



NETWORK OF RURAL WOMEN PRODUCERS
Trinidad and Tobago

20
YEARS
1995-2015

Empowering Rural Women in Trinidad and Tobago

A photographic journey of the Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT)



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Empowering Rural Women in Trinidad and Tobago

*A photographic journey of the
Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT).*

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20 YEARS 1995-2015

Celebrating Rural Women



This twenty year journey of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWPTT) is indeed an impressive achievement which instills great pride in our network of rural women.

As we celebrate this monumental occasion, our theme **“Honour the Past, Celebrate the Present and Plan for the Future”** immediately comes to mind and at this time I am forced to reflect on my role of President and that of those Presidents who have preceded me.

This pictorial publication aims to showcase some of the developments and key achievements that the Network has fostered over the years. It communicates our history and the strides that our membership have made in building their skill sets, becoming entrepreneurs and building partnerships with other public and private sector and other civil society groups.

As we celebrate our rural women, we are grateful for the fact that the Network has had the privilege of having some of the best minds in the fields of agriculture and agribusiness. Among these are foundation members Shanti Soogrim, who went on to be winner of the National Agricultural Entrepreneurial Awards (Trinidad and Tobago) and Rose

Rajbansee who served as President of NRWPTT, President of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP), President of the Federation of Women Institute, and Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). It should be noted that ACWW has a permanent representative at the United Nations and has held consultative status since 1947.

At the regional level many rural women have been able to improve themselves. Notably, Pauline Soogrim of Guyana who is now serving as Minister of Amerindian Affairs in that country; Fidelia Graan Galon of Suriname who serves as the Ambassador of Suriname to Trinidad and Tobago and Head of the Diplomatic Corps. Members in Trinidad have been serving as Directors on National Boards and more than five rural women in Jamaica are serving as councillors and local government representatives.

Our women have had the opportunity to present at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women CSW 57, in 2012. Two of our rural women also attended the CSW58 in 2014.

In 2013 the opportunity came as an invitation from the Commonwealth to present our project: the Mango Festival as a “case study” at the Commonwealth Government Women Affairs Ministers Meeting in Dakar, Bangladesh. Similarly, we were invited to be a panellist on the Caribbean Tourism Conference held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2013.

In 2013, Boston University expressed interest in a six-week internship with NRWPTT for one of their International Relations students Denise Gharty. She reports to have had an enjoyable time and memorable experiences of the culture of Trinidad and Tobago. This is an example of the Network’s mandate of meeting and sharing with members and deepening relationships with women from across the world.

In 2013/14, the Network continued with its programme of exchanges and a group returned to Suriname to strengthen the agreement of understanding with the NRWPTT. The Network also participated in CARIFESTA, with great success.

In 2014 The French University of Montpellier –SupAgro Institute, Department of Training and Student Life made a request for an internship for one of its students Laura Rinaldo,

who successfully completed the six week internship. This link was enhanced when it was learnt that Laura is originally from Morne-à-l’Eau, Guadeloupe. That city has had a long standing twinning arrangement with our Capital City Port of Spain. The Honourable Mayor therefore sent a covering letter in support of the visit, opening the way to further strengthen the links in agriculture and agricultural value added products .

It is a pleasure to share these thoughts with you, as I am privileged to hold the position of President of the NRWPTT. With the support of Executive and members we will continue to undertake our role to empower rural women, with an even greater sense of commitment, efficiency and understanding.

Gia Gaspard-Taylor
President

Network of Rural Women Producers
Trinidad and Tobago
NRWPTT

Message from the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the offer from the executive of the Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago to write this message of congratulations on their 20th anniversary. For one reason, it allowed me to travel down Memory Lane.

Shortly after I was appointed Representative of the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Trinidad and Tobago, Marlene Antoine, Rural Development Officer, attached to the office, introduced me to the gender programme which concentrated on the development of women. However, there were a few groups, exemplified by the Paramin Women's Group, who had small business operations.

Marlene and I held discussions with the women in the programme and it was agreed that, for rural women to realize their full potential, there was a need for representative and economic strength. In turn, this required numbers for effective advocacy and the creation of viable enterprises. The germ of a national Network was born and this has now grown into a young adult of 20 years.

Consequently, in 1994, representatives of a number of groups and/or associations, directly or indirectly involved with the development of women, such as, the Federation of Women Institute, Paramin Women's Group, Mayaro Women, Penal Women, two Tobago Women's Groups, Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Agricultural Development Bank, and Consumer Guidance Council, were invited to the IICA office.

At that meeting, agreement was reached on the Network. This was followed by a number of lengthy meetings (amongst themselves, with lawyers and the Ministry of Legal Affairs)

that resulted in a draft Constitution and the election of a truly representative 15 member Board of Directors.

