WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN MICRO-BUSINESS: THE CASE OF THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT INSTITUTE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to evaluate how the Women’s Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T) empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. Through a case study, the thesis focuses on how the WLEIT&T empowers six women participants to become leaders through their participation in two pilot projects. Three of these women operated micro-businesses from their homes, two had difficulty in accessing funding to launch their business enterprise, while one found that the time was not right to begin. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observers notes, official documents from the WLEIT&T, and from two informal interviews with the Execution Programme Co-ordinator and the leadership facilitator.

From the findings of the study, the WLEIT&T set out to empower women leaders in micro-businesses, but these women also became leaders in their communities and religious organizations. The transformative leadership skills for micro-businesses facilitated by the WLEIT&T are transferable to other areas of leadership.

Finally, the study makes recommendations to the WLEIT&T. These recommendations may be considered to further address the training of women for leadership in micro-businesses.
DEDICATION

To Makeda Athena Ayana Leslie-Ann Paul, my daughter
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the participants of this study, the Execution Programme Co-ordinator and the leadership facilitator of the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago who contributed to this study. They unselfishly and willingly gave their time to share their personal and professional stories. Their participation provided a better understanding of women's leadership.

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Finally, I want to thank my family for being there with me. To my brothers, I appreciate the great support. I want to specially thank my daughter for her encouragement and understanding.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

... although the Caribbean female population is estimated at roughly 51 percent of the total population. The positions of leadership within the major political parties, the trade unions, the security forces, the civil service, and the key economic, industrial, and financial sectors are held by men (Antrobus and Gordon, 1984, p.120).

Through the use of a case study, this paper evaluates how the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T) empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. In view of the changing meaning of leadership, I intend to analyze the WLEIT&T understanding of women's leadership, and examine some of the assumptions and new theories of transformative leadership that shape this field in developing countries. The research consists of interviewing six women participants and analyzing the framework of the WLEIT&T. Some of the questions that motivated this study are: Does leadership mean the self-reliance of women to fully participate in decision making at the highest level within a hierarchic system? Does leadership mean the thoughtful exploration of a diverse woman's effort to lead through empowering others? Is women's leadership woman-centred and transformative? The remainder of this chapter concentrates on developing the background and statement of the problem; the purpose; significance and setting of the study; and the gender and socio-economic position of women in Trinidad and Tobago. The introduction will conclude with the organization of the following chapters in this study.
Background and Statement of the Problem

Recent global trends have initiated social and economic development plans for the "Third World." Though they intended to benefit women in development, they have not done so. The approach has changed and attempted to include both men and women through a gender in development perspective. Despite this approach, women still remain oppressed (Sen and Grown, 1987). A major reason for their oppression is the presence of gender biases. Trinidad and Tobago, intends to address the problem of gender biases with the establishment of the Gender Affairs Division within the Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs (see Appendix I).

The country of Trinidad and Tobago realizes that women are "victims" of development due to the gender biases that affect women's level of equity and empowerment. The gender biases against women caused the under-utilization of valuable leadership resources, because they limit women's access to power. Gender biases cause women to remain poor, unemployed and under-employed.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the gender biases are documented under the themes of welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control. On the issue of welfare of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, The World Bank Report of 1995 shows that men enjoy 45% more income than women. When it comes to access, women have less entitlement to distributed resources. Within the context of conscientization of gender bias, the subordination of women is socially constructed. An analysis of participation reveals that few women participate in public and private institutions at the highest
level. The control of women shows unequal power relations of men and women in the family, home, workplace, community, and private and public organizations (Ministry of Gender Affairs Division, 1999).

A synthesis of the documented gender biases reveals that fewer women are found in leadership positions of micro-businesses in Trinidad and Tobago, although they are income generating perspectives in developing countries. Women face different constraints in entrepreneurial businesses than men. Significant research suggests that there is a great difference in business start-up, timing, educational background, work experience, business skills, goals, management styles, growth rate, business characteristics, networking and acquisition of loans (Aldrich et al., 1997; ILO, 1996). It is against this background that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago works to address practical, strategic and specific needs of women through the WLEIT&T within the Ministry of Gender Affairs Division.

The specific documented gender biases faced by women in micro-entrepreneurs were first assessed through Women Entrepreneurs in Micro and Small Businesses in Trinidad and Tobago, a study conducted by the International Labour Organization, Caribbean Office Multi-Discipline Advisory Team (ILO, 1996). One of the recommendations by ILO was to train potential women entrepreneurs in leadership and business skills with the aim of raising their status. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago recognized these critical issues and established the WLEIT&T as two pilot projects. Although the Institute was a recommendation of the
ILO, the Government also took into consideration the mandate of the Beijing Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in order to include women in leadership and issues of decision making, economic participation and poverty.

Reddock's (1997) UNDP study on Trinidad and Tobago also shows that equity in decision making and power sharing is a problem, only for women. They are consciously excluded from many leadership positions because of their gender. Women also resist political and leadership positions due to competition and adversarial partisanship. In 1985, statistics show that women occupied 29% of high decision-making posts in the public sector, however this percentage had declined by 1990 to 25%. Additionally, ILO (1996) recommends that gender sensitivity training is needed in both the private and public sectors to increase women's participation in decision-making positions.

The WLEIT&T was introduced to women of Trinidad and Tobago as a pilot project in 1998 and 1999. With its establishment, women entrepreneurs, especially those from under-privileged and disadvantaged areas of Trinidad and Tobago, received training for leadership in micro-businesses. As my thesis concerns women's leadership in micro-businesses, I will interview six women who participated in the June 1998 and February 1999 women's leadership pilot projects. Taking the WLEIT&T as a case study, I want to evaluate whether or not the women
entrepreneurs, who were participants of the pilot projects learned about transformative leadership for micro-businesses.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to evaluate how the WLEIT&T empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. The theoretical understanding of adult learning is that the adult learner discovers things that she is ready to discover at a time of her personal development and enhancement (Freire, 1968; Lister, 1994; Knowles, 1980). Given this theoretical perspective, the study analyzes how the WLEIT&T makes the learning of leadership skills effective for women micro-entrepreneurs. As the study is prescriptive, it will contribute to gender and equity learning, adult learning, the theories of women and development, the community economic development planning of Trinidad and Tobago, and a Third World feminist theory of leadership.

**Significance of the Study**

The study has theoretical and practical significance. This study will provide important data on women's leadership in Trinidad and Tobago, which is not readily available. Fresh data will be provided through a theoretical perspective of women's leadership from the developing country of Trinidad and Tobago. The study hopes to provide evidence that will lead to a wider understanding of women's leadership in micro-businesses.
The practical significance of the study evaluates the initiatives of the government of Trinidad and Tobago, which encourage women in leadership roles through micro-businesses. It follows discussion on the leadership of women at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The people of Trinidad and Tobago, especially women and the world look to the government and international institutions to carry through the process of women's leadership discussed at the last World Conference on Women.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government establishment of the WLEIT&T is therefore part of the mandate to create women leaders through its stages of development planning. The aim is to bring women into the mainstream of the development processes, and have them play an integral part in defining objectives and modes of development. Both women and men should participate in decision making within Trinidad and Tobago in the course of economic improvement.

Setting of the Study

The study is undertaken in the twin island-state republic of Trinidad and Tobago, situated at the southwest tip of the Caribbean Archipelago and north of Venezuela. In 1990, the twin island-state of Trinidad and Tobago had a population of 1.2 million. Approximately 50% are female with 80% evenly divided between African and East Indian ethnicity (Reddock, 1997). 80% of the population trace their roots back to Africa or India in roughly even numbers. The next 20 percent of the population consists of people from Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and China.
Trinidad and Tobago gained independence from Britain in 1962 and became a republic within the Commonwealth in 1976. It has a democratic government. The national capital is Port of Spain with a population of 350,000, while Tobago's capital is Scarborough. The total population of Tobago is 50,000. It is an English speaking republic with the old French-based patois almost now in extinction. Some Hindi language is used in the Indian community. The other major urban areas are San Fernando and Point Fortin in the South, Chaguana: in central and Arima in the east. Trinidad and Tobago experience a relatively higher standard of living to other developing countries. Policies and legislative measures are put in place for gender equity and reform. In spite of this, problems related to income distribution, increased levels of poverty, deprivation, standard of living and access to social services, vary within the country and among it's population (Reddock, 1997). There is still much to be done towards more gender equity and reform.

