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SEMINAR ON WOMEN AS AGRICULTURAL
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Elsa Chaney

I'm not Dr. H. Patrick Peterson, but he's a good friend of mine and indeed was instrumental in getting us started on the project I'm going to tell you about today. Sometimes it's hard to be the third speaker because a lot of the things have been said. What I'm going to try to do is be that "feedback" we were talking about earlier, and to describe and analyze what we did in a very specific project which brought together an interdisciplinary and intercultural team, to build a women's component into an on-going rural development project in Jamaica.

Let me then proceed to do two things: to describe the project to you so that you can see how it worked, not with the idea that it should necessarily be replicated everywhere in exactly this form, but as a possible model. Then I want to try to draw out some generalizations about building women's components as a strategy. And it's the strategy that I'm interested in, more than the facts about the project in Jamaica.

Let me draw Jamaica on the board...Cuba is up here. You fly over it to get to Jamaica which is quite a bit smaller than Cuba. We were working right in the mountainous center of Jamaica, in a very beautiful place where it's green all the year round. The II Integrated Rural Development Project is a Ministry of Agriculture effort covering two areas, the Two Meetings and Pindars River watersheds, right in the center of the country, covering about 10 square miles. The project encompasses something like 5,000 families, most of whom are small farmers -- not small in stature! -- farming on small hillside holdings.

Through the initiative of the Project Director, a Jamaican, and the Rural Development Office of USAID, Dr. Peterson, we received funds provided by the Women and Development Office at AID and were challenged to come to Jamaica to "do something for the women." We worked closely with the women on the hillside farms and with something like 21 Jamaican experts; from the first day we began incorporating them into what we hoped to do. We built in about 11 months a "women's component" in an on-going project, and we trained a corps of young women-in-development home extension workers, many of them from the area. I'll say more about them later. And we got going a project-within-a-project which revolved around gardening. We gave it a fancy name, however; we called it the Family Food Production Plan. This was to mystify and impress the men a little bit. And also to get the women's component linked back into the main project goal, which is to increase agricultural productivity.

Now the II Integrated Rural Development project is primarily -- and must remain -- a soil conservation project. This part of Jamaica shares with approximately 30 other watershed areas the common problem of tremendous soil erosion. So the principal project activity is to analyze, farm by farm -- for everyone who wants to participate, there is no obligation to do so -- the soil and crop mix. There is great interest in the project, once you get beyond a certain skepticism on the part of the farmers, who are very sophisticated people. Many of them have spent long years away from Jamaica. They've seen London or Montreal or New York and have come back to farm the family land. The project hopes to reach them in three main areas: soil conservation or treatment which can range all the way from very

intricate terracing to perhaps simply rearranging the way the water runs off -- not every farm needs, although many of them do need, drastic attention; crop analysis, that is, what are you growing and what else could you grow that would bring in more income to raise the standard of living, and, finally, credit so that the soil conservation treatments can be carried out and any changes made in putting in new crops. By the end of four years, it is estimated that the project will have incorporated perhaps 70 percent of the farm families in this area.

The work had been going on for about four or five months when we arrived. The idea was to come in and talk with the women first, before doing anything. It was very good that the project advisors stressed this with us; they really didn't want us to come in and impose our ideas. They wanted us to come in as a kind of catalyst, to work with several of the women who had been hired with the title, "Home Economics Officer." But when I say "to work with the women," I don't mean just work with the Officers, but to climb up and down the hills and talk with the farm women themselves.

Now the farm women are really of two kinds in the IRDP, which is what I'm going to call the Integrated Rural Development Project -- the name is such a mouthful. There are female farm operators -- it's interesting that in Jamaica, almost a quarter of the farm operators in the small farm sector are women. This statistic is related to Jamaica's history; it's almost part of the life cycle for men at one point or another to "go a foreign," as they say, and to leave the women behind on the farm. The men migrate within the region, or as I'm sure you know, until around 1965, there was a large influx to Great Britain. Now the flows have changed direction;

and many Jamaican men and also women are going to Canada or coming to the United States.

So there are women farm operators, but there are also the women whom the project leaders felt somewhat uncomfortable about because they thought the project was not reaching women who were wives of farm operators. (I'm glad to say that the project was not ignoring those women who were the nominal heads-of-household and were doing the farming. I went through a pile of Farm Plans to satisfy myself, and saw there that a good proportion of the participating farm operators were women.) There was an uncomfortable feeling that somehow the project wasn't really reaching all the women, integrating their contribution, taking advantage of what they had to give and, in turn, affording them some benefits. So that was the challenge: to try to figure out how we could link these women in. All along we emphasized that we did not want to create a little sub-project off on its own, taking advantage of the fact that in the first year of the project there was some degree of flexibility and even some finances available.

