vegetable replace it, thereby assuring greater production in that space and rotation for disease control.

Other requirements for selection were that the vegetable would grow well in the region; would be a heavy producer within a small space; could be harvested over a period of time, and was a familiar food.[6] It should be stressed that the idea of complementarity with locally-grown or imported staples and cereals requires that selection of vegetables for Family Food Production Programs be tailored to each country and region. After much discussion, we decided to "control" the production of vegetables, at least at first, buying seeds in bulk and repackaging them -- participants can get ample seeds for a garden for one Jamaican dollars.

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[6] Not all selections met every requirement. For example, pumpkin needs space to run, but grows easily, is a popular food, and contributes crucial Vitamin A. Okra does not make an important contribution to nutrition, but is relatively free of disease and pests and, if harvested regularly, produces abundantly -- thereby forcing the family to consume it frequently. One new vegetable -- kale -- was included because of its very high nutritional contribution, needed to complete the required diet; moreover, kale grows well in Jamaica and the people like greens. Family Food Production Program vegetables are calaloo (a green-leafed amaranth "spinach"), carrots, kale, okra, pak choi (a nutritious Chinese cabbage), peanuts, pumpkin, red pea (a small kidney bean eaten green or dried), and tomato.

IRDP senior staff, members of the U.S. advisory team and Jamaican and North American consultants collaborated in the elaboration of the Family Food Production Program and additional women's component goals (see Appendix I). Several of the consultants were home economists; the Women in Development/Home Extension Unit is an effort, however, which goes well beyond the traditional boundaries of this discipline. Home economics brings some positive contributions: several of the women's activities could be built on a body of knowledge and techniques that have been tried all over the world. Particularly noteworthy were the contributions to the training course -- outstanding sessions on how adults learn, on teaching techniques and tools, and exercises on creating low-cost, nutritious meals on minimum budgets. But the disadvantage is that the concerns of U.S. home economists are too narrowly focussed for the reality of poor hill women, many of them female heads of households.

The creative tensions of social scientists, agricultural technicians and home economists working in an interdisciplinary, intercultural team resulted, we believe, in a women's program which is highly innovative. In some settings, however, one might consider replicating such a component without the burden of the home economics label; at the same time, so far as the Jamaica IRDP is concerned, the label provided a useful cover for enhancing the women's productivity by giving them agricultural extension and assistance on their crops, along with more traditional elements of nutrition, health and child care.[7] Certainly none of the highly-qualified home economists recruited as consultants ever suggested that the women's activities

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[7]The authors have had the opportunity to suggest adaptation of the Family Food Production Program in another Caribbean country where home economics is unknown. In this case, the first workers hired for the women's activities are two young women trained in agricultural extension.

should include anything remotely related to cake decoration, crocheting or macramé -- sometimes, unfortunately, associated with home economics. After some initial questioning of the idea of women as food producers and processors, as well as food preparers, they embraced the Family Food Production Program enthusiastically.

Phase II: First Steps in Implementation

As coordinator of the planning team, Chaney arrived back in Jamaica four months later. During the first few weeks, she and the planning team were obliged to take on some preliminary bureaucratic chores -- probably inevitable in an exercise of this kind. They prepared documents for the Ministry of Agriculture, necessary for approval of the Women in Development component since it was to be an "add-on," not originally contemplated in the project paper. They wrote job descriptions for the officers of the new unit, since these, too, had to be approved by the Jamaican equivalent of the civil service. They drafted a budget and worked out with project personnel how the unit would be structured.

One decision was made early: that the women's activities, as much as possible, would not be isolated or administratively separate from other project operations. Rather, the new women officers would work out of the twenty subwatershed headquarters into which the II IRDP is divided. They would function as full team members, on a par with the soil conservation and agricultural extension personnel. Thus, if their education and experience so qualified them, they could be chosen as subwatershed team leaders. The idea of integrating the Women in Development/Home Extension women into the regular staffing pattern -- rather than placing them in a separate "service" -- was arrived at after much discussion. The officers were

to report not the the Home Extension coordinator (who would function as a trainer and resource person, rather than a supervisor), but to the team leader and assistant project director in each watershed. (This feature has probably been the one to function least well -- see Accomplishments and Assessments below.)