The Network has had many successes. However, to me the most important is the fact that, despite many trials and tribulations, the Network remains cohesive and vibrant. Further, many of its members are operating and managing viable Enterprises thus contributing to the economic improvement of themselves, their communities and the nation.

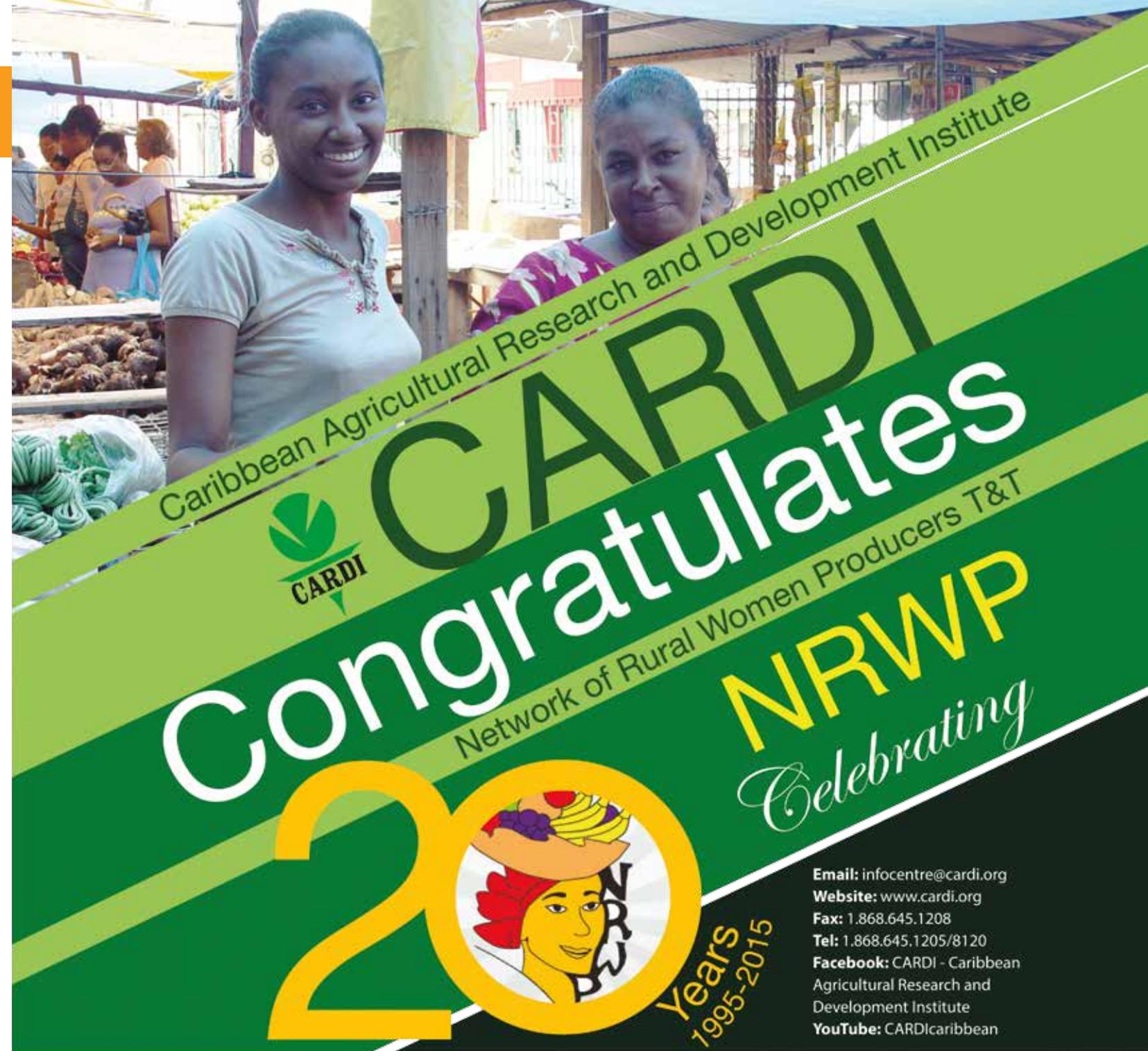
At the regional level, in 1998, in association with IICA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and with the patronage of the then First Lady, Mrs. Oma Panday, the Network hosted the first and only meeting of the First Ladies (wives of Heads of Government/State) of the Region, including Haiti. During that meeting, there was signed the Port of Spain Accord, which saw the establishment of the Regional Network, the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP).

This activity took place during the initiation of another major regional initiative, the first Caribbean Week of Agriculture. The Network can therefore justifiably claim to have played a critical role in the establishment of two of the most important initiatives in the development of the "new" agriculture in the Region.

I am positive that the network will continue to have many more successes. Consequently, I congratulate it not only on this 20 years but, more importantly on its next 20+ years.