Gender and Socio-Economic Positions in Trinidad and Tobago

Evidence of gender mainstreaming in Trinidad and Tobago appeared as far back as 1978 when the Minister of Education addressed the 23rd Annual Conference of Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institute. In his address, he spoke on The Role of Women in the Developing Economy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The minister questioned the role that women played in developing the economy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Joseph, 1978). Since then, women have been seen to have a crucial role in the social and economic development of Trinidad and Tobago. He believed the many gender biases that impact women in
other Third World countries do not exist in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. A historical look at Trinidad and Tobago reveals that women, along with men have received equal access to education.

Today, at all levels of the educational institutions, both males and females have equal access. In 1990, half the amount of students enrolled at the primary, secondary and university levels were females. In spite of this equality, women remain under-represented in technical education. The women who are enrolled in technical education remain enrolled in the gender stereotypical subject areas of clerical, secretarial, domestic or household duties of home economics, dressmaking, graphic and applied arts, housekeeping, shorthand and typing (Reddock, 1997). When it comes to the university level, a changing trend develops, especially at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago. It shows more women are educated than men, through degree concentration.

More women receive higher education at the university level in all subjects except engineering (see Table 1). Despite the achievement of higher education, women are consciously excluded from leadership positions within Trinidad and Tobago (Reddock, 1997). As women are not in leadership positions, they remain poor and have to develop innovative and creative ways both inside and outside the home to generate income. This ensures their survival, the welfare of their family and the community.
Table 1.

Women Pursuing Studies at the University of the West Indies in 1978 and 1995-1997 in Trinidad and Tobago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Women in 1978</th>
<th>Women in 1995-1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>(Joseph, 1978) 4%</td>
<td>(Reddock, 1997) 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Studies</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and General Studies</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To make money, women sell anything from bake goods, candies and take on the sewing of garments for community members (ILO, 1996). They tend to make use of the skills already achieved in the home. With these skills, they could combine business and attend to their household responsibilities.

Organization of the Chapters

The thesis consists of seven chapters. In chapter one, I present a rationale for the thesis. Chapter two provides the literature review of the thesis in which the three main emerging themes are discussed. Chapter three is an overview of the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T). The
WLEIT&T empowers participants to be leaders in micro-businesses. My research participants took part in the two pilot projects of the WLEIT&T. In chapter four, I outline the methodology of the study, in order to evaluate how the WLEIT&T empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. The research sample consisted of six women from the two pilot projects of the WLEIT&T. Three women came from each pilot project. Additionally, I also set out the research questions and the method used in data collection. In chapter five, I presented the demographics of my research subjects. I also presented the interaction of the interviews with my research subjects. Chapter six shows the research analyzes of the findings under themes. It discusses the type of leadership skills acquired by the participants of the WLEIT&T. The chapter shows that the participants of the WLEIT&T acquire transformative leadership skills for micro-businesses. The women use this same skill in their communities and religious organizations on completion of the pilot project. Chapter seven, the final chapter, summarizes the findings, concludes the thesis and makes recommendations to the WLEIT&T.

In summary, there is a problem of gender biases for entrepreneurial leadership within the developing country of Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of the study is therefore to evaluate how the WLEIT&T empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. It also intends to make recommendations to the government of Trinidad and Tobago, in order to encourage the leadership role of women.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

... overlooking this fact has allowed us to imagine, quite mistakenly, that women only lately have begun to emerge as leaders, whereas they, like men, have always led (Hartman, 1999, p. 3).

Introduction

In this chapter, I hope to expand on the key concepts required to understand the Women's leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T).

These concepts are grounded in the feminist theoretical perspective of gender and development, women's leadership and adult education. In the literature review, gender and development focuses on a people-centred approach. Women's leadership is presented as a transformative perspective. Adult education is identified with valuable self-defined life experiences, conscientization and critical thinking.

I selected to review literature in these areas because of my interest in women's leadership in developing countries. I am committed to assist women through the interrelationship of gender, race and class. I believe that I can use my "privileged location" in a developing country to assist women in Trinidad and Tobago.

I am interested in women's leadership because of my work as a part-time micro-entrepreneur and teacher within the developing country of Trinidad and Tobago. Although I was a full-time teacher, I had to devise a way to create additional income. This I did through the operation of a micro-entrepreneurial business in dress design,
on a part-time basis. As a part-time micro-entrepreneur leader, I combined business and household family responsibilities with a profession in education.

**Gender and Development**

The country of Trinidad and Tobago is vigorously involved in social and economic development plans. This is learned from the *Review of the Economy 1998: Ministry of Finance Report*. Gender equity, the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged are addressed through collaboration and partnership. Despite this information, the literature reviewed showed that women of developing countries do not benefit from the trickle down effects of development plans (Sen and Grown, 1987). They continued to suffer from the inequalities of gender biases, as their contributions are never included into development programmes. Women's positions remain isolated through the theoretical perspective of women in development (Rathgeber, 1989). The epistemology of women in development does little to address the social, political and economic construction of gender roles of women. Although, this theoretical approach has since changed to a concept of women's inclusion, women unfortunately have not yet benefited. Further change is needed to place women within the paradigm of gender planning and development, through policies and participatory training.

It is hoped only then, women would benefit from development programmes. According to Sen and Grown (1985); Razavi and Miller (1995) and Karl (1995), gender planning and development should acknowledge women's visions. Women should be placed at the centre of development planning. This theoretical perspective
encourages the rise of empowerment and leadership skill training projects for women (Antrobus, 1989; Karl, 1995). Mindful of this, agencies and government organizations are now taking the initiatives to assist women, from grassroots communities toward empowerment and leadership. This strategy is important for women who need to "employ creative and productive strategies both inside and outside of the home in order to generate income to ensure the survival of their households and the welfare of their communities" (Sebro 1996, p. 17).

Literature shows that the importance of women's survival is very relevant to nation building. Marilee Karl in Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making (1995), views women's empowerment to be crucial to the development policies of countries. She believes that female leadership in the community and entrepreneurial business are key roles for designing and reflecting empowerment in wide-ranging economic policies.

In view of development plans within a Caribbean context, Peggy Antrobus in Caribbean Women and Development: A Reassessment of Concepts Perspective and Issues (1985) calls for a "people-centred development" plan for women. She believes in a "feminist perspective" rather than a "growth-centred model." She also believes that women should be at the centre of development plans. Additionally, she theorizes that there is a need for education and training in non-formal and adult education programmes. These programmes should have a special emphasis on the history and culture of the Caribbean woman. She believes that these perspectives reflect the
values shared by women of the Caribbean. Women of the Caribbean are cooperative, and feel a mutual responsibility towards one another. They resist domination and abhor violence.

Antrobus (1985) also discusses the need for programmes that project a non-formal participatory approach methodology for the training of women. Once this is at the centre of gender and development, it will ensure women's initiatives, self-reliance and self-esteem, fueled by their desires for authority and dignity. These enhancing programmes should be for the empowerment of women and focus on women's self-confidence, self-esteem and dignity. Initiated people-centred programmes encourage the opportunities for decision-making by women, which facilitates democratic management structures. Within these programmes, women are provided with specific skills for their participation in needs assessment, programme planning and evaluation. These programmes increase women's awareness of the resources available for development projects at the local, national and international levels. They also deepen women's "consciousness and analysis of the wider framework of social, cultural, political and economic structure in which they live and work" (p. 6).