During the preliminary weeks, most energies were dedicated to planning the one-month training course for future women's unit officers. Unexpectedly, time also had to be spent recruiting the students. In the months between March and July, several project officers had been designated to get the word out, particularly in the Christiana-Kellits regions. In the press of other responsibilities, however, they had not managed to assemble a trainee group. Rather than lose momentum, we decided with the project's leaders to recruit on a crash basis. The project director was confident that there would be a good selection since even in the rural areas of Jamaica, there are many high school graduates among the young women and very few career opportunities for them.[8]

He was right! After a few days of driving around the countryside in two teams -- where we contacted school officials, officers of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, and left notices with the postmistresses at the small postal stations scattered over the project area -- the word got out. Prospective trainees began streaming into project headquarters in Christiana to fill out application forms. Two "open house" days brought fifty of the best to Christiana, and the project training officer, Levenia Hines, made the final selection of 34 trainees -- the number being dictated by the budget. Thus the training course itself became a screening device;

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[8] An interesting -- and saddening -- sidelight on the situation of young women in the rural areas: many more than could possibly be accommodated in our program had the proper end-of-school exams and personal qualifications.

there would be twenty positions available, and during the month, the trainees could decide whether they wanted to work with the rural poor, while the Jamaican staff would be making a preliminary selection of the best. So far as the local girls were concerned, most of them were from poor families. Their inclusion assured that the first workers would know the problems of the women from the best possible perspective -- their own experience. In order to have some officers with more training, however, we chose five graduates of the Jamaica School of Agriculture's home economics course who were just leaving school as the training course was about to commence. This lead to some complications, as will be detailed in the account of the training course below. Adding to the reality-based selection process, two of those chosen were older girls (but not much older) who were single mothers.

Planning for the training course was a collaborative effort; the ideas and initiatives generated -- and the accomplishments -- owe much to other persons. Initial curriculum for the training course was worked out by Helen Strow, International Programs Officer for the American Home Economics Association, who came to Jamaica for a planning trip in July, then returned in September for the training course. Strow was responsible for recruiting the U. S. faculty for the training course, while Chaney spent a week contacting and interviewing Jamaican resource persons. Those participating in the planning and training were 60 percent Jamaican (see Appendix II for a list of all those who participated). Many valuable contributions to the planning were made by Dr. Jennie Kitching, director of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Martha Lewis also arrived early in order to make preparations for the gardening sequence in the course.

The recruitment in July of Terry Newburn, a qualified professional home

economist who had, moreover, worked among the rural poor in the midwest, added greatly to the planning and training efforts, as well as to assuring that the thread of continuity would not be broken (after the course, Newburn had to carry on alone because it took several more months for the designated leader of the women's component, Jasmine McPherson, to secure her secondment from the Health Ministry).[9]

As part of Lewis' preparations, she worked with two local farm women to plant demonstration gardens on their land. Thus, seeds would have germinated and plants would be up in time for field trips by the students in the training course. It was not possible to build up the soil of those sites in the few weeks available, so Lewis devised several strategems to work up the soil and force the plant growth.[10] Rapid growth and heavy production in the demonstration gardens impressed the neighborhoods where they were planted, and requests for gardens were coming into the project before the course got underway.

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[9] Newburn was the wife of the U.S. Advisory Team's leader; her recruitment underscored the good sense of incorporating the talents and skills of professionals who are available because they happen to be the wives (or husbands) of project personnel.