Arlington Chesney
Executive Director

Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)



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Facebook: CARDI - Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
YouTube: CARDIcaribbean

Message from the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)

Dear Members of the Network of Rural Women Producers
Trinidad and Tobago:

Good wishes for your deliberations in Suriname and the start of the
Caribbean Week of Agriculture October 6 – 12, 2014.

Congratulations on your 20 years of forward looking
achievements for rural women producers in Trinidad and Tobago.

October is a month of harvest in the northern climates and a
time for planting in the southern climates but when you are living
in the tropics you think of planting and harvest during the rainy
and dry seasons. October is an important month for the United
Nations (UN) which has declared the following International days:
October 11 is the International Day of the Girl Child; October 15
is the International Day of Rural Women; October 16 is the UN
declared World Food Day and October 17 is the International
Day for the Eradication of Poverty. These four days are especially
important to rural women and their communities. 2014 is also the
UN declared Year of Family Farming.

As you celebrate your many successes, I hope you will consider
the connections between the girl child, rural women, the world
food day and the eradication of poverty.

I wish you every success for another 20 years of sowing, growing
and innovation.

Yours truly,

Sharon Hatten, Canada

ACWW UN Committee Chair and Board Member 2013-2016

ACWW “working together for a better future”



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Creating History

*“By working together, by joining forces,
by forging a strong link and working as
a network, we will generate the power
to make a difference.”*

Oma Panday



The Head Table at the official launch of the NRWPTT. (l. - r.) Rose Rajbansee, NRWPTT at the podium; seated: Dr. Reeza Mohammed, Minister of Agriculture; Mrs. Oma Panday, wife of Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; Dr. Arlington Chesney, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago; Eileen Clarke, Director of Gender Affairs and Yvonne Charles, Chair of the proceedings.

In 1995, a group of rural women began meeting at the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago. Over a two-year period meetings were conducted regularly during which a constitution for the network was finalised. The NRWPTT was formed under the stewardship of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), led by its Representative at the time, Dr. H. Arlington D. Chesney.

Throughout its history, the NRWPTT has been guided by their vision statement: *To be a national umbrella body promoting rural women's issues and empowering women to enhance their economic and social well-being.*

The will to build bridges and seek opportunities for the advancement of the women in the young Network was evident from early on. With key support from IICA and other organizations such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the NRWPTT took its baby steps in attempting to provide employment opportunities and access to credit for micro business projects.

As expected, some initiatives were not as successful as others, however challenges are to be expected in the development of any organisation. The NRWPTT faced all of their challenges head on.



A regular meeting of the NRWP with IICA managerial staff.

Governance

To date, five women have served as President of the Network for varying periods over the 20 years. They are: Fulade Mortola (Trinidad); Sonia Hannibal (Trinidad); Rose Rajbansee (Trinidad); Margaret George (Tobago) and Gia Gaspard-Taylor (Trinidad).

Veronica Romany currently serves as Vice-President of the Network. Notable contributions have been made by Secretaries over the years, among these: Petra Gomez, Roma Price and now Ria Edward.

Membership

The startup membership of the young network comprised some 40 members, only three of whom remain as members today. These longstanding members are: Gia Gaspard-Taylor, Rose Rajbansee (Manzanilla) and Veronica Romany (Paramin).

The NRWPTT's current membership is based on 60 members and 14 groups from across Trinidad and Tobago. These groups include: Federation of Women Institute; Network of Non-Governmental Organizations for the Advancement of Women; Women of the Soil; Maloney Women's Group; Toco Foundation; Soap Sisters; Paramin Women's Group, Stacia Women's Group; North Manzanilla Farmers Group.

The Network is legally registered with the Ministry of Legal Affairs as a non-profit organisation and is funded through Government subvention and membership fees.



Long-standing members Rose Rajbansee (left) and Veronica Romany (right)



Ms. Marlene Antoine (left), Rural Development Officer with the IICA Office, was responsible for the programme for development of women's business groups



Dr. Arlington Chesney presenting a cheque from the revolving loan fund to Ms. Figaro, Network member from Point Fortin. Gia Gaspard-Taylor looks on.

CANROP

The Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP) was launched in Trinidad and Tobago in 1999 with much pomp and great expectations by the wives of the Heads of State/Government, who signed the "Port of Spain Accord" that formalised the regional Network.



Signatures of the wives of Heads of Government/State of the Caribbean, on the **Port of Spain Accord**, marking the establishment of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (then CNRWP now CANROP).

Caribbean rural women who have served as CANROP Presidents over the years include: Bibbi Andrews (Guyana) - 1st President; Rose Rajbansee (Trinidad and Tobago) - 2nd President; Christine Wilson (Saint Lucia) - 3rd President and Carmen Nurse (Saint Lucia) - 4th and current President.

CANROP members meet annually at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA), under the sponsorship of IICA, CARDI and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) of the Netherlands. During the CWA, the women also have the opportunity to participate in a number of training workshops, agriculture fairs and meetings of the Ministers of Agriculture of CARICOM, who also traditionally meet at the CWA.