Empowerment and visioning are other essential components of gender in development. According to Onibokun et al. (1995), empowerment of women and visioning are important development strategies. They agree that the rise in empowerment of women in development projects means self-reliance and the capability of women to make autonomous decisions, in all areas of the society and the
economy. As development becomes more people-centered through the inclusion of gender, the consideration of the visions of grassroots women leaders in the community will become a reality. Visioning will enable women to see the big picture perspective. They will be able to break the barriers of gender biases, use flexibility, and translate their vision into reality, through gender participation.

Women's Leadership

To understand the social reality of women's leadership we are given a limited body of literature on women's leadership in developing countries. I noticed that a significant amount of the literature is devoted to case studies of leadership projects (Sebro, 1996). In spite of this, the literature reviewed in this section is limited to transformative leadership. It reflects a less hierarchical position and builds trust on cooperation and collaboration. It empowers individual women who can empower others, as well as a whole group. Transformative women leaders first show regards towards others, as they encourage others to lead. This is the type of leadership that addresses the problems faced by the developing world after the misguided conception of catching-up in the development theory of the First World. It is based on care, not self-interest or greed. Antrobus's (1998) vision of leadership clearly shows the principle of transformation:

It is based on a consciousness of all the sources of women's oppression, grounded in a passion for justice and driven by a commitment to the personal and institutional changes that will take us toward our goals of a more equitable, humane and sustainable world (p. 11).
A transformative leader is not afraid to share leadership. Women believe that the way to gain leadership power for oppressed people is through sharing power. According to Antrobus (1999), women's transformative leadership empowers women for social change. It recognizes the need to work differently, and requires new strategies in order to work and change the oppressions of women. It builds self-esteem, skills, resources, and allow access to decision making within communities.

Antrobus (1998) proposes that Nita Borrow provided us with a model of transformative leadership. She practiced change from the margins. Hill Collins (1991) believes that this type of leadership reflects the efforts of a civil rights perspective, where the leader is committed to make people's lives better. It is a unique way in connecting to other people. Black women like Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks were other examples of transformative leaders. They were visionary, as well as flexible thinkers, with an interest in broad social change for all people. They work with others to contribute to their growth and development of others.

Transformative leadership is not the traditional hierarchical leadership typical of the male model, that does not share power (Bunch, 1991). The male model of leadership is hierarchical and threatens the existence of our planet. War, violence and pillage of nature are the consequences of the hierarchical model of leadership. Transformative women's leadership is a cooperative model. It is female-led through the socialization of women to be nurturers and sustainers of life.
It is the leadership that shares power, and empowers others. It is the type of leadership that is needed for the goals of equality for women. This model of leadership is focused on change, communication and interaction. According to Antrobus (1999), it is leadership for change where the larger picture is understood. Hartman (1999), in her introduction to Talking Leadership informs us that leadership by women creates positive change which enhances women's lives. Transformational women's leadership is central to finding solutions to the exploitation of the gender biases imposed on women in developing countries. It is conscious of human rights and committed to change the current subordinated positions of women.

Women's transformative leadership is supported by further studies. Wells (1998) theorizes that women's transformative leadership is different from men's method of leadership. In her opinion women have more socially facilitative behaviors while men are task oriented. Levy (1988) informs us of a feminist leadership of process that is transformational. Whereas, Astin and Leland (1991) reiterate that transformative leadership is a leadership that is clear about what needs changing.

As stated above, most of the literature in this review is based on a case study project on transformative women's leadership in developing countries. Each case study shows that it is necessary for both development planners and poor women in developing countries to receive training for leadership. The purpose of these training workshops is to focus on the empowerment of women through collaboration, self-reliance and participatory methodology. The following two cases are examples. The
Rose Hall community organizing leadership project of St. Vincent focuses on consensus-building, shared power and collaboration (Sebro, 1996). The South Asian regional training workshop organized by Freedom From Hunger Campaign/Action For Development of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, focuses on the empowerment of the poor, especially on women (Bhasin, 1985).

Transformative women's leadership is supportive to women entrepreneurs, the fastest growing segment of small businesses in developing countries (Aldrich et al., 1997). Although both men and women are involved, and share similarities and differences, micro-businesses allow both to become leaders. Despite this, it is more difficult for women, as they differ in business start-up, acquisition, timing, circumstances of startup, educational background, work-experience and business skills. They are also different in terms of business goals, management style, business characteristics and growth rates. Mulakala (1991) concretizes the leadership of women in entrepreneurial businesses in her discussion on hucksters and traffickers in the English-speaking Caribbean. Women are engaged in this activity to support their families. This example emphasizes Antrobus's (1998) discussion on women's leadership that shows that women leaders in micro-entrepreneur businesses bring about social and economic change. The hucksters and traffickers of the Caribbean make a difference in the area of economic sustainability for women.
Adult Education

The literature review is guided by adult learning that supports the idea that teaching adults should be approached in a different way than teaching children and adolescents. Adult education occupies an important place in the process of how women's learning is accomplished and what they learn. Adult learning is primarily accomplished through experience (Knowles, 1980).

According to Hayes (1992), although feminist scholarship offers potentially dramatic implications to the field of adult education, women are invisible in the epistemology of adult education. Despite this, women frequently constitute the majority of learners and teachers. Women's learning problematizes adult education through a critical perspective in the teaching and learning processes. The presence of women lays the initiatives for challenges.

In order to understand adult education we must first recognize the process of learning, as the nature of learning is both a process and an outcome. It is also an individualistic activity, temporal, irreversible and uncoercive. Although learning requires energy, it releases energy. However, most adults learn more from other people since learners require a model. As learning is an outcome, it determines how we proceed as lifelong learners. According to Knowles (1980) and Ellsworth (1992), adult learning is a process to improve life situations. It is self-directed and evaluated by the learner.
In exploring the growing body of literature, Knowles (1980), a pioneer in adult education, describes it as learning that takes place in buildings and outside of buildings, with all sorts of people and not a set curriculum. It is often labeled staff development, manpower development, training, workshop, continuing education, lifelong education, self-directed learning and many other applicable names. With its definitions come the processes of acquiring experiences, self-development and education through the acquisition of new knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, interests or values. These educational processes take place alone or within a group through production, political and service processes.

Knowles (1980) presents key assumptions on how educators might base their practices on adult learning processes. He begins by stating that adults need to know why they need to learn the information before they begin the task. The educator has a responsibility to create situations for the learner to discover their "need to know." For adults accumulate valuable life experiences that are reservoirs for resource learning for both themselves and others. The essential part of adult education occurs through the use of adult experiences. This is why adults are deeply self-directed in learning. The role of the educator is therefore to facilitate mutual inquiry rather than to transmit knowledge to the adult learner. As adult learning is life-centered, the most appropriate way to organize this learning is through the use of life situations, that can make living more effective tomorrow. Adults also learn through individual differences, therefore adult education should make provisions for differences in style, time, place and pace of learning.
Freire (1970) has also provided us with a discussion on education. It is the conscientization or critical thinking perspectives about the world for liberation and social change. He believes that education is the centre of social change. From this paradigm comes the revolutionary leaders, who do not believe that they, alone, know everything. If they do, it means that they doubt their followers. Instead, revolutionary leaders enter into a dialogue with their followers and do not impose their knowledge on them. They view dialogue as an important concept, especially when used through reflective thinking, as followers are not empty vessels. The revolutionary leader leads through co-operation and collaboration. This conscientization is exhibited through the awareness of the transformative leadership that Antrobus (1998) speaks about. It is a women's leadership that is flexible, responds to change, empowers others, fosters collaboration and participation, and is inclusive rather than exclusive.

In summary, the literature review concentrates on three major categories; they are gender and development, transformative women's leadership and adult education. Several theories were mentioned in each of these areas. The theories derived were in support of transformative women's leadership. Although the evidence provided case studies of transformative women's leadership, there is a need for further studies from other perspectives.
CHAPTER 3

THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT INSTITUTE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Until there is a significant body of research on women's leadership, both over time and in a cross-cultural context, case studies of the many projects devoted to developing and making women's leadership visible, play an important role in our understanding of this complex subject (Brasileiro and Judd, 1996, p.15).