[10] Some of these strategems may be worth recounting because they illustrate the improvisations that sometimes are necessary when time is short. By using bags of chicken manure, available from the project's demonstration farm, and generously layering it, then covering it with dirt before planting the seeds, Lewis gave the gardens the look of good, healthy, organic soil. To demonstrate starting seedlings and growing transplants using cheap, available materials (and to push them to be ready for showing to the trainees), she soaked seeds in water, then planted them in cereal boxes with one side cut out and gently warmed them in the oven to hasten germination. Our apartment hotel livingroom had to be shared with the Lewis' cereal box "flats." Seedlings were later transplanted into plastic sandwich bags and paper milk cartons. Potting soil was scavenged from rich, black topsoil left by bulldozers cutting for a new road, and was sterilized by baking in the hotel apartment kitchen's oven.

Phase II: Training Course for Extension Officers

In spite of sixteen days of almost continuous rain, a well-planned four weeks' course was carried out with no attrition among the students -- although the 34 trainees returned to their homes, sometimes four or five hours away by bus, on weekends. (The fact that there would be jobs for many of the trainees at the end of the course was, no doubt, a strong incentive for staying.) Sessions were held in a large, barn-like meeting room attached to a training center where young women and men prepared for work in hotels and restaurants (the IRDP project inherited this school, as well as the craft workshop mentioned in the introduction). These students prepared and served lunch for our trainees. The building was situated in the project's motor pool compound, a bustling and noisy atmosphere. Instructors had to cope with the roaring of novice drivers practicing in caterpillar tractors.

There were other difficulties which we learned simply to take in stride -- since there was no alternative site for the course. The classroom had only a wrought iron gate to close against the outside world, and walls did not meet the roof. Distractions multiplied from heavy downpours on the metal roof periodically drowning out all human sounds and putting out the electricity; from the high spirits of the hotel students in the next room, and from the interplay between our trainees and young motorpool workers finding things to do near the gate of a room filled with lively young women.

During the week, trainees lived in a comfortable small hotel near the training center. A faculty member stayed there almost every night to participate in group games and singing, to be available for talks and to encourage mixing. A few evening classes also were held in the hotel when speakers from Kingston could

not make it out to Christiana (a two-hour, hard drive) during the day. Graduates of the Jamaica School of Agriculture, who considered themselves to be superior in training and sophistication -- and first in line for the job placements -- at first held themselves aloof from the local girls, even sitting apart at their own table.

The difficulty evolved because we were required at the last minute to take all twelve of the year's Jamaica School of Agriculture graduates into the course, even though only five had been chosen. We never did find out why -- a call from the Ministry simply ordered us to accept them -- although we speculated it was because the Ministry did not have money to employ them in its own extension service and wanted to "store" them for another month until funds were available. As a consequence, we had six or seven older girls who perhaps, at least part of the time, wished they were elsewhere -- and a city/country girl split to overcome. Not all the JAS girls were from the city, of course, but they had trained in Spanish Town, just outside Kingston, and had tasted city life. The split extended even to the lengths that the city girls would not dance to reggae records during the recreation periods, since they considered Jamaica's indigenous music passé and wanted an exclusive diet of disco. It took a great deal of patient effort, particularly during the social times, on the part of faculty and Jamaican staff before friendships started developing across group lines.

From the above, the reader can guess that all did not go smoothly -- nor did we really expect that it would. Two crises during the first week were solved by turning the problems over to the trainees themselves. A walkout at lunchtime developed over the sandwich menu -- a cultural blooper on our part because the students wanted the hot meal at noon that they were used to, as well as the heavy

breakfasts and dinners they were served at the hotel every day. A creative solution was achieved by challenging the walkout leaders to plan menus within the budget available, telling them it would be good experience because in their work they would often be restrained from ideal solutions by budgetary limitations. The second crisis developed when students were to return to their homes the first weekend. The group erupted, with all hands participating in an intensive debate on the best routes -- and the cost -- to reach each destination. Then and there, we turned over to the students the task of organizing the procedure, setting fair allowances and dispensing the funds.