Presently, CANROP is seeking to strengthen the network through improved governance and communication.



Above: CANROP members together at their meeting at the 10th Caribbean Week of Agriculture held in Dominica in October 2011. **Below:** Members after a training exercise at the same event.



Mission for the millennium

A better life for rural women

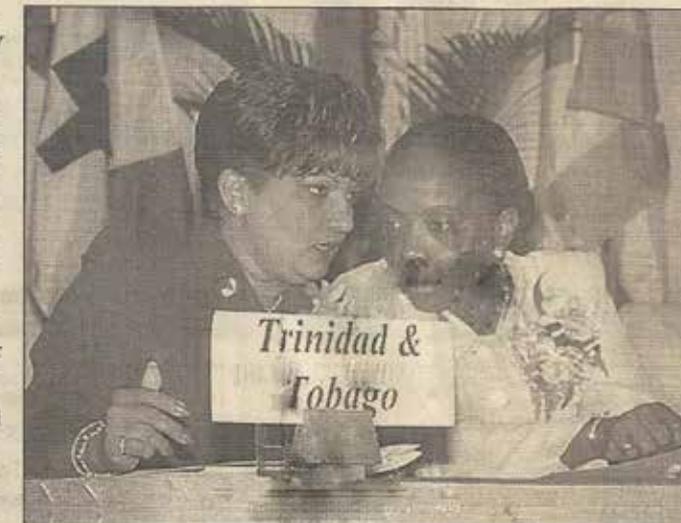
THE following is an edited version of the feature address delivered by OMA PANDAY, wife of Prime Minister Basdeo Panday at the First Meeting of the Wives of Heads of State and Governments of the Caribbean Community last Monday at the Holiday Inn, Port-of-Spain. The title of Mrs Panday's address at the three-day meeting was "Enhancing the participation of women in the rural development process within the Caribbean."

I WELCOME everyone of you most warmly to our Rainbow Republic.

Here in Trinidad and Tobago, we think of the Rainbow as a symbol of our diversity, and the harmony that we enjoy in our diversity.

This morning, at this conference of women who have come together with a mission to make a difference in our corner of the world, the rainbow can have another meaning, a special meaning for us.

I believe that we are here today because, collectively, we have the potential to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of our sisters, across the Caribbean.



OMA PANDAY, left, wife of T&T's Prime Minister, Basdeo Panday, speaks with Beverly Arthur, second from left, wife of Barbados Prime Minister, Owen Arthur, at the First Meeting of the Wives of Heads of State and Governments of the Caribbean Community last Monday at the Holiday Inn, Port-of-Spain. Photo by NOEL SALDENHA.

bridges to a better life for women in our rural areas.

Let us strengthen our network of Wives of Heads of State and Government.

Let us network with the First Ladies of the Americas, so that we can access potentially sizeable resources to help us fulfil our mission.

Let us use every connection to help us build those bridges to better lives for our rural women. We will achieve our goals only if we succeed in mobilising all the resources that we can muster, to propel our sisters forward, through the Caribbean Network of Women Producers.

The establishment of the regional women's network took prominence in the media in Trinidad and Tobago. The feature (above) was published in the **Sunday Guardian**, July 11, 1999

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Building Skills

“Invest in rural women.”

*Ban Ki Moon
UN Secretary General*



Training project with basket weavers from Guyana, was hosted by the NRWPTT in venues across Trinidad and Tobago

The Network takes an integrated approach to women’s empowerment, drawing on local, regional and international partnerships to deliver developmental opportunities to the women. Investing in the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge in various areas of training has been a pillar of the NRWPTT throughout its history. Members have been afforded the opportunity to participate in training activities and other learning opportunities, improving their skills and knowledge in a range of areas. These areas include:

Advocacy, agribusiness management, agro-tourism, business management and finance, culinary skills, farming, food safety, handicraft (paper, soaps, etc.), information technology, leadership, proposal writing, among others.

Training activities were not limited to Trinidad and Tobago, as some members participated in various events in the region. A few of the training activities (particularly in art and craft) are delivered by members themselves.



Above: Early Network members participating in a culinary skills training session
Inset: Members at a workshop on seasonings and sauces at CARIRI in 2013.

A generous donation of an unused annex at the grounds of the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago in 2010, helped to fuel the entrepreneurial spirit of the NRWPTT. The building was renovated and made ready for use by 2011 and launched as the **Rose Rajbansee Centre for Training and Rural Development**.

The centre provides an office space for the Network, as well as an area for showcasing products, hosting meetings and other events. Above all, it provides a much-needed 'home base' for training activities. Many of the Network's training sessions are held at the centre.