This chapter describes the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T). The Institute attempts to address leadership skills and the personal enhancement of women in micro-businesses. Prior to the two pilot projects that were undertaken by the WLEIT&T, the various ministries within the Government of Trinidad and Tobago attempted different interventions for gender equity. The interventions sought to enhance women's income generating capacities in various skills such as, dress making and food preparation. Although they tried to enhance women's technical abilities, the leadership skills and personal enhancement of women were not addressed. Women continued to be confronted with critical issues of gender biases, which seriously affected their income generating capacity. In an attempt to address these critical issues, the WLEIT&T was established within the Division of Gender Affairs. Objectives, schedule programmes, criteria and training methods were then formulated, for the full participation of women.

Two pilot projects, each a week in duration were successfully conducted in June 1998, and February 1999. Women from Morvant Laventille, and Caroni North and South regions had attended. As they were pilot projects, only 30 women participated
in the first, while 43 women participated in the second. The pilot projects set out to achieve six objectives:

1. To train women in order to enhance their personal development and that of their families;
2. To promote leadership among women, empowering them to articulate their concerns in pursuit of their development;
3. To arm women with personal and life skills, in order to assist in their exodus from poverty onto productive and sustainable lifestyles;
4. To better understand the critical issues affecting women and their families that may inform further programmes, projects and policies of the Government;
5. To introduce women to information, and possible funding, which may lead to the initiation of micro-enterprises and income generation;
6. To encourage women through creative methodologies, in order to identify forward looking strategies, for their empowerment and development, and that of their families and communities.

The WLEIT&T use the above objectives to formulate programmes for the participation of women. Scheduled programmes allowed women to participate in courses such as, Gender and Development; Leadership and Decision making; Micro-Enterprise Development; Confidence and Self Esteem; Mentorship and Success Stories; Deportment; Functional Literacy; Access to Formal Systems and Resources;
Personal Planning and Management. A schedule timetable outlined the week's program (see Appendix II).

The participants of the WLEIT&T were from all social backgrounds. They may have had a desire to enhance their life situations and that of their families. They required particular skills that would ensure that they reached their fullest potential, and would be in a position to contribute to the national development of Trinidad and Tobago.

Emphasis was placed on the participant's critical level of need, before acceptance into the programme. Low-income women were targeted first, especially vulnerable women with families. It was hoped that the WLEIT&T would enhance women's access to opportunities that would promote their well being, as well as their participation in social and economic development.

Although the projects of the WLEIT&T were geared towards low-income women, there were six criteria for participants' acceptance. They were as follows:

1. Women leaders, or those hoping to take up leadership positions at all levels;
2. Women in the most acute situations of poverty;
3. Past participants of Community Development Division Adult Education Programme, and the Ministry of Works Unemployment Relief Training Programme;
4. Rural and grassroots women;
5. Unemployed and under-employed women, especially with skills;
6. **Vulnerable men, especially those who were unemployed.**

A highly practical and participatory style of training is used for the pilot projects. It includes lectures, role-play, videos and workshops. The learning approach places emphasis on experiential learning which are the actual situations that affect participants. At the end of the project, participants are to benefit from a practical and highly intensive programme that sought to empower their lives. They should be equipped with strategies to overcome situations of poverty, limited access to resources, information, problems of low self-esteem and limited involvement in leadership and decision making.

Unlike other training institutes, the WLEIT&T is free for successful participants. The Ministry of Gender Affairs advertises the programme in the daily newspapers for prospective participants. The selected participants then attend the one-week training and consulting programme at a central venue. The aim behind this approach is to generate new ideas, while enhancing women's development and empowerment within communities.

The major thinking behind the WLEIT&T objectives is to bridge the gap between the actual skills of women, and get them involved in economic activities. Another priority is to make women self-sufficient as entrepreneurs, so that they can sustain their lives and the lives of their family. It is difficult for women because gender biases show that women are not the ones to inherit the properties, especially the
community level women. It is also difficult for women to walk into a commercial bank and have all the things that are needed, for example, the proper business plan, collateral, referrals and guarantors. At the WLEIT&T, the women are provided with resources to learn how to overcome these barriers and become leaders of their respective business.

The training at the WLEIT&T hopes to inspire a certain type of leadership in women. It is not the traditional type of hierarchical leadership, but the leadership where women share decision-making. They share leadership in a lateral way, and in so doing avoid empowering only one person. Women get together with this type of leadership to build networks for businesses, and create self-sufficiency. It is not all the time that women find themselves working alone, they therefore have to develop collective leadership qualities in order to work in a team. Sometimes to make a success of an entrepreneurial business, women may have to get together with other women of like minds, or like skills, to make a project a reality. As most of these women are from the informal sector, a sharing type of leadership is ideally suitable.

The training at the WLEIT&T is done with consultant facilitators who are examples of successful women entrepreneurs. An Execution Programme Co-ordinator manages the project. Her background and training are in gender and development. An adult learning perspective is used in teaching the women. It acknowledges the women's past experiences and successes. History shows us that women in the informal sector have economically and socially maintained their families (Sen and Grown, 1985).
Women of Trinidad and Tobago have survived, although many of them are single parents, who have kept their families together. The programme at the Institute allows all the women to share their experiences for the benefit of others. What they do is learn from each other to better utilize the experiences they have gained over the years. The learning therefore becomes enjoyable for the women. Although there are different areas of enhancement for the women, they are encouraged to take on the roles of leaders in their community or entrepreneurial businesses on completion of the project.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago now fully recognizes that women are faced with a number of issues that are of critical concern. The two pilot projects proved successful in that they demonstrated the need for the government to assume an active role in helping women develop the skills necessary to run their own businesses and to make economic and social gains. Given the information above, the Division of Gender Affairs is seeking to continue the WLEIT&T after the short pilot projects.

In summary, the WLEIT&T is a development project of the Division of Gender Affairs. Its main objective is to enhance the lives of women through leadership skills in micro-businesses and community participation. At the end of the training project, participants leave the Institute with specific skills. They leave feeling empowered with leadership abilities and a sense of personal development.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

I interview because I am interested in other people’s stories. Most simply put, stories are a way of knowing (Seldman, 1998, p. 1).

Introduction

This chapter addresses the processes of the research methodology. To conduct the study, I utilized a qualitative method for a case study design. It evaluates how the Women’s Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T) empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. I have chosen this method, because it allows for observation and semi-structured interviews (Hamel et al., 1993). I interviewed six successful women participants of the two pilot projects, collected data from various written records and documents on the WLEIT&T, and I had informal interviews with the Execution Programme Coordinator and a facilitator. This chapter includes my research questions; population of the study; procedure of the research and other sources of data; what limited my research and how I analyzed my collected data.

The use of a case study paradigm for the WLEIT&T utilizes a naturalistic qualitative perspective. I use a qualitative rather than a quantitative method given the nature of the research. A quantitative approach focuses on the empirical and objective data of variables, which cannot provide a qualitative inquiry of the WLEIT&T. According to Neuman’s (1997) theoretical concept, a quantitative approach cannot give information on the experience of another human being through the use of semi-structured
intemaws. Experiences or voiced processes, observational field notes, documents and semi-structured interviews are best approached through a qualitative stance.

Stevenson (1990) and Moore (1990) posit that a qualitative research methodology supports the appropriate way to evaluate the phenomenon of women leaders in micro-businesses. Also, most quantitative research involves studies of male entrepreneurs. This supported the ideas of the typical entrepreneur as male, and excluded women as entrepreneurs in design and structure of research subjects. My research study participants are all women and a quantitative perspective would prove unsuitable.