The training course concentrated on the use of non-formal extension teaching techniques, and on principles of nutrition and health, and of vegetable gardening. There were exercises in breaking down a body of information into small sections around which lesson plans could be developed for the farm women with whom the trainees would soon be working; workshops on constructing visual aids from simple, locally-available materials; practice home visits, and lectures on theories of how adults learn and techniques for teaching them. There was instruction on Jamaica's nutritional problems and possible solutions, as well as on basic nutrition concepts, dealing with food myths and planning low-cost meals. Sessions were devoted to the theories and practices in intensive vegetable gardening and the Family Food Production Plan, and there were field trips to see the gardens which Lewis had arranged to plant before the opening of the course -- fortunately, both had germinated well, and there were healthy plants of all the vegetables to observe.

There was never enough time in the course to cover everything in sufficient depth. Even then, we had to resist pressures to load the schedule with all sorts of additional topics which observers suggested ought to be included. A one-month

course means only twenty actual training days, and the fragility of the instruction subsequently has been augmented by frequent inservice training sessions since the first new officers were hired.

Accomplishments and Assessment

The training course for future women's unit officers ended with ceremony, as all such enterprises do in Jamaica. Students decorated their somewhat dingy premises with bright posters (made in the course) and flowers. At the "graduation," they put on the best skits, demonstrated visual aids, read poems and presented gifts to the faculty. The U.S. Ambassador and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture presented certificates. "Miss Minnie" (Minnie Clarke, local councilwoman) came with local craft souvenirs for the U.S. coordinators. A source of wisdom on vegetable gardening and Jamaican customs in the planning phase, Miss Minnie sometimes audited a course session when her busy schedule of parish council work, farming and political party activities allowed.

At course's end, students were ranked numerically from 1 through 34 as an aid for the future hiring process. The evaluation was based on course work and on interviews by the Jamaican staff. The U.S. consultants designed the evaluation, but were careful to leave all the personnel decisions to the Jamaican project leaders. The pool since has grown smaller -- some of the trainees got other jobs, one graduate migrated to Canada with her family, and two of those hired did not work out as officers and were replaced by others lower down on the hiring roster. A second training course to replenish the pool has been scheduled for June of 1981.

After the course was over, the original two officers had to carry on the

women's program until money was available and the full complement could be hired. They worked under the guidance of Terry Newburn, the home extension advisor; somewhat inappropriately (because she was supposed to be the counterpart of, not the coordinator), she had to assume the supervisory role until the designated coordinator, district nurse Jasmine McPherson, finally was seconded to the project. Her transfer from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Agriculture took an unexpected eight months. McPherson came on duty officially in August of 1980, but she had been close to all phases of the program from the interviewing of women on their hillside plots. The wait illustrates one difficulty in "add ons" -- both the Ministries of Agriculture and Public Service, and in McPherson's case, the Ministry of Health, had to concur on the initiation of the unit -- and in the case of Agriculture, had to come up with the funds to hire the new officers since the Women in Development funding ended with the training course (a condition of the funding had been that it would be "seed money," and that regular project funds would be utilized after the officers began their work).

October to February was a valuable time of experiment for Newburn and the two original officers, as they waited for the others to join the project. They also had an opportunity to work out plans for the regular training days which, as noted above, have supplemented the first course as new officers have been hired.

In February of 1980, the first ten of the course participants began work. Most of the new home extension officers are very young (Juanita, designated "course baby" by the other participants has just turned seventeen) with no post-secondary education except for the IRDP training course. For some of the young women, there have been problems of status during the first months. They were placed in the

subwatershed offices with the expectation that they would be treated as full team members. However, several felt that they were ignored or depreciated in the first several months; for example, some had to fight for transportation to their day's work site when the agricultural extension or conservation officers felt that their needs should come first. Many of the women's activities officers are employed as "agricultural assistant," the lowest rung on the Ministry of Agriculture's career ladder, because they have not been graduated from a post-secondary school; their lower education level may have been a factor in their own and the other officers' eyes.