We were very aware that building an effective women's component meant linking the women to the main project goals and activities. Frankly, this is a "patching" operation. So more than ever we wanted to link back into the main project what the women were doing, and not have them off doing their own thing, out of the public eye -- not contributing to nor benefitting from the main project.

So what did we notice, with the help of the farm women, as we began our planning? Here I have to give you some background so that you can see how the women's effort ties into the other project

activities. The small farm sector in Jamaica is extremely important in the whole economics and politics of the country. The project was very much keyed to enhancing that importance. The small farmers provide a great deal of the food for the cities, and food is a political issue. The sector also provides -- and this is not always the case -- about 25 percent of Jamaica's exports, principally bananas, nutmeg allspice, and other things, too. Although only 13 percent of the acreage is devoted to the small farm sector, still something like 60 percent of the Jamaican population still lives in the rural areas, and about 30 percent of the work force is in agriculture. So numerically, agriculture is important and economically it's important.

Agriculture in Jamaica also is important because Jamaica spends large amounts of its foreign exchange on food imports, and I know that I don't in this group have to go into all the implications of that fact -- what food imports mean for a country's balance-of-payments situation and for the availability of foreign exchange for other uses. Because the project is intended to be a model, and the hope is to replicate it in other watersheds throughout Jamaica, the project goals are significant outside the project area: to increase food for the non-farm sector, to improve Jamaica's trade balance by cutting down on food imports; to provide an important source of foreign exchange, and to create a rural market for industrial goods.

In spite of the emphasis on food production, the project had an almost exclusively outward focus. You can understand why from what I've said. It's the most normal thing to say, "What are we going to get out of these hills for the rest of Jamaica, to provide

food for the cities and for export?" Now it became evident, in our initial assessment in talking with the women, that nobody had thought very much about these particular 5,000 families, those in the project, the people who were going to do all these wonderful things for the rest of Jamaica. They had been forgotten, except for some future "trickle down," when their income was going to increase, and their standard of living was going to improve, and they were going to get some good out of the project -- if it all worked out.

We took this as our starting point. We said, "What about the families here? What are they going to eat? What do they eat now?" It didn't take us very long -- going around with the district nurse to make a brief survey -- to find out that the people were eating part of their starchy cash crops, and almost nothing else: yams, cassava, Irish potatoes, bananas, plantains, and breadfruit. This diet was pretty much what the children got twice a day. In the evening, they might have a meal with a little more -- perhaps a stew with chicken backs -- but for some, the first two meals of the day were even more restricted: to bananas and tea.

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 average, and agricultural workers lose weight during periods of heavy labor. These are all indications, certainly not of acute malnutrition, but of definite dietary deficiencies.

We know from a growing number of studies that consumption in rural households is not necessarily related to production -- you may be producing crops which are going to be sold, and the proceeds are not necessarily going to be invested back in better food for the family. So to make a long story short, we asked how we could link back into the project, which has increased productivity as its main goal, something which also would be productive. So we invented the Family Food Production Plan which is gardening by another name. But it had a sort of cachet. We wanted to have the word "production" included, because we wanted to give the idea that these women were not knocking on the door of the project director and saying, "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 Plan, to pin it down, is a cycle of nine nutritious vegetables which, if planted in roughly the order laid out, and combined properly with the starchy foods, will give a family pretty good nutrition with only occasional animal protein. The Plan was carefully worked out by a gardening expert who collaborated closely with the project horticulturalist. Those of you who know something about nutrition know that if you put rice with peas [kidney beans], you get a release of the protein in the red pea, and the dish is very nutritious. And so it is with a number of food combinations. We built in a very strong nutrition education program, because you not only have to grow vegetables, but you have to see that they get inside the children and the other family members. If the gardens get going on any scale, there's going to be some temptation to sell the vegetables which command a

good price in Jamaica. So we built the women's component around gardening and nutrition education.