Research Questions

Although my research question evaluates how the WLEIT&T empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses, I was guided by the following informal and semi-structured questions in the interviews, which allowed the women to tell their stories:

- What do the women participants learn and why?
- How do the women participants learn leadership skills?
- How do they describe their learning?
- What affects the participants learning?
- How do the participants demonstrate what they have learned on the completion of the pilot project?
Population of the Study

I gained access to the participants of the study from the Execution Officer of the WLEIT&T. I made the initial contact to the Ministry of Gender Affairs through correspondence (see Appendix III). For each of the pilot projects, the Execution Officer provided me with a list of names and telephone numbers of the participants. She was very enthusiastic about the study and I had her full support (see Appendix IV).

The participants were randomly chosen with some influence from the Execution Officer. I used the two lists that she provided to access the names for prospective participant-interviewees. Within my list of six participant-interviewees, only three owned a micro-business. Primary contact was made on the telephone, and then through face to face contact. Three participants came from each pilot project. I then conducted the fieldwork between June and July 1999.

Procedure of the Research

The main instrument for the research was a schedule interview with each of the chosen participants. Each interview was scheduled for approximately an hour. Five semi-structured, open-ended questions were used to encourage the women to talk about their experiences at the WLEIT&T, and about anything that seemed related to the questions. The interview schedule was divided into two sections. The first was a general section about the demographics of the participants. The second section dealt with their participation at the WLEIT&T.
Before the start of the interview, each participant was informed that she could withdraw from the interview at anytime (see Appendix IV). I informed the women that I was not an expert and the information collected was for my MA thesis. During the interviews I tried as best as possible to detach my biases, values and beliefs, so as not to influence the participants responses. Each participant-interviewee was reminded of my intention to tape-record the conversation, to ensure that no data was lost or misrepresented. They all agreed to the tape recording. I took notes to support each interview and my observations. Two of the three participant-interviewees who owned businesses, took me on a tour of their respective business place.

Other Sources of Data

Data was also collected from the office of the Ministry of Gender Affairs, which maintains the WLEIT&T. This document was collected from the Execution Officer. I also informally interviewed the Execution Officer and the leadership facilitator. They were interviewed because I believed that they would provide useful information for the study. The leadership facilitator is an entrepreneur, while the Execution Officer had managed the pilot projects.

As it was difficult to contact each of the participant-interviewees to extend my thanks, I sent a letter to the Execution Officer thanking her for the opportunity to research the WLEIT&T (see Appendix V). The tape recordings were then transcribed verbatim as soon as possible and the transcription reviewed and analyzed for findings.
Limitations in the Research

My research could have been enhanced if I had the opportunity to actually observe a workshop at one of the pilot projects. My study of the WLEI'T&T was only possible after the conclusion of the pilot projects. At that time, the women all returned to their respective homes and businesses. As I have stated above, only three of the participant-interviewees were in some type of micro-business.

I tried on several occasions to arrange an interview with one participant of the WLEI'T&T who was especially recommended by the Execution Officer. It proved unsuccessful, as I detected a bit of hesitancy from that participant, after making contact on several occasions by telephone. She also failed to commit herself for an interview time and date. She could have been an ideal participant, as she was a micro-entrepreneur.

Other participant-interviewees I met in less than ideal places, like a coffee shop, a restaurant or the reception area of an office. Interviews were also held in the homes of participants and the noisy garment factory/home of an entrepreneur. I met the Execution Programme Co-ordinator at her office in the Ministry of Gender Affairs. In the case of the leadership facilitator, I met her at her home-based entrepreneurial business. These two persons were informally interviewed. I found that the information they provided assisted my research. They provided useful information about the WLEI'T&T.
Collection of Data and Analysis

Once the interview data was transcribed verbatim through the use of a transcriber and a word processing program, I began to identify themes for analyzing and coding advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method allowed for intensive comparison of the interview data in order to arrive at a set of themes. The themes reflected the ideas of the participants and cannot be used as generalizations of views that are held by all women of Trinidad and Tobago, or all developing countries.

In summary, the chapter describes the procedural steps for the research. A qualitative methodology was used through a case study of the WLEIT&T. It began with outlining the research question, semi-structured and semi-formal interviews and the collection of data from participants and officials. The data was then compared and interpreted to identify themes for the findings of the research.
CHAPTER 5

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT INSTITUTE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings (Neuman, 1997, p. 68).

Introduction

The last chapter discussed the methodology for understanding how the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLET&T) empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. In this chapter, I propose to address my participation and interactions with the participant-interviewees. Their names have been changed, so not to reveal their identities.

My analysis of the interview responses contributed to an evaluation of how the WLET&T empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. In the interviews I was able to derive information about the women's demographics, and experiences, before and after the pilot projects. I also gained information about those who were in business, intended to go into business and who were in other leadership positions within their community. The semi-structured interviews (Hamel, et al. 1993) encouraged the women to tell stories about themselves.

Researcher-Interviewee Interaction and Analysis

The women I interviewed were between the ages of 32 and 63 years. Three women were from each of the two main ethnic groups. Of the six participant-interviewees,
four were married, one was a single mother and one was unmarried. They all had children except one woman who decided to wait until she was married. Each woman had four children, except the oldest woman, who had seven children.

Three of the participant-interviewees already operated micro-businesses, two had problems with funding in order to launch their businesses, and one was not ready to begin her business. Those who operated businesses used their homes to conduct their micro-businesses. One participant-interviewee employed people besides members of her family in her micro-business.

All participant-interviewees had a secondary education except one. Although she does not have a secondary school education, she believed that she had the equivalency. She showed this when she said, "education, a School Leaving Certificate at secondary level equivalent." A Schooling Leaving Certificate is equivalent to a high school diploma. It is obtained at the end of primary education. Primary education ends at the age of 13 years in Trinidad. Two of the participant-interviewees had a post-secondary education.

Four of the participant-interviewees were not only interested in micro-businesses for self-sustenance, but also identified themselves as actively involved in community development. Two called themselves community leaders, one a community person for women and youths, and another a helper for youths in the community. Although the other two women did not identify themselves as community leaders, one was
directly involved in her religious organization while the other taught literacy to a
group of adult learners. Religious association involvement was important to the
women and their roles in the community.

The micro-businesses discussed by the participant-interviewees were stereotypical
women's businesses like garment manufacturing, food catering, patient-care and
garment construction. The two other micro-businesses that the women were
interested in were the operation of a grow-box industry and a pub. These were non-
gender specific businesses. Four of the participant-interviewees considered having
their micro-businesses at home, while two considered using other facilities than their
homes to operate their businesses. High rental cost of property for the operation of a
business appeared as a barrier to these women. It appeared as if this prevented them
from expanding their micro-businesses.

My first interview was with Sandra. She was 34 years old and in the second year of
her micro-business of manufacturing garments. She was one of the three participants
that I interviewed who owned a business. Sandra participated in the second pilot
project with women from Caroni, in February 1999. She learned about the pilot
project through her religious organization. This pilot project was conducted at a
Community Centre in the central part of the island. When asked about the first pilot
project, she replied that she did not know about it.
Sandra's business was located in the basement of her home in an east residential area of the island. I arrived at her garment factory at 4:00 p.m. and her two employees were busily producing garments on consignment. Although only two industrial sewing machines were in operation, the tiny room in which she produced garments was very noisy. She invited me to interview her in the quiet environment of her home, instead of the basement work area. I declined because I wanted to witness the operation of her business. Sandra subcontracts production from a main garment manufacturer. She only constructs the garments while the main manufacturer cuts the items before sending them to her factory. Sandra started her micro-business after working for ten years as an employee at a garment factory.

Sandra is of East Indian decent, married for 18 years and has four children. The children milled around as I interviewed her. The youngest is seven and the oldest is fifteen. Sandra has a secondary school education, got married at the age of eighteen and had her first child at nineteen. I could see that Sandra combined her micro-business operations with her household and family responsibilities. She seemed quite confident as she spoke about her micro-business. She was clear about where she started and where she wants to go with her business. Sandra did not want to expand the business for it to affect her home and family relationships.