By our September 1980 visit, however, most officers felt they were better accepted. Their participation in the Agricultural Show had impressed project people. Vegetable gardens were popular in the communities, and the officers were growing in confidence and competence. Blue-denim shoulder bags with "IRDP" in red letters worked as an identification badge, helping those women who wanted to start gardens to seek out the officers for assistance. We also observed farmers, both male and female, coming out to ask the Women in Development unit officers for information on other aspects of the IRDP program. One officer speculated that farmers, if they were unsure of themselves, might find it easier to approach a woman officer than a man. The women's unit staff appeared comfortable in their role as respresentatives of the project, and given their youth, brief training and short period of experience on the job, were surprisingly mature and professional in their manner.

While they have grown in experience and competence, some officers were adhering all too faithfully to the original garden design, missing opportunities for creative solutions in site placement problems, or learning from experimentation

observation. On the other hand, some were branching out and breaking new ground. For example, Linneth Williams helped the mistress of a pre-primary school, operated on the porch of the teacher's house, to start a school garden in her yard. Then Linneth worked out recipes for the garden's produce to make a noon meal for the children. Beverley Samuels, the first officer in the Pindars River region, already has moved into group work because she cannot keep up with the demand for individual instruction -- a planned step forward which other officers soon will be taking. Such progression also will take the officers organically into an important activity -- assisting the farm women to lay the groundwork for organizing themselves. [11]

By September of 1980, 20 home extension officers were on duty and the coordinator had been in place for 2 months. Despite many months without a full complement of officers, the tally of achievement appears excellent: 540 gardens have been started, and a number are in the second harvest cycle; 4207 home visits were recorded; a popular exhibit of the energy-efficient Lorena stove was mounted at the annual national Agricultural Show; beginnings with group work are being made.

Measuring change will be difficult. Efforts to survey for baseline data on family production and consumption patterns foundered -- no person competent to design and administer a survey was available at the proper time the survey should have been carried out. In a second attempt, the officers asked the farm women to recall all food eaten by the family in the previous 24 hours; there were, however,

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[11] Women in the IRDP areas are not organized into groups for any kinds of women's activities, except those related to the thriving churches. They do collaborate informally in their neighborhoods, as we describe below. Some women are active in community organizations; for example, in the Jamaica Agricultural Society, where the secretaries (but seldom presidents) often are women, and a good proportion of the members in some groups are women.

intense negative reactions to the questions, and the officers themselves expressed strong distaste for making the survey. They thought the survey was unreliable in any case because it was unlikely that true answers would be given if the family were poor and had little food.

Measurement of production and income conservation also would be difficult. Some women are selling surpluses, some give the extra to neighbors. There is a strong reciprocity system -- a form of social insurance -- among the women in these rural neighborhoods, in which they help each other in different ways. Many goods and services are exchanged without cash entering the transaction.

In spite of accomplishing a relatively large number of tasks with a short period, there were some weaknesses in the team effort. Greater attention should have been given to the overall status and situation of women in the project area and in Jamaica. One session was provided on women's particular problems and contributions. Perhaps this was all the students could have absorbed, but probably there should have been more. An invitation to the Women's Bureau to give a session on women in Jamaica could not be accepted because of the full schedule of the Women's Bureau representative assigned to the region.

There also was a certain resistance to putting emphasis on women's particular problems and perspectives. This was the case particularly of the home economists on the team, perhaps because home economists still work mainly within a family or household unit framework, with the implicit assumption that the family is composed of mother, father (present) and their children. In Jamaica, however, according to the 1970 census, the incidence of the female-headed household is 30 percent.

Overall, however, we feel satisfied that of several possible emphases for the first year of the women's component, we chose an important set of activities in the Family Food Production Program and nutrition activities. As Uma Lele (1975) has shown in her extensive survey of rural development projects, consumption in rural households is not necessarily enhanced by increased income from cash crops. On the contrary, there now is strong evidence of links between what a household produces and what it consumes. Fresh vegetables, fruits and supplemental animal protein, often are expensive, and are available only in distant markets -- a long walk up and down hills in the glaring sun. Whether the cash crops are commodities such as tobacco and cotton, or food crops such as yam, sugar cane or cassava, Lele's study shows that extra family income from improved farm practices often will not be spent on family nutrition, but on "empty" calories, alcohol or transistor radios. Besides Lele's data, we can cite other studies demonstrating the same tendencies (Kumar 1977; Zalla 1979). The first study shows that household gardens substantially improved the diet of rural families in India; the latter that shifting land from food crops to coffee in northern Tanzania was accompanied by a decline in caloric intake.