Then came the question: How are we going to implement this? We then set about recruiting and training 34 young women, most of them from the project area, in a month-long course, depending very much on the good resource people in Jamaica. We also had several home economists who were recruited for us by the American Home Economics Association. We brought in four U.S. experts because if you are not in your own country, you can concentrate and get something accomplished in four weeks. The Jamaicans were so busy we could only entice them out for two or three days apiece. So with a combination of U.S. and Jamaican experts, we carried on a month's training course which gave these young women the rudiments of gardening and a rather superficial education in nutrition. Now a core of them have been hired by the project -- there are 15 at work -- the training is going on in order to deepen their knowledge in these two areas -- an afternoon a week, and several longer term courses planned for later on. We are aware that the training is somewhat fragile, and that was one of the reasons we wanted to stick to only two activities -- gardening and nutrition -- at the beginning. Later on, there are other activities outlined in the objectives which may be added.

In our initial assessment, we also were careful to estimate whether we were just laying on a lot of extra work -- whether the women would find the Family Food Production Plan a burden. The women already are involved in ^{the} cash cropping. About 47 percent go regularly "to the bush," as they put it, to work on the cash crops. Another 21 percent collaborate at least in planting and

harvesting. So this means then that you have a lot of the women regularly involved in the cash cropping. In that part of Jamaica, the women are certainly busy, but on the other hand they don't have the sort of housekeeping associated with cold climates. Many live in the open, with sleeping sheds and a cooking shed, around a central yard -- two or three families, sometimes, sharing a central space.

So we ascertained that, if they could get the help of older sons and their menfolk, the gardening would be feasible. The men need to be involved because you can't really put in the garden unless the men say, "All right -- you can have a piece of the terraced land" if it's very hilly land, or unless they say, "You can have this land, I won't need it for bananas." You do have to get the men in on this, too, because otherwise it doesn't work out. They need to do the initial spading sometimes. They also need to understand the nutrition aspects.

In our initial survey, then, we satisfied ourselves that the women really did have time to grow family food without killing themselves. And, in fact, the gardening is beginning by demonstration effect to catch on. We have more clients than we can handle. The women are saying, "When are the young ladies [as they are called in Jamaica] coming to help me start my garden?"

We linked these young women back into the main project in another manner -- by not creating a separate home extension service with a vertical chain of command. The project looks something like this: the Project Director is at the top, and there are two Assistant Directors, one for each watershed. Then there are 20 subwatershed offices in the two project areas, each with a team

consisting of an ag extension person, a soils conservation person, maybe a couple of field assistants, and now these 15 extension officers to work on the women's component. The project could not hire 20 because the Minister of Agriculture didn't have the money. These women have been placed in the subwatershed offices; they report to the Assistant Project Directors, they work in teams, with the other project personnel, and they do not report to the women in development/home extension coordinator. She is their trainer, resource person -- and I can imagine that she has a good shoulder to cry on, but she's not their supervisor. That was another way we tried to link the women's component into the total range of activities so that what the women were doing would not be an effort off on its own.

Now let me finish up because I think we all would like to have ample time for discussion. I want very quickly to say something about building a women's component in an on-going project as a strategy. Now if you think about the way assistance agencies usually do projects, the host government first has to make a request, and then there are feasibility and baselines studies. After that, projects are designed and various project papers go through a number of stages involving rewritings and negotiations. Unless and until we have more people who integrate women's role in their heads, so that women are included in the project process all along the line from the very first planning, we will not truly "integrate" women in development. What I am suggesting today is really a kind of patching, if you'll excuse the homely expression, a "repair" of a project where we hope the seams won't show too much. But such a patching could be an important strategy because it is a way to

get something going rather quickly.

Some of us are convinced that what we need now are some demonstration effects of women participating in projects and contributing to them. So often we have an attitude of..."Oh, those poor women. In equity, we have to let them in, include them, even though that will use up project assets. But we have to do it, because after all, the poor women...." What we were trying to emphasize in Jamaica was that the women were going to help the project reach its goals, and that's very important in this strategy. There may be valuable feedback from actually seeing women involved and contributing, feedback to the beginning of this process so that women will gradually be included in the planning and after awhile we won't have to do it this way, as a patching, an "add-on."

There are four or five requirements for successful building of women's components or add-ons. First of all, intervention probably has to come in the first year, so there is time to get something going. Projects in AID go through a first-year evaluation, mid-term evaluation and end-of-project evaluation, and it's important to get something going before these things happen. In the first year of a project, there is some flexibility, there are funds -- as someone has put it, there is often fat in a project, and there is the possibility of getting something going without having to wade through the whole project cycle.