I next interviewed Molly who attended the second pilot project. She does not have a micro-business because of the unavailability of funding. Despite this, she wants to start a grow-box micro-business and make Indian garments. She is an active
community leader in the central region of the island. I met Molly an hour before she participated in a workshop on community volunteering. It was at the reception room of the Community Volunteer Training Centre. She was instrumental in getting an invitation for me to attend a workshop on Raising the Issues: Facing the Changes: Technical Workshop for Women Ahead. However, it was postponed. Although the Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs initiated the programme, it was sponsored in collaboration with a developed country's Gender Equity Fund. Unfortunately the developed country did not provide the funds. The workshop did not take place while I was doing my research.

Molly completed secondary school after having two children. As she believes in continuous learning, she went back to school after the birth of her children. She is married and of East Indian ethnicity. Molly's husband is self-employed. As she spoke with me, she beamed with self-confidence and enthusiasm about being interviewed. She found that our interview was too short and wanted to meet me again, to talk more about her community participation. Her activism takes her to meet other women. Self described as a community leader; Molly is involved with issues of violence against women.

I next met Debra, a woman of African heritage. I met her in a less than ideal place for an interview. It was at a busy downtown restaurant, and we were interrupted on a few occasions by the background noise of the patrons. She was involved in the first pilot project with women from Morvant Laventille. She has a small entrepreneurial
business in caring for the aged and the catering of food. Debra is also a volunteer teacher in adult literacy. She is an active grassroots community person, whose philosophy is to help women and youths. Her participation within her community was very strong, as she noted:

"...this is the language I talk to my children, and the language I talk to other people with. Besides this, I am a community person. I try to assist in wherever possible, to bring young people to a sense of consciousness."

Debra would like to expand her micro-business but believes that the time is not right to do so. When asked about funding for her business project, she was very optimistic about it, as she saw finances to be easily accessible.

Debra, a single mother of four children is 53 years old. Her children are either employed or attending a post-secondary institution. She boasts how she made it as a single parent. She believes that her philosophy of life-long learning had a tremendous part to play in who she was today. She attended high school, secretarial school, a technical institute and a labour college. She also took several academic courses whenever possible. In a jovial manner she remarked, "in other words, if I was in another country, perhaps by now I would have a Ph.D., from all the credits I would have gained from seminars and courses." Our interview emphasized who Debra was today and how she got to be this person. In the interview she paid homage to the
knowledge and experiences she gained from her mother. She often referred to her words as clichés of her mother's.

Pam was the next participant I interviewed. She participated in the second pilot project. Getting to her home was not difficult. She lived in the same community in which I resided to do my research. On my arrival at Pam's home, I met her son, who was at home, since he was not feeling well. He did not attend school that day. Pam is a 48 year old housewife of Indian decent. She has four children. Her eldest daughter attends a post-secondary institution in England, another daughter is married and the last two children attend high school.

She did not have an established micro-business, but plans to open a Puja shop.¹ This business caters to the Hindus of the community. In the meantime Pam operates a small real-estate business. She insisted that she does not put a lot of effort into it. Pam lives in the north west of the island and finds difficulty in operating her business from home. She thinks the location is unsuitable for business.

Besides her proposed Puja shop and the real-estate business, Pam is involved in community and social work for her religious organization. At the time of the interview, her husband was away from home on a special training course.

My next participant-interviewee was Carol. She was involved in the first pilot project. We decided to meet at a café in the capital city. It was very noisy during the interview. In spite of this, I had a successful interview. Carol is a 32 year old woman of African decent. She lives alone. She has a secondary education. Carol spoke a lot about her family who lives apart from her. She was very interested in financially assisting her mother and three brothers. She did not have a business but is the leader of a Girl Guide Pack, at a primary school in her community. Her future business plan is to open a pub in her hometown. She wants to sell beer and wine to the tourists on the beach. It is a popular village where tourists visit. Because of the lack of funding she had to postpone starting immediately. Up until the last fifteen minutes of the interview, Carol seemed nervous. After the interview, we continued speaking informally without the use of the tape recorder. I think this had made her nervous, as she spoke undisturbed after I put the tape recorder away. When asked about what she does presently, she spoke of just completing a job contract as a secretary with the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

I completed three interviews on this day. At my final interview, I met with Anna around 4 o'clock in the afternoon at her home. She attended the second pilot project. She is a food caterer and partner in a small wine manufacturing industry. Anna's home business is very diversified. She also rents plants in her micro-business. She is a retired schoolteacher, and so is her husband, who is the other partner in her business. Both work together at home in their micro-business. She has a post-secondary education and has completed courses at a Technical Institute.
Anna is of African decent with seven children. They are either employed or at post-secondary institutions. In Anna’s micro-business, she caters meals and delivers them to her clients. When asked about the type of meals that she caters, Anna says, "any kind of meal her clients request, I can provide." She makes these meals from her home. Anna’s husband assists her in all the projects of the business. During our interview, she often referred to him as her partner in business. She is also actively involved in community work through teaching in adult literacy programmes.

In summary, I interviewed six women who participated in the WLEIT&T pilot projects. Three women were of African decent, while the other three were of Indian decent. Three operated home-based micro-businesses, while three intended to go into business. Their families and businesses were interconnected.
CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS AND MAJOR THEMES

At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seldman, 1998, p. 3).

Introduction

In this chapter I use the framework of the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T) given in chapter 3 to interpret and evaluate how the participants are empowered to become leaders in micro-businesses. The collected data suggested that the WLEIT&T empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses, as well as leaders in the communities. This was recognized through the themes of self-empowerment, adult learning, transformative leadership and recognizing the relationships of family, home and micro-business. Although the themes were separately discussed, their boundaries were very fluid and interconnected.

The study identified that the participants of the WLEIT&T were engaged in using transformative leadership skills to become leaders in micro-businesses. The leadership skills that the women learned were not the skills of hierarchical leadership, typical of the male model of dominance. Rather, they were the skills purported by Antrobus (1998, 1999); Sebro (1996); Levy (1988); Astin and Leland (1991) that reiterate clearly what needs changing while leading. Their leadership was based on care, not self-interest or greed. The women showed that they were aware when a change was needed while in positions of decision-making. They demonstrated this
through speaking of the type of leadership skills that they had learned in the pilot projects. The following comments by the women show evidence of the leadership skills they had learned:

"In leadership skills, we learned not only to lead but also when to follow. ... Sometimes we have to know when to adjust and know when to follow. As a leader I have to know when to take advice from others. I would not know what is happening all the time."

"To lead, you have to follow, so hence participation is important for whoever. Don't care how the opinion is, you should take it, look at it, if you have leadership skills. For while that simple suggestion, opinion, whatever, there might be a lesson you may learn."

The transformative leadership skills that the women acquired were that of nurturers and sustainers of lives, which had been theorized by Bunch (1991). As nurturers, the women were able to perceive the importance of their involvement not only in micro-businesses, but also for community social sustainability. The communities that the women participated in were not only limited to the local territory (Wilkinson, 1989). The communities more often included religious organizations.
The women accessed decision-making positions within their communities because they gained self-esteem and critical, conscious methods of thinking from the pilot projects. These skills were gained through the adult education learning perspective advocated by Knowles (1980) and Freire (1970). The women's training supported them as visionary and flexible thinkers, for they had the interest of all people. Additionally, Antrobus (1985) theorized that women should be at the centre of developing plans as it ensures women's initiatives and self-esteem. The pilot projects supported these perspectives in order to make the women full participants in the community. This is how the women spoke about their participation in the community.

"I am involved in community work, social work for our religious organization."

"As a community leader in my community, I thought that I should attend. I can benefit from it [WLEIT&T] and also the Community when I return."

"I learned so much from it [the WLEIT&T] and I would like to see other women learn from it."

"that entails to go to different branches [religious organization] to train the other treasurers. And I figure, yes I can handle it now."
"To lead, you have to follow, so hence participation is important for whoever. So therefore it is part of you. You have to come up with innovative and creative ways to get along. And I say innovative and creative ways not illegally but legally. And therefore it became part of me and therefore I extend that to any other woman in the community."