Replication

The Jamaica II IRDP was an appropriate place for demonstrating the strategy of "adding a women's component," because the thrust of this project is towards solving the basic and universal problems that all developing countries face -- and that development efforts are trying to alleviate. The first and most obvious of these is the need for increased food production. Soil conservation, credit and marketing systems, and all the other components of the project are directed toward that end.

Planners, recognizing the centrality of women's role in the production of food, particularly smallholder and family food production, developed IRDP women's program to provide technical assistance to support that role. Nutrition education contributes a skill so that women can perform that role more competently.

The problem of food for farm families exists in almost every agricultural and rural development project, as pressures to increase production to meet growing urban demand and a country's need for foreign exchange push production into crops and systems not suited to the food needs of the small farmers. Moreover, studies of rural people migrating to seek wage employment show patterns of women staying behind to hold the farm together. Development programs among smallholders where migration is a factor must recognize women's part in this survival strategy.

The Family Food Production Program with its production and nutrition/health education emphases brings women into the central thrust of development programs, thereby more truly integrating all goals and persons within a project. Moreover, the design can be adapted to varying local conditions and differing national customs. There are several requirements for successful building of women's components or add-ons, and it seems appropriate to end this Case Study by citing those which appear to be the most central after our experience in Jamaica.

First, intervention probably has to come in the first year. Projects in AID and other agencies go through several evaluations, and it is important to get something underway before the first assessements take place. In the first year of the project, there is some flexibility and there are funds.

Second, there should be some possibility of making a significant impact, either by blunting negative features of a project on women, or of women making a

positive contribution towards enhancing the project's goals. Another requirement should be the possibility of institutionalizing the gains, for assuring continuity. In the Jamaica project, the young women trained have the prerequisites for going on in the Ministry of Agriculture's extension service -- our project was their first step on a professional career ladder. Continuity also means building on local people, experts and resource people, as well as the "clients." It would appear to be very important not to carry out a women's "add-on" exercise in isolation, but to link in and to lock in with the on-going extension service, health service, local experts in nutrition, gardening, income-generating activities for women.

There also ought to be some opportunity for replicating whatever kind of "women's component" being implemented. The Jamaica IRDP, for example, is intended as a model project so the women's component there is a "model within a model." There also should be positive signs of support from project personnel -- indications that there is going to be real collaboration. In designing any kind of program, project personnel already on the scene will need to be relied on for information and help. Project resources will have to be tapped. It is important to establish, as quickly as possible, one's legitimacy -- and to put out all kinds of lines of communication so that a support network among project staff can be quickly created. Integration of a women's component begins with the integration of the designers and the project staff.

Briefly, some cautions (followed by some initiatives which worked particularly well) in replication:

- Designs and plans may be taken as "revealed truth," rather than as guidelines -- and be locked into an inflexible model.

- Other project personnel with their own pressing responsibilities cannot be relied on, as when we counted on others to recruit our trainees in our absence. The women's program may be at the bottom of the list of their priorities.

- Dependence on project transport, even that designated for common use and not assigned to another component, should be avoided, and independent transport provided for in one's budget. Transportation in rural projects always seems to be a problem which can erode energies, schedules and even tempers.

What worked particularly well:

- Rewriting project goals to include Women in Development objectives, and including such revisions in staff meetings for discussion. In the case of the IRDP, the basic working document, the Farm Plan, was revised to include the Family Food Production Program. What is written down becomes more "official." (See Appendix III.)

- Consulting with local women for input in the design of the component.

- Recruiting local girls for training and employment.

- Disengaging from all personnel decisions and actions.