Mr Victor Villalobos Director General of Inter American Institute for Corporation on Agriculture and visiting Government Minister Timothy Harris from St. Kitts visited with the NRWPTT at the opening of the centre.



Mr. Gregg Rowllins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, addressing the gathering at the opening of the Rose Rajbansee Centre for Training and Rural Development in 2011.




The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the IICA family extend congratulations to you and other members of the NRWPTT as you celebrate your 20th anniversary.

In our view, this is a remarkable achievement as not many organizations can boast of the many accomplishments that you have achieved over the years.

The NRWPTT has indeed become a household name as it has led the way in building capacities and empowering rural women, through various projects such as the Mango Festival and Mango Conference.

We are indeed very proud of these accomplishments and wish the Network continued success in the future.

Representative and Staff
IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago



Training in paper craft at the Rose Rajbansee Centre for Development and Training



Rose Rajbansee participating in a CTA Training session **Web4forDev** held at UNDP Offices in Port of Spain, Trinidad



Members of the NRWPTT participating with members of other agribusiness groups in workshop on Marketing of Micro-Products at IICA



Training in soapmaking. Handmade soaps have grown to be a signature product of the NRWPTT - with many members engaging in the making of this product



25 members of the network participated in an IICA-led workshop to make bread and other pastry products using local ingredients: cassava, sweet potatoes and plantain. The training was conducted at the Toco Foundation's Agri-Centre in Cumana, Toco



Participants of a Food safety training course at IICA in 2013



NEDCO is pleased to offer

Congratulations to the NRWPTT

on your twentieth (20th) anniversary.

Over the years you have steadfastly executed your role of enhancing rural women to increase income and improve their standard of living while successfully promoting an entrepreneurial culture.

NRWPTT's activities are in strategic alignment with NEDCO's aims and objectives to develop MSEs into sustainable enterprises.

We are happy to have established a collaborative relationship and will continue to assist with building institutional capacity for the network.

We look forward to working with you as you reach new heights in the years

The Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institutes

extends heartfelt congratulations to the Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago on its 20 years of service to rural women.

As a foundation member of the organisation, we are proud to be associated with all efforts you have contributed in empowering our Rural Women for the past two decades.

We look forward to our continued working relationship in the ensuing year.

May God bless you all.

Yours in Community Service,
Gloria Copeland
President

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Empowering Entrepreneurs

“Empowerment of women is a powerful driver of progress across Millenium Development Goals.”

*Helen Clarke
UNDP Administrator*



Mango spa services offered at the Mango Festival in 2012

Many women in rural communities lack the capacity and necessary entrepreneurial and management skills to produce and market value added products from agricultural commodities. Incomes and business opportunities still remain somewhat limited.

The NRWP has taken bold steps over the years to assist members in addressing these challenges. Programmes designed to improve their capacities and skills in pursuing entrepreneurial activities have included access to funding, transfer of technology and networking.

Most members of the Network currently run their own micro-enterprises, boasting an impressive variety of products and services. Examples of these include:

Products

Handmade paper
Jewelry
Sauces & Seasonings
Soap
Wines

Services

Catering
Event planning
Plant rentals
Spa & beauty treatments
Training

The micro-enterprises are mainly community-based. Some of them having wider national and regional clientele.



Some early innovative products of the NRWP



One of the Network's more successful "soap-preneurs", Colleen Malwah-Aqui (r.)

Opportunities are provided for the women to display and sell their products at events on the local calendar as well as regionally. Every year, the Network hosts or participates in local events to commemorate the following occasions:

- **International Women's Day** (March 8)
- **World Biodiversity Day** (May 22)
- **International Rural Women's Day** (October 15)
- **World Food Day** (October 16)

The Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) has also provided an avenue for promotion and sale of products of Network members. The CWA is also a key occasion on which the women can meet and network with their CANROP counterparts in other islands.

The annual Mango Festival, the Network's flagship event also provides a great opportunities for exposure of members and their products.

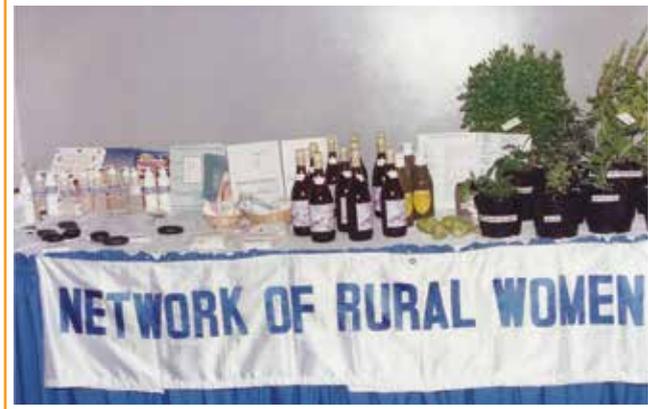


Our members are innovative and enterprising producers



NRWPTT members have been promoting their products and the NRWPTT brand from since the inception of the Network.