Self-Empowerment

Self-empowerment helped the women to become leaders in both their micro-businesses and communities. Five of the participants interviewed started with describing their experiences of having low self-esteem before attending the pilot project. Their attendance at the pilot project initiated the change of self-empowerment. Debra was the only participant-interviewee who believed that she did not have low self-esteem at the beginning of the pilot project. Despite this, she realized that the pilot project built self-esteem in the other women. As for her, she believed that the pilot project enhanced her activism in the community. The evidence that follows shows the low self-esteem that the participants felt at the beginning of the pilot project of the WLEIT&T.

"I was always a coward person. I always had the urge to stand up in front a crowd to talk, because in the temple you have to do that a lot, but I am
always scared and I am afraid of crowds."

"When I got involved in the temple, well, I did a lot of that, but I would stay in an enclosed area, in the sense, not up front. I always use to stay back, in the back-seat doing what I could do, and whatever, never come publicly and do anything or up front." [before her participation at the WLEIT&T she never made herself visible by speaking up in the temple].

"I really wanted to do this kind of business although I was timid before. But having done the course [at the WLEIT&T] has done a lot for me."

"To begin with, I had low self-confidence, I was afraid of taking interviews, my palms would sweat."

"Yes, as I want to believe that I suffered from a sort of low self-esteem."

According to Antrobus (1989), education contributes to personal empowerment. It is done through resistance and one's ability to gain personal power. Empowerment is also full of personal risk. It is speaking up for women. After the women attended the
pilot project of the WLEIT&T, they took the risk, gained self-esteem and demonstrated a shift to personal and political empowerment. The risk towards empowerment proved successful for the women. Antrobus (1989; 1998) calls the risk taken by the women, a demonstration of feminism through the consciousness of oppression. The women became aware of gender biases that prevented their input and contributions for social, political and economic development.

We are also informed by Antrobus (1985) that development-training projects, combined with participatory methodologies, build women's self-esteem, confidence and dignity. They encourage empowerment for decision-making. The following statements expressed the women's empowerment through self-esteem, confidence and decision-making:

"After the seminar, I have the courage to do so because I told myself, no, no way. And then from the seminar they told you, how being a woman, men and other people like to dominate you and make you feel as if you are not important. Your place is in the home and whatever. So I have the courage and bravery to stand up and defend myself brilliantly and I am really shocked."

"I am not afraid again."
"Actually, I learned togetherness, to be confident.
The way to go..... if you have a goal..... go at it.
Set goals and..."

"I believe if I didn't do what I did, people would have gone away thinking ill things about me, but because I could have stood up and defended myself, I gained respect, I demanded respect from the same branch [religious organization] that we were involved in. I demanded respect. Before I wouldn't have done it.....I stood up and defended myself and everybody was proud of me, because they told me that."

One woman commented on how having gained self-esteem she is now able to deal with family problems:

"They [facilitators of the WLEIT&T] talked about other things, family life itself. I was able to deal with some of the problems in my family life. What they talked about helped me in that sense. I knew how to get on with my life."

Two women realized the value of self-confidence and self-motivation for job interviews:
"But after the training, I gained a bit of confidence. I had an interview afterwards and although I did not answer all the questions to my full ability, I felt good coming out of it. I even told the interviewers how I felt."

"I am more motivated to go out for a job."

Although Debra believed that she did not lack self-esteem, she experienced growth through reinforcement at the WLEIT&T:

"At the seminar, at the Leadership Institute, things were reinforced to me, but I knew a number of people benefited from this."

**Adult Learning**

The participants in this study recognized the importance of adult learning at the WLEIT&T. They became conscious that adult learning was part of the life-long learning that they had always practiced. They felt empowered as their experiences were validated and accepted through shared learning. The women also felt they had a safe place at the WLEIT&T to meet and share their knowledge.

The facilitators at the WLEIT&T practiced the non-formal adult education that Antrobus (1985) theorized. It is ideally suitable for a people-centered development
plan. The adult education reflected a Trinidad and Tobago woman's perspective through co-operation and sharing of experiences. The women's history was taken into account. They also learned through a critical learning perspective, and took away only what they needed to know for self-development. Freire (1968); Lester (1994) and Knowles (1980) purposed that the learner discovers things only when ready. The discovery comes about at a time of personal development and enhancement. This is how women expressed their critical learning perspective and how the WLEIT&T treated them as adult learners:

"It was an adult perspective. Children normally have to be taught 1+1=2, but what they did, most of the facilitators asked us to use our own experiences. And they made reference to them."

"I take only what I want to know from the course."

"The information she gave was to the whole group, but actually in that state [having a problem in my family], like it was falling a little on my side. In that sense I was able to pick up and identify with what she said."

"I take only what I want to know from the course."
"Well it was sort of interactive, you find that we used our experiences. It was participatory. We brought in our own beliefs and experiences. We actually went to businesses where we heard from entrepreneurs who talked about their experiences."

"they gave us and we were able to give back to them. We spoke about our personal experiences. They had a lot to share with us and we were allowed to tell them."

"most of it came from me, from our own experiences and whatever. It came from our experiences in the past… you learn more from your experience, from your mistakes."

Part of the experience of learning at the WLEIT&T was to share knowledge and learning with all the participants. The women talked about their experiences to benefit others. Knowles (1980) theorizes that adult educators should create situations for learners to discover what is needed to know. The facilitators of the WLEIT&T used a type of pedagogy that facilitated the learners' experiences. This pedagogy theorized by Knowles also facilitated the mutual interest of the adult learner as well as the adult educator.
The women realized the value of life-long learning as they all spoke of their experiences other than that at the WLEIT&T. Their interest in life-long learning inspired them to attend the pilot project. They believed that attending the WLEIT&T was another step in a journey of learning where they can always learn something new to improve themselves. Knowles (1980) and Ellsworth (1992) believe that peoples' life situations are improved through self-directed learning. The participant-interviewees generally spoke of how they were life-long learners. The responses included:

"while I was home, I had two children, ... I never went to school or anything [that is secondary school]. I stayed at home, but I know that I have a very good, [she laughs] good knowledge of English in my head and I went and wrote English O'level² but I made a D. I did not pursue."

"I have this certificate, and took a course in Bee Management. I took that course in Hindu Philosophy and whatever I took training. I have a certificate for that and I have many other little certificates and so... So, you know I always continued doing something for myself."

"I attended secondary school, but did not finish my final exam. I went back to school at the age of 21 years after having two children."

"I did my ACP³ and LCP⁴. It is equivalent to a first degree.
I did other courses, home economics. I went to John D. [The shortened form for John Donaldson Institute for Technology] I did vegetation courses. I did other courses from elsewhere."

"I did continuation classes at Malick Senior Comprehensive. And even after the course at the Women's Institute, I went on to do a computer course and that helped me to get into the Ministry of Legal Affairs, company section."

"I did other educational development courses on my own like going to John Donaldson and Cipriani Labour College."

Although the WLEIT&T recognized the need to address both women and men in development initiatives, the strategies used in both pilot projects addressed the needs of women. Despite this, the women enjoyed having a space for themselves while

they shared knowledge and learned from each other through participation. Antrobus (1985) speaks widely of the need for non-formal and participatory approach methodologies for the training of women. The WLEIT&T contributed to the development of the women through a people-centred approach methodology. The interviewee-participants spoke enthusiastically about having a space for only women:

"I guess our objectives were more or less the same, because we were all women and we gained more."

"It was a seminar for only women and a lot of the women are older women who don't have much education or whatever, but they are involved in women's groups."

"It was good. I really enjoyed being with the ladies down there, the different personalities. It was a nice time for me. Now that I have learned the different types of personalities, I have started to accept people for what they are."

