Mission on women in drug trafficking recommends action

A fact-finding mission to the United Kingdom to investigate the situation of Caribbean women in prisons for drug trafficking has identified some important matters that need urgent attention. The mission in September 1998, was formulated and led by representatives of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, WAND and the UK-based NGO, Hibiscus.

The mission identified inconsistencies in the sentencing of Caribbean women; the possible violation of basic human rights and the prevalence of racial inequalities within the prison system; and that economic hardship was the main reason stated by women for their involvement in the movement of illegal drugs.

The mission has recommended:
(a) research to examine the vulnerability of women in the region to drugs trafficking and the relationship of the women's activities to crime in the region;
(b) formulation of a project that would focus on preventive education, counselling, network and solidarity building for women in vulnerable points in the region such as the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago;
(c) a programme of repatriation for women imprisoned as drug carriers or those jailed as sex workers or slaves.

WAND supports development of persons with disabilities

About 20 young Barbadians with varying disabilities benefited from a series of eight personal development workshops co-sponsored by WAND and the Barbados National Association for the Disabled (BARNOD).

The workshops, which were conducted weekly during September and October, sought to help the participants to develop positive self images through an understanding of the principles of equality and human rights.

An objective of the project was to empower the participants with the tools necessary to live and function as independently as possible within their communities. It also sought to promote an awareness among media workers of the need to present positive images of persons with disabilities.

The 14 women and six men were guided through topics such as understanding and developing self, positive self image, job opportunities and self employment, knowing your community-based support groups and human rights. They also were exposed to subjects such as food and nutrition and personal hygiene.
Delegates at the WaCC/Women's Media Watch - Jamaica conference on Gender and Communication Policy viewing a demonstration of new information technology. Sitting on the floor is Maria Teresa Aguirre, Regional Coordinator, WACC.

Religion challenges feminism?

"Dialogues in the Spirit: Caribbean Religions in Comparative Perspective" was the theme of a conference presented in November by the Caribbean Religions Project of York University's Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean.

Tutor/Coordinator Dr Judith Soares, who represented WAND at the conference in Canada, presented a paper "Fundamentalism in the Caribbean: Feminism and New Women's Ministries". It looked at feminism as a body of thought and area of practice and its inability to attract women who are increasingly dealing with religion and spirituality as means of understanding their own lives.

Judith argued that more women are using religion, as a means of understanding social liberation, rather than feminism which deals more specifically with the "political" woman. She identified a current trend of looking at the "total" woman that encompasses matters of the soul and spirit.

Papers presented at the conference are to be published as part of the Project.

UNESCO radio project to start January

The "Women speaking to Women" radio project sponsored by UNESCO is expected to start in January 1999, with the production of four five minute programmes per month. These are expected to be distributed to community radio stations in the region which form part of the project.

WAND, with UNESCO’s sponsorship, has installed a radio studio at its offices and has conducted a radio production workshop to train staff, media workers and community workers who will contribute to the sustainability of the project.

We’re getting a documentalist

WAND expects to employ a part-time documentalist to catalogue and index books, organise its documentation centre and train a member of staff in library skills in the new year.

The unit has never had a full-time documentalist and it’s hoped that the new documentalist will be able to bridge a critical gap that has existed for a long time.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMMES FOR CARIBBEAN TRANSFORMATION

Congrats to UWI at 50; What, WAND’s 20?

Congratulations to the University of the West Indies from WAND on the Celebration of its 50 years of contribution to academic excellence and development in the region.

Projects like WAND, which marked its 20th anniversary in August, exemplify the UWI’s mission statement ‘to unlock West Indian potential for economic and cultural growth’.

Congrats are also in order to Professor Rex Nettleford on his appointment as Vice-chancellor of the University.

WAND looks forward to another 50 years of the UWI’s contribution in this spirit of ‘Celebrating the Past, Charting the Future’.

Spirituality workshop report ready

The report on the workshop on Spirituality, Gender and Communication which was cosponsored by WAND and the Caribbean Conference of Churches in May 1997, is now available in bound format.

The workshop and publication were funded by the Ford Foundation.

WAND

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