Above and Below:
Early days - displaying the fruits of their labour: an already wide range of products made by the women.



Mango products hold the interest of participants at the Mango Conference 2014.



This beautiful costume is made entirely out of paper!

Visit the Rose Rajbansee Centre to meet the doll and find out how her costume was made!

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Networking Abroad

“This experience is something I will take for the rest of my life and share with women both in agriculture and in my community.”

*Irene Miguel
Fishing Pond Farmers Group*



Honourable Edward Belfort, Minister of Justice and Police, Suriname, receives a gift from NRWPT President Gia Gaspard Taylor

The NRWPT has always sought opportunities for members to travel outside of Trinidad and Tobago to broaden their horizons and extend their networks. Many have travelled to various events, workshops and courses. The most regular of these would have been attendance and representation at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, which is the Caribbean’s premier regional agriculture forum, held in a different Caribbean island annually.

Owing to her membership on other boards and organisations, Mrs. Gaspard-Taylor has profiled and promoted the work of the NRWPT at different meetings of the Commonwealth Women’s Network, The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)

and the United Nations. This, in many measures, has brought additional opportunities for the Network, its members as well as other rural women in Trinidad and Tobago, who are not members of the NRWPT.

In 2014, the Network spread its wings and facilitated the participation of two rural women in the UN Commission on the Status of Women CSW58 in New York.

The NRWPT’s presence abroad has also been championed by long-standing member of the Network, Rose Rajbansee, who served as Regional Coordinator (Latin America and the Caribbean) for the ACWW from 2010-2014.



(l.- r.) Gia Gaspard-Taylor, President NRWPT, Elaine Francois Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee and Irene Miguel, Fishing Pond Farmers Group at the CSW58 in New York, USA.

NRWPTT hosted a French exchange student in August 2014, thereby opening doors to new arrangement for the NRWPTT to host exchange students and other young women visiting Trinidad and Tobago, who wish to make a contribution to the development of rural women. Ms. Laura Rinaldo, was hosted at two members' homes during her stay and was supervised by Rose Rajbansee and Veronica Romany.

Within the region, in 2012, the NRWPTT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maroon Women of Suriname. This MOU will serve as a model to enhance the social, cultural and economic well-being of rural communities in both countries.



Signing of the MOU with Suriname. (l. - r.) Gia Gaspard-Taylor, Jerry Miranda, District Commissioner and Brigitte Fer-Hardy, President of Para Women's Organisation

In the Pipeline

With the support of national business development enterprises such as the National Entrepreneurial Development Company (NEDCO) and ExporTT and thanks to the some of the Network's local and international connections, a few exciting business ventures are in the pipeline. Further details and updates will be provided via the Network's website and Facebook page. (see pg. 36)

- Branding of NRWPTT products (for export) under a common label and under the theme "Equality through Business"
- Participation in ExporTT's trade missions to three French-speaking countries in the region
- Participation in a trade mission to Atlanta
- Participation in the Mango/Peach Festival in Atlanta



Gregg Rawlins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago joined with members of the NRWPTT in hosting visiting members of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ambassador of Suriname Madame Fidelia Grand-Gaalon and Margaret McMillan from Ireland, a member of the ACWW, at the IICA Office.

The Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago Experience of a Lifetime

By Kimberly Baptiste

On becoming a member one of the first activities I had the pleasure of participating in was an intensive workshop hosted by the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI). Good manufacturing practices, food safety and mango products processing were all covered. A wealth of information and practical training all sponsored by the Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT), a group that promotes and supports and takes all necessary measures to ensure members are equipped with the skills and expertise required to be successful in their journey as entrepreneurs.

With the group's impressive performance at the CARIRI workshop we were invited with 16 groups to participate in CARIRI's annual Food Safety Challenge. We were tested on topics such as: Building & Facility Design, Pest Control, Cleaning & Sanitation, Personal Hygiene, Storage of Perishables, Food Preparation & Handling, Raw Materials Quality Control, HACCP and Packaging. The NRWPTT made it to the finals round, ultimately placing second overall.

This group has been a great experience thus far and I would like to thank my new support system NRWPTT. I was afforded the opportunity to be a part of the Mango Conference and Mango Festival 2014, a

celebration of mango, showcasing the true potential of mango and its by-products. These events reinforced my vision for the opportunity for growth of agriculture, particularly the mango and its economic potential.

Thanks to the NRWPTT, I am now involved in developing local capacities, strengthening women's grass roots organizations and empowering young women to create positive change in their communities. My short journey with the NRWPTT thus far, as a new member, has been an adventure the most valuable experience of which has been the group of lifelong sisters I have joined.



"Brigand Hill Products will steal your tastebuds and entice you to purchase our products."