Second, there should be some possibility, it seems to me, of making a significant impact. Since resources are not large, I think we have to choose our projects carefully. By a significant impact, I mean either the possibility of blunting negative features of a project on women, or of women making a positive contribution towards

enhancing the project's goals (rather than simply the women will benefit, or the women have needs). Another requirement is the possibility of institutionalizing the gains, for continuity. I don't think we should go in and do things that are not going to be carried on. In the Jamaica project, we were very careful that the young women we trained had the prerequisites for going on in the Ministry of Agriculture's extension service. Now Jamaica is perhaps one of the few places where you could do this -- find young women in the rural areas who were high school graduates with the proper school-leaving examinations. We checked this out very carefully. We wanted this to be for the young women their first step on their professional career ladder, and we did not want to leave them dangling after the project was over. Continuity also means building on local people. We recruited all the help we could get from the local Jamaican experts and resource people. They were busy, they were strapped, but they were very generous in their help. It's very important not to carry out such a project on one's own, but to link and and to lock in with the on-going extension service, health service, local experts in nutrition, gardening, women's income-generating. In the case of Jamaica, the women concerned were very valiantly trying to extend the horizons of their extension service, and for that reason provided another means of institutionalizing the gains.

Fourth, it seems to me that there should be some chance of replicating what we do. I don't think that with the small resources available we ought to do things that aren't demonstration projects. The Jamaica IRDP, in itself, is intended as a model project. So we were sort of building a model within a model. Another requisite:

some positive signs of support from project personnel. We went in under the best of all possible conditions: an enthusiastic invitation. Of course, you have to have some kind of approval even to get into a country and a project, but I think we have to check out ahead of time whether there is going to be real collaboration. We had to draw on the resources of the Jamaican project personnel and of the U.S. advisors. We had to make ourselves very visible, deliberately sit around and shoot the breeze, in order to learn what was going on and to establish our own legitimacy. We had to woo them a bit, in the right sense, because we could not have built the women's component without getting them involved in our effort.

I think that our Jamaica project did fulfill these requirements. Now it remains to be seen how it will work out, but in the 11 months which elapsed between the first visit to appraise the situation and the hiring of the core group of workers, what was only a glimmer in our collective minds, the Jamaican minds, too, I should emphasize, became a reality. We began in March, 1979; by the following February 1, there was a corps of young women out on the hillsides implementing a women's component. I think I'll stop here, and I hope someone will ask me during the question period about some of the obstacles and difficulties we faced, and how it was working in an interdisciplinary team with home economists.

QUESTION: I THINK THAT WHAT I UNDERSTAND FROM WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THAT IT IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT NOT TO GO IN FIGURING WE KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, AND HERE IT IS, AND SO ON, BUT TO INVOLVE THE WOMEN VERY, VERY CLOSELY, AND TO OPEN VERY STRONG COMMUNICATION. I HAVE SEEN THIS OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY IN WOMEN'S GROUPS, GIVE THEM A STAKE IN WHAT GOES ON, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, TALK TO THEM AND FIND OUT WHAT THEY DO WANT.

The Women in Development Office with which I was associated made that a kind of condition -- to go out to Jamaica without any preconceptions. That was Dr. Peterson's idea, too. We said, "We know the issues, we know the problems in a general way, but we're not going to lay out any kind of program until we have a chance to talk to the women." And we spent two weeks tramping up and down the hillsides, fortunately with the district nurse who knew all the people and how to get us around. What we did grew out of many conversations with the women in the project area plus many more with Jamaican experts, the coordinator for home extension in Jamaica, several women in the Scientific Research Council who deal with nutrition, women who really know the scene there, such as Evadne Ford who has been working with rural families forever. One day we said to her, "Gee, a lot of what we are doing sounds a lot like what you did years ago. Are we sitting here reinventing the wheel?" And she said, "No -- not exactly like what we were doing. Moreover, I'm not going to tell you what we did before. Conditions are different now, we start from what's here, and we don't hearken back to the past too much."

QUESTION: I THINK YOU DEALT WITH A PART OF MY QUESTION, BUT YOU DID ALLUDE TO PERHAPS SOME DIFFERENT PRECEPTIONS THAT MIGHT HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN YOUR GROUP AND THE MORE CONVENTIONAL HOME ECONOMISTS WHO, AS I THINK I HEARD, WERE ALREADY ON THE SCENE. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS, AND HOW DID YOU ACHIEVE BETTER ARTICULATION FROM THOSE GROUPS?