The authors of this Case Study (see bibliography) have written a paper documenting several of the ideas touched upon here: the role of women in agriculture in the Third World; the importance of smallholder agriculture in providing food for internal markets and generating some export earnings; the decline of the small farm sector as male migration accelerates in some world regions, and the increasing burdens on rural women as they try to carry on all the agricultural operations in addition to their work in the household.

QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT THE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT/HOME EXTENSION COMPONENT of the II INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1. Is it proper strategy to create a separate women's component in a project?

In the case of the II IRD Project, the intent of the project director and the AID officers was that the project should be truly integrated, the farmer and the farm approached as an holistic unit. Many farm households are headed by women. The project originally was designed for soil conservation, but before implementation was expanded into an integrated rural development effort, including credit and marketing components, reforestation, agricultural extension, demonstration farms, community development councils and a small housing and water system program. While women farmers had equal access to the project, at least insofar as the tangled land tenure system permitted, there were no programs for the wives of farmers, for children or for older persons no longer farming but still living in project territory. The WID component is a method whereby they are linked into the project not as objects of development efforts, but as participants and as contributors to project goals -- particularly that of increasing food production.

One of the principal goals of the project is to raise agricultural production for the Jamaican and the export markets. There was no planning for family food requirements, and there are different considerations in producing for home consumption. The WID/Home Extension component was designed to correct that oversight. If the production of a farm is concentrated on one or a very few crops for a world or local market, it is vulnerable to the vagaries of that market, bad weather, disease, etc. Not only can the cash crops be a total loss for a farm family, but food prices in the market can be exhorbitant due to the same causes that ruined the cash crop. The family is doubly hit. A home food production plan with continuous cropping of a variety of vegetables is a food security factor. Moreover, the variety, if planned to complement the basic starchy diet as is the IRDP Family Food Production Program, can provide better balance in the diet. Of course, it would have been better if family food needs had been considered in the first planning stage, but to add a component recognizing the special role of women in family food production is the next best step.

2. Are women locked into patterns of dependency and powerlessness with a strategy that provides technical assistance to them to strengthen their competency in food production for the family rather than income generating activities?

Subsistence food production does not foreclose other activities to earn cash, since home production of vegetables is not heavily time consuming and, moreover, offers savings in time spent on marketing. Once established, an intensive garden can produce a great deal of food with a modicum of effort. Moreover, many women live in mountainous and isolated areas where there may never be much rural industry. Where possible, home production can be combined with other types of income-earning activity, a tradition in rural Jamaica where family members often hold multiple jobs.

However, the important considerations here are the income conserved by the women's productive effort and the opportunity costs of wage employment balanced against the time and effort required to earn cash to purchase food. Food is becoming expensive everywhere in the world -- locally grown as well as imported. Local market prices must reflect increasing costs of distribution and delivery tied to rising crude oil prices. There is the energy cost to the family -- human time and exertion, as well as costs for fuel expended in getting food home over difficult terrain. Post-harvest losses increase these costs. It is difficult to "monetize" these factors, but food grown close to the place of consumption has cash value, and for a family is important conservation of income. Moreover, the nutritional elements are better, and storing a growing plant (i.e., leaving it in the ground) is the most economical and labor-saving method of preservation.

An argument can be made that a wage job is not necessarily a dependable form of security. Jobs can disappear, as can wages with physical or psychic pressure, leaving a woman more dependent than ever. On the other hand, productive resources give a measure of self-sufficiency. Instruction in growing vegetables is valuable agricultural training, i.e., proper care of soils, pest management, rotation, moisture conservation, etc. Moreover, world food supply and demand projections argue that agriculture may become an attractive income-generating activity. In this project, the productive role women can and do play in food production is recognized and assisted.

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*Surplus vegetables can be sold, although a garden designed for the market will be quite different from one designed for family consumption. The latter produces small supplies of harvest over an extended time, whereas a market garden should produce a quantity large enough at one time to make marketing of the harvest a profitable activity.