*Congratulations on reaching 20!
Rose Rajbansee*

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Creating a Legacy

*“You may never know what results
come from your action. But if you do
nothing, there will be no result.”*

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948).



Mr. Gregg Rawlins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago speaking at the opening of the 1st Mango Festival at the IICA Office in St. Augustine in 2009. Head table (l. - r.) Cintra Persad, Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Rhoda Reddock, UWI and Gia Gaspard-Taylor, NRWPT

The NRWPT's flagship annual event is the Mango Festival and Conference. Both events focus on exploring the innovative and entrepreneurial possibilities of this well-loved commodity.

The festival supports women as innovative and enterprising producers, through the provision of opportunities to develop and present new products and services, using this prized commodity.

The first Mango Festival was held at the grounds of the IICA Office in St. Augustine in 2009. The event rapidly grew in popularity and by the second year, it attracted new sponsors: the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Tourism Development Company (TDC). Sponsorship has continued to grow as the Festival has grown in popularity and reach. The



Patrons of all ages, enjoying what the Mango Festival has to offer: raw fruit, processed and baked mango products alike.

presence of regional womens' groups from within the region has grown over the years with participation from Suriname and Grenada.

The Mango Conference, held annually during the week preceding the Festival provides a forum for research work relating to the exploitation of the mango "from seed to table". R&D is the basis of the success of the mango at the producer and commercial level and thereby the growth of the mango industry in Trinidad and Tobago.





Participants enjoying the NRWPT product display at the Mango Conference 2014.



Surinamese dancers at the Mango Festival, 2014



Handicraft donated by the Suriname Women's Network.

The NRWPT is pleased to acknowledge the sponsors of the Mango Festival and Conference over the years



NEWSDAY SECTION B Wednesday July 10, 2013 Page

The BEAT

PEOPLE FASHION BOOKS HEALTH LIFESTYLE RECIPES MUSIC ART

Mango Festival attracts hundreds of visitors

By RALPH SANWARIE

THE NETWORK of Rural Women Producers (NORWP) in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, Ministry of Food Production, Sangre Grande Regional Corporation and Inter American Institute of Corporation and Agriculture held its Mango Festival and competition at UWI Field Station, Mt Hope last Sunday.

Hundreds of people visited the festival to sample and buy mango products, and learn about the different varieties of mangoes available in Trinidad and Tobago.

Gia Gaspard-Taylor, president of NORWP welcomed all exhibitors and participants, and encouraged them to continue producing mango products. She said soon mango products will fill the shelves of the supermarkets and groceries in TT.

Taylor said the Mango Festival is growing every year and attracting more and more people. There were all types of mangoes and mangoes products on display and for sale which included edible items and cosmetics.

The day's event culminated with tassa drumming and distribution of prizes. Rachel St Rose received the prize for the most innovative product while the booth by Colleen Malwah Aquí was judged the best.

© MANGOES continues on Page 38

COLLEEN MALWAH AQUÍ (right) receives the prize for best booth from Gia Gaspard-Taylor, president of The Network of Rural Women Producers at the Mango Festival held on Sunday at UWI Field Station, Mt Hope.

RIA SOOKOO receives the prize for 'Best Mango Chow' from Rosa Rajbansee of NORWP.

MANGO PRODUCTS on display at the Mango Festival.

VISITORS at last Sunday's Mango Festival take a look at mango infused body products and other items made with the fruit by Rachel St Rose.

Recognising Achievement

“May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others.”

Anon.



Winners of the CARIRI Food Safety Challenge in 2014. The NRWPTT placed 2nd.

The women have been turning heads and receiving recognition in different spheres over the years, including leadership, community service, entrepreneurship, environmental advocacy.

The most recent challenge undertaken by the NRWPTT was by a group of members who participated in the CARIRI Food Safety Challenge. Members Dilean Richards, Chamilee Jogie, Sandra Greenidge, Kimberly Baptiste and Rachel St. Rose came up against 16 companies and emerged as winners in food safety standards.

In commemoration of UN International Women’s Day and Commonwealth Day, 2011, a function was held to recognise 24 women as “Change Agents” for their work and dedication towards the advancement of women and girls. Two of the members: Gia Gaspard-Taylor and Rose Rajbansee were honoured on this occasion.

Nolana Lynch, the youngest member of the Network emerged as the National Youth Award Winner 2013 for her inspirational and effective impact on environmental advocacy and preservation.



Rose Rajbansee receiving her award from Mrs. Monica Williams, Director Gender Affairs (2011).