Well, we really were an interdisciplinary team. We had three U.S. home economists who came principally to structure the course, but also had a lot to do with the planning, because of course, you can't plan a curriculum unless you know the objectives of the program

for which you're training the people. Plus the help of nutritionists, horticulturalists, rural experts, just the people I've mentioned. And also some of the IRDP personnel; the horticulturalist who had to work with us to figure out the cycle of the vegetables. Another expert who could tell us all about the growing characteristics of vegetables, but unbelievably didn't know the nutritive value of any of them with the exception of some of the beans and peas. And someone to give sessions on pests. We called on very practical and very conceptual people who could guide us. I think the initial uneasiness with some of the home economists had something to do with the fact -- can I be a little bit brutal, will you hate me? -- or with my perception, in any case, that the traditional home economists, and that included some of those who came out from the U.S., really fought us somewhat on the gardening. They were not used to considering food production as part of "their" concern. They were used to starting with food as a "given" -- somehow, God delivers food on the doorstep, and the the demonstrator takes over and talks about nutritious ways to prepare it -- a very old-fashioned idea. But I do think that they did come to some understanding and appreciation of the gardening, and they did take it up and incorporate it into the course.

The women in the project areas simply will not put vegetables into their families' diets if they have to walk six or seven miles to the market. They don't have the money anyway, and the vegetables lose a lot of nutritive value by the time they're eaten. No one has refrigeration, and there is no transportation in much of the project area. You bring from the market, where you go perhaps only two or three times a month, what you can carry back on your head. So

it became very evident that there wasn't going to be anything nutritious to put into the pot in the way of vegetables unless the women grew them. So we pushed back the horizons of home economists that way.

The other difficulty we had revolved around who were defined as "household." Now I don't think that any of the American home economists, if you faced them with it, would not have acknowledged the fact of the female-headed household. A lot of women in the project area and elsewhere in the Caribbean are managing alone, and this is a West Indian syndrome. Of course, I don't mean exclusively West Indian; this is a world-wide trend, but it's particularly marked in the West Indies. The fact is that many of these women are coping very well, and this relates to something that someone asked Gloria. I had the chance to be present recently at the launching of a two-year study of Caribbean women, being carried out by the Institute of Social and Economic Research in Barbados. When the researchers came to framing hypotheses about West Indian women for that study, it was evident that nothing we have generated internationally to explain women's situation really fits. You can't start talking about oppressed women. West Indian women are poor, they struggle, but they are not oppressed even though they may even collaborate sometimes in maintaining the "formal" superiority of the male. The system may oppress them, but in the household, in the family, they are often in charge. What you have to try to explain is how West Indian women became so autonomous and so good at coping.

However, all through the training course, we were getting an implicit picture of the household from the American home economists

as father (present), mother and children, a nice nuclear family. Everything in their teaching came out that way. The U.S. home economists had difficulty in adapting to these young women in the training course who were going to be dealing with families that are structured very differently (in fact, two of the students were single mothers). And so the household -- how to conceptualize the household -- became very difficult. If you don't have the correct picture in your head -- and for the Caribbean, the term "household" simply doesn't net in everyone who is important to family survival -- then you are not dealing with reality.

In the West Indies, as many of you know, there may be very crucial family members hundreds of miles away, sustaining a household by their remittances as migrant laborers. There may be households in which a grandmother has been left with young children -- five years ago, ten years ago. A typical pattern of migration has been for the family to take the older children and to leave the younger ones behind. There may be completely female households: a mother, her sister, a couple of older people, the women's children, informal adoptees. But it's very hard to fight the nuclear family stereotype. I used sometimes to "get it" from them -- they were always lecturing me. "Elsa, you are talking about the women too much, you separate them out too much, but we deal with families." I could have bought that, if they somehow could have changed the picture of the family in their heads -- always, implicitly, it was the father, mother and kids -- period.

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I want to quote Hanna Papanek, which I often do, on something that she didn't bring up today, but it's a very useful

observation. That is, in answer to the gentleman who said that on top of a very complex job, we're now going to have to worry about involving women in the whole development process. Hanna once wrote that women are already involved. They may not be formally incorporated in development; they may be ignored, but nevertheless women in most societies are already deeply involved through all kinds of economic activity, in all sectors, even though counting operations such as censuses and labor force surveys may sometimes ignore them because the definitions of what is "work" may not include a lot of things women do in the informal sector.