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7/10/79

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
Home Economics Unit/Women in Development
Integrated Rural Development Project
Pindars River and Two Meetings, Jamaica

Persons To Be Served by Unit — As members of watershed or subwatershed teams, officers of the Home Economics Unit work first among families with Farm Plans, but do not exclude other families in the project area who wish to participate in the Home Economics programmes. The Unit puts great stress on drawing women and girls, as well as interested menfolk, into an active role in planning its activities. The Unit is especially mindful of the double load placed on female farm operators: home-making and field work.

Overall Goal of the Unit — The Home Economics/Women in Development Programme is designed to assist the Integrated Rural Development Project in achieving its overall goal of improving the standard of living for families of small hillside farmers in the Two Meetings and Pindars Rivers watershed areas.

As needs are identified, those related to Home Economics Unit objectives will be addressed by the Home Economics officers; other problems will be referred, as appropriate, either to other members of the watershed and subwatershed teams, or to outside agencies.

Objectives of the Home Economics Unit — The objectives outlined below are for a four-five year plan designed to be carried out on a progressive basis; in the first year, the programme may not go beyond Nos. 3 and 4. It should be stressed that the objectives outlined here are flexible; they may change as the Home Economics officers gain experience, and as the women and families in the project areas take a more active role in defining their own needs.

It is recognized further that not all objectives can be fully realized within the four-five year time frame; it is envisaged, however, that at least the structure for reaching the objectives would be in place at the end of that time.

Objectives of the Unit are as follows:

1. To increase agricultural production, particularly through the Family Food Crop Plan: a planned cycle of vegetables and of animal protein produced primarily for improving family nutrition and consumption patterns.

2. To improve family health through better nutrition by

   (a) increasing knowledge of food and nutrition;
   (b) increasing the variety of vegetables and of animal protein produced and consumed by the family;
   (c) improving practices related to the selection, preparation and storing of food.

3. To improve among women and girls their sense of self-worth and self-confidence, and to encourage their active participation in the life of the community.

4. To increase appreciation among their families and communities of the essential contribution women and girls make to the family: as productive members of the farm unit, and through their homemaking role.

5. To improve the management of family resources so that increased income produced through I.R.D. activities will contribute to improved family living.

6. To improve the quality of child care beyond nutrition through addressing the physical, emotional and educational needs of the child and through stressing the principles of responsible parenthood, including family planning.

7. To collaborate in the planning, building and upgrading of the housing units provided for in the project.

8. To identify activities to increase income, after family consumption needs are met, including Handicraft Centre at Spring Ground.

9. To introduce appropriate intermediate technology, especially a fuel-saving, improved cook stove and better techniques for food storage.

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Those persons starred also acted as consultants for general program planning for the new unit.

APPENDIX III

9/5/79

(The following are suggested guidelines for the Family Food Production Plan as discussed in a meeting on August 7, 1979 with Home Economics staff and consultants, and agronomy, soil conservation and extension personnel and advisors.)

1. The principal goal of the Family Food Production Plan is to supply nutritious vegetables (and later animals) for the family table. This does not mean that some surpluses may not be sold -- and the family encouraged to purchase other nutritious foods with the proceeds.

2. A nutrition education program will accompany the gardening effort to teach the best methods of cookery.

3. Education in family resource management also will be included to show how the Family Food Production Plan provides nutritious food and saves family food dollars, at the same time as it contributes to national well-being by saving on foreign exchange spent to import food.

4. The Family Food Production Plan will be part of the Farm Plan, and the space(s) allocated to the FFPP will be illustrated on the map.

5. Both costs and returns of food raised and consumed on site will be used to calculate family income.

6. The Family Food Production Plan may be carried out on treated land, or on untreated; it may be near the house or involve intercropping -- or a combination of the two; how it is implemented depends upon the layout of the family land.

7. If an appropriate and convenient place for the Family Food Production Plan is on a slope, then the slope should be included in the provisions for soil conservation treatment.

8. There will be a close coordination of the Home Economics/Gardening component with the Agronomy and Extension Units, not only in carrying out the provisions of the Family Food Production Plan, but in every phase of the work in the project area.