Ms. Gia Gaspard-Taylor receiving her award from Ms. Yulle Williams, former Minister of Gender Affairs,



Nolana Lynch with her award

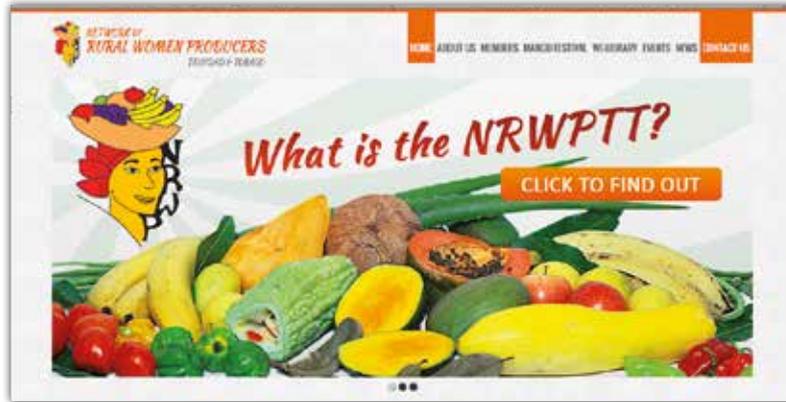


On the occasion of International Rural Women’s Day in 2011, the NRWPTT honoured some of their members for contributions made over the years.

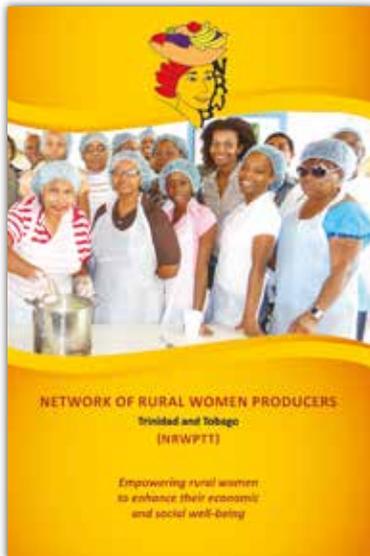
Seated (l.- r.): **Angela Gallai** - Community and Culture Development; **Rose Rajbansee** - Longest Serving Member; **Veronica Romany** - Product Development in the Mountainous Village of Paramin, Small Business Development; **Margaret Brown** - National, Regional and International, Development of Women. Absent from the photo is **Edna Stewart** - Rural Community Development.

Standing at the back are (l. - r.) Her Excellency Madame Fedelia Grand-Galon Ambassador of Suriname in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gregg Rawlins IICA Representative and President Gia Gaspard-Taylor.

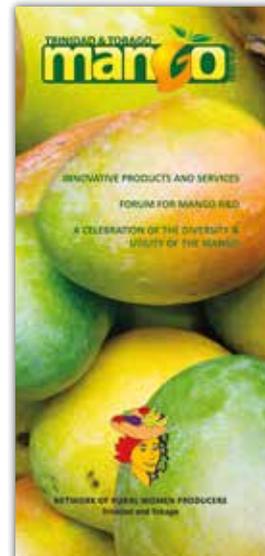
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NRWPTT Brochure



Mango Festival Brochure



"NRWPTT News" Annual Newsletter



Network of Rural Women Producers - Trinidad & Tobago



NETWORK OF RURAL WOMEN PRODUCERS
Trinidad and Tobago

The Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago, would like to thank the many individuals, local and regional institutions, agencies, government ministries and international bodies that have invested in our Network over the past 20 years.

Your individual contributions are too numerous to mention. We recognise your collective contributions in areas such as access to finance, advocacy, enterprise development, institutional strengthening and technology transfer as having served very well in helping to develop individuals within the Network as well as the Network as a group on the whole.

A special thank you to the the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), who after opening their doors to us in 1995 and welcoming us into their family, have maintained their good relationship with us throughout our history and have helped us progress.

Thank you all!

For where your treasure is...



...there your heart will be also.

Luke 12:34



NETWORK OF RURAL
WOMEN PRODUCERS
Trinidad and Tobago

Support women in microenterprise in developing
the MANGO INDUSTRY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



*“Your Partner in
Agribusiness”*



Ganesh Gangapersad
CEO, NAMDEVCO

On behalf of the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), we extend our heartiest congratulations to the Network of Rural Women Producers in Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT) on completing 20 outstanding years of success. The NRWPTT has always been at the top of the list for serving the community with generous services.

Organisations like this with a brilliant team of dedicated members, who are motivated through collective empowerment can only aim for high results. Working with members has been a great honour over the years and we value each and every collaborative activity shared with the NRWPTT.

The Network has sown seeds in the national landscape which have yielded abundant benefits in rural communities. The NRWPTT's commitment and sincerity over the years has bloomed into much deserved local, regional and international recognition. The Network has always kept the empowerment of women in agriculture as a priority within the organisation's goals. As such, we have always considered it a privilege to work with the Network to facilitate this whenever requested. Not only does the Network provide a learning platform for these women but it also offers various means of support to their agribusiness ventures.

We wish the Network of Rural Women Producers in Trinidad and Tobago all the success for many more years to come. The Corporation pledges its support in assisting the network in realising future endeavours.

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