So the trick is, or better, the challenge is to make their involvement more fruitful, to support and enhance that involvement, to see that the women get a few of the resources that are floating around. I think perhaps that's a useful notion -- that we're not going to have to drag women in, kicking and screaming, in most cases. They are already there, fully involved in the social and economic processes of their societies, and the trick is to avoid, through our marvelous development and modernization projects, driving them out of that involvement.

I also want to respond to several other issues raised, because I think that in the attempt to be provocative, I may have been somewhat negative about home economists. Will you allow me to emphasize the other side of the picture, to say something about what I think your strengths are, and how these might be made even more positive assets? Because I think such an exercise might have some curriculum implications, let us see if we can "build" our ideal home economist for this sort of interdisciplinary work. What might he or she look like? That is, after all, the

title of your seminar, "Home Economics in Third World Countries." This is very presumptuous of me, but let me have a try.

I think one of your biggest strengths is the fact that you know how to organize. That is an absolutely essential skill. You know how to manage. You also know a lot about how adults learn, and this was very evident as our home economists got across the course content to the young women in our training. You also know how to teach people how to teach. That was really very illuminating for me. You know a lot about the psychology of learning, and how to take very complex information and break it down so that it is absorbable not only for young workers who are not very knowledgeable themselves, but who also are going to have to teach others. That was very scary for our students: "My God, I'm going to have to get across information to those women out on the hill-sides!" The home economists were superb in being able to calm fears and to make the idea of teaching others seem a manageable and do-able enterprise.

You also are very good at constructing all kinds of teaching devices -- that goes along with your ability in knowing how to teach, and how to teach others how to teach. Sometimes I wished that there were fewer flannel boards and posters around, and more gardening in the curriculum, but the Project Director came down one day to see what our young women had produced, and he went back to the project headquarters declaiming, "I have seen the most beautiful things!" And he really had -- what our home economist team got out of those young women was miraculous -- my mouth was open at the kinds of things they built which are going to be extremely useful. During the month, they constructed from practically nothing

a whole series of teaching devices.

And that leads to something else -- that you are awfully good at making something out of nothing. I was impressed that our U.S. people, who had had experience in developing countries, insisted that we not take anything with us in the way of materials, that we buy on the local market everything that our students were going to use. Otherwise, they said, the students will say, "Oh well, we can make these things while the Americans are here, but we'll never be able to carry on afterwards." So we didn't use anything that we didn't get as scrap, or that was not available in that little town. And that meant adapting a lot.

The U.S. extension experts also were very insistent that the teaching and the practice teaching be done on a hillside, not in the home economics center which had a stove, refrigerator and other equipment which women out in the bush will never have. Most of them are cooking on three stones. So I think those are some of your strengths.

Now what would I add if I could "build" my ideal home economist to invite out again? I think that Jean Kinsey illuminated something for me that I've been struggling with, that is, with her idea that there are "inner" and "outer" worlds, and that the home economist is very good at dealing with the former, but doesn't focus on the latter. The world outside somehow doesn't impinge. Perhaps it's because so many come out of the Middle West -- perhaps unconsciously there is a hope that the world somehow will get back to the nice kind of world we think we knew: of families intact, collaborating together, and making the home a peaceful, well-managed and attractive refuge.

That kind of mind-set makes it difficult, because the West Indian and Third World realities may never be like that. Home economists can't handle the father in London, who long ago abandoned his family. The implicit picture in their heads is father present, father as principal provider. And that's simply not the case for a lot of the women, in rural Jamaica or anywhere. So I would hope that my ideal home economist would absorb a lot of information about the differences in households, families and kin networks, the different family patterns, the different cultural ways that women use in coping. There are families: people seem to have the urge to form family-like groupings. Even little Colombian street urchins in Bogotá form little surrogate families. But it's the different kinds of families and the varied functions of the family that seem very, very hard for home economists to deal with.