"We don't want to leave them [men] out but they must be there to work with us. Just as we are able to work under the men, they too should be able to work under us."
Transformative Leadership

Again and again, the participant-interviewees were reflective about their strengths and their contributions in the development of their micro-business, as well as the community. The women demonstrated what Miles (1996) calls shared concerns through alliances at the local level with individuals and organizations.

The women demonstrated learning transformative leadership skills after attending the pilot projects of the WLEIT&T. The skills were acquired when they learned how to manage their micro-businesses. They were encouraged to lead with collaborative and sharing skills. As they learned about leadership, they were encouraged to allow others also to lead. They learned that leadership is best done through the sharing of power. These learned skills were transferred to leadership positions in their communities. This is the same leadership that Antrobus (1998) envisions. It is grounded in a passion for social justice for all as it brings about a more equitable world. The women's learning also encouraged conscious critical thinking (Freire, 1970). They demonstrate critical conscious thinking and transformative leadership qualities by the following statements:

"Of course, for too long women have been laid back, sitting at home, afraid of their male counterpart, we need to get out there and do something, show them that we can lead, and lead even better. We don't want to leave them out, but they must be there to work with us."
"With the other women, it gave me a sense of purpose to encourage and support women, and I say women because it is my first priority so far."

"After the days left, they gave us an assessment form. And when I looked at the questions that we had to answer, I figure that I am a very good leader."

"I think I had that sort of thing within me already, but this really enhanced it."

"As a matter of fact from after the first day of the seminar, I came home here and I made over twenty calls to my friends asking them to go."

The participant-interviewees often spoke in the plural form about leading their micro-businesses. This typifies transformative leadership. Sebro (1996) informs us that transformative leadership focuses on consensus-building, shared power and collaboration. The women of the WLEIT&T who owned businesses often spoke of including their workers and family members in decision-making. The following responses legitimate this claim:

"...what I will say in the sales, our production yes and no."
Some day will be good and other days may not be good.

Some days we get a faster production."

"Right now we have a lot of work and we are working overtime. We start from 8 to 4 and go later if we have extra work."

"If I say my husband and I, our company, we gave it a name"
[this participant used the first two letters of her name and her husband's, to name their micro-business]."

"Most of them in this place here, they will help me a lot when I need something done, right. They say let us do it this way, and get it done faster. I may not think of it to be done that way."

"This is it, we sit and share, we compromise and come up with answers, this is what we do. What we want to do … How we get funding. Everything we do, we do together."

The women spoke about the importance for planning their business start-up, as preparation was important for the success of the business. For the women to be both
leaders in micro-businesses and the community, they had to be provided with applicable management and programme planning skills. According to Antrobus (1985), women need these tools because they inform them of available resources for development projects. The WLEIT&T facilitators provided these instruments to the women in the pilot projects. The participant-interviewees anxiously related the business learning skills and experiences they had acquired. Their responses were:

"The Institute also taught me something, that is, getting to know about this business, like how to manage it. You may find that at the end of the week you are not getting the quota you are suppose to be getting as a garment manufacturer."

"A lot of the formal things about business were taught about in the project. Where to go, what to do, even how to write project proposals to open small businesses."

"I learned a lot. First of all as a person who is trying to go into business, I learned how to do the planning. I must plan first, what I must do. I learned how to carry myself, how to communicate, taking personal care and deportment."
"from the seminar we gather that if you want to open
a business, first you have to think about the kind of business,
where you are opening the business, the competition."

"I always had the idea in my head about opening
a Puja store. ... When I say Puja store and
they [WLEIT&T] analyzed the situation
... they said, girl you go for it, you know
that is a real, real smart idea you have there."

Despite the learning of business skills for entrepreneurial development, two women
complained of the difficulty in acquiring funding for their business ideas. The other
dis outlined that I interviewed were either not ready for funding or found no
difficulty when they approached credit agencies. These were the responses from the
two participants who encountered problems in acquiring funding:

"... what happen, I remember going into the
[funding agency] to get a loan. I find that it
was disappointing. You have to actually have
money to get money out of them."

"But you are telling me that you want me to go
out there and do this, and help myself. Yet still,
the problem is finance, we still don't have finance."

"I cannot do a lot, I have no access to funding."

"... for the sewing I must have a percentage of
the loan... You have to secure 20% by yourself."

"And you know they are all bias, gender bias. If I need
a loan, my husband has to sign, although he does not work.
I don't have to sign when he goes to the bank for a loan."

The Relationship of Family, Home and Micro-business
An interesting pattern emerged from the responses of the women involving the
relationship of family, home and micro-business. All the participant-interviewees
spoke of the connection of family, home and micro-business. They preferred to
conduct their micro-businesses from their home, where they could also attend to
family responsibilities. Sebro (1996) upholds this important strategy held by women
in economic development. It calls for their creative abilities to support the survival of
the family, home and micro-business. These are the generated responses from the
participant-interviewees:

"I have full cooperation with my husband. He comes
and help upstairs. And I have my daughter who will,
like if I get tied up on a morning, she would help. I could go out there [in the garment factory] and she would help."

"The size of the children made me decide on going into my own business ... I do not have any little ones to be running around. Although he is seven years old and comes and says, mummy I want this or that."

"Well I don't want my business too large to upset my family life."

"No, not for the time being, this is why I am focusing on the real estate because I can stay home and do what I have to do and money is coming in there."

"Because of the patient at my home, hence the reason I am not into full-time catering."

"As I told you I operate from home...... We are looking for a place in St. Peter. We cannot get a location. A small cubicle.... a thousand dollars a month, when you are finished, it's only for rent. You can only pay rent."
As I think of Sebro's (1996) suggestions on creative and productive strategies, I also have to bring my own perspective into the discussion. I similarly developed strategies in the creation of my part-time dress design micro-business. I had to think of ways to run my part-time dress design business, work full-time as a teacher and attend to my home with my family. For every participant-interviewee who had an existing business, each was a home-based micro-business.

The family, the home and the micro-business were interconnected physically, socially and economically. The participant-interviewees who owned micro-businesses found it economical to operate their businesses from the home. As leaders in micro-businesses, it was important that the family survived.

In summary, the WLEIT&T set out to empower women leaders in micro-businesses, but these women also became leaders in their communities and religious organizations. Once women achieve transformative leadership skills, they can also transfer these learned skills into other areas of leadership. It was therefore easy for the women of the pilot projects to demonstrate transformative leader skills in their communities and gain immediate results. The data showed that the participants of the pilot project gained transformative leadership skills for empowerment in micro-businesses as well as in their communities. As leaders, it was important to the women that the family, home and community survive.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Credit must be given as well to the mix of participating women, who range from barely literate to professional; who saw the need for change, and were willing to help effect it; but more significantly, who were ready to support and assist each other in the process. That is what development is all about (Sebro, 1996, p.26).

Introduction

In this chapter, I summarize my findings and conclude the evaluation on how the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T) empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses. After, I shall make recommendations that I believe are necessary to improve the services of the WLEIT&T. The study reveals that the women participants of the WLEIT&T are empowered with transformative leadership skills. These skills are not only used for their micro-businesses. The women also use them to lead in communities and religious organizations.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The WLEIT&T addressed practical, strategic and specific needs of women in the developing country of Trinidad and Tobago. This was done through two pilot projects. The projects main objectives were to help low-income and disadvantaged women in personal improvement and leadership skills in micro-businesses. The interventions sought to enhance women's income generating capacities in businesses they operated, or intended to operate. Six women who participated in the two pilot projects were interviewed.
The findings show that the women were between the age of 32 and 63 years old. Five had children while one had none. All the women were involved in other leadership positions in community development or religious organizations. They were not only involved in their entrepreneurial businesses. Their businesses were within their homes. Four of the women operated or intended to operate gender specific businesses (e.g. garment factory, food catering). Two women were interested in non-gender businesses (e.g. grow box, a pub). Three of the women participants were of Indian decent, while three were of African decent. All six women had primary education. Five had secondary education and two had post-secondary education.

The study reveals that the women participants were empowered with self-esteem, adult learning methods, transformative leadership skills and an awareness of the