I also found a certain reluctance or resistance among home economists to talk about women organizing, to see that women in these countries must (and do) organize survival networks, and that it might be legitimate to encourage groupings which go beyond getting together to watch a cooking demonstration. Women may have to organize in some countries to extract anything from the system. Home economists, I think, somehow would rather see the women at home in their little households -- maybe organizing to get together to learn something -- but not to pressure the system. There was a certain fear of that, I think. And that's the outside world impinging again, the idea of changing structures, which home economists prefer to stay away from. The whole income-generating topic, too, was hard for them. Their world view does not permit the idea that often women must work outside the home out of necessity, that many women

are sustaining their families economically. Fathers do that. There also was a rejection, a real disinterest in the agricultural side (apart from the home gardening), almost an "I don't want to know that much about agriculture." I think that's something we are going to have to remedy in "packaging" the new home economist. She is going to have to get out and find out what's going on in agriculture. So many of the women that she's going to have to reach are farmers. I'm not saying that the male extension agents shouldn't also reach the women. But in some cultures, it's only possible for women to teach women. And since so many women are engaged in agriculture, in cash cropping, the home economist has got to learn something about agriculture. In the curriculum of the Jamaica School of Agriculture, the home economists are not allowed to take any agriculture courses. We somehow have to start breaking this down in our own universities, and then in the insitutions in the Third World with which we collaborate. So those are some of the things I observed -- you will have to draw out the implications. I certainly don't want to be completely negative. You do have strengths. You have some very positive assets that can be built on, and that are very useful in Third World countries.

QUESTION: THE EXTENSION SERVICE HERE IN THE UNITED STATES HAS PUT A CLEAR BOUNDARY AROUND IN TERMS OF...AND THAT WOULD BE TRUE FOR AGRICULTURE AS WELL AS HOME ECONOMICS...IN STAYING OUT OF POLITICS. YOU CAN VOTE, BUT THAT'S REALLY IT. SO THAT ORGANIZING PEOPLE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IS A NO NO. AND I'M WONDERING IF THAT'S PERHAPS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT IS SORT OF A CARRY-OVER INTO OTHERS. WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IN JAMAICA, AND SO THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A ROLE THAT THOSE OFFICERS ARE, THAT THEY COULD HAVE BEEN POLITICIZED AND THEY COULD HAVE BEEN RABBLE ROUSERS, OR THAT IN FACT WOULD REQUIRE THEM TO LOSE THEIR JOBS? DO YOU KNOW THAT IN TERMS OF POLITICS?

I'm talking about a certain orientation....

QUESTION: OH, I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, BUT I'M ALSO WONDERING IF THE ROLE OF THOSE PEOPLE THEY WERE TRAINING WOULD HAVE, IN FACT, BEEN QUITE SIMILAR TO AN INTERNALIZED ROLE OF HELPING IN CERTAIN WAYS, OR IN FACT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED FOR EXTENSION WORKERS TO BE POLITICAL ADVOCATES.

Well, no, I'm not talking about being political advocates, or advocates of a certain political party. Thank God, the IRDP is apolitical. It would really go down the drain if it weren't. I'm talking about participation. For example, the project was trying hard, with a team from Cornell University's "participation project" to figure out what were the ways people collaborating to get things done in the region and to figure out how the various project activities could be institutionalized after the advisors and project personnel go away. And also, incidentally, there were two anthropologists who were very sensitive towards women's participation. They were working particularly through the Jamaica Agricultural Society and other groups organized out there. I found an almost complete lack of interest among the home economists in anything to do with participation. At that level, the level of community participation, there was a vast uninterest in either knowing what was going on, or trying somehow to plug our students into it.

QUESTION: I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT IF YOU HAD THE PICK OF THE CROP OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN HOME ECONOMICS IN THE UNITED STATES, YOU SHOULD END UP WITH SUCH PROVINCIAL AND SEEMINGLY NOT INVOLVED PEOPLE, AND THE OTHER THING THAT IS PART OF THAT IS WE'RE DEALING RIGHT NOW WITH THE "IDEAL" HOME ECONOMIST. WHO IS THAT, WHAT IS THAT, WHO IS HE?

Yes, I got your point. Just as I don't want you to think that I'm advocating replicating this project in exactly the form described here, certainly no one should think that I'm generalizing

about all home economists. I think that I appreciate the strong points of those with whom I worked. I will not soften what I have said too much, because I think it's good if you all are challenged. You have a lot to give in the Third World. People have heard about home economics, and when they think of women, they often think, for better or worse, of a home economics program. There may be a lot of demand for technical assistance in setting up women's programs, and home economists have something to contribute. Internationally, home economists have been at work for a long time; they've built up a body of accepted knowledge, they're "legitimate." You're going to be called upon, and I'm really only trying to say that what you have to give can be better, without detracting from the fact that there is a there is a legitimacy about your profession and a body of knowlege that everybody respects, all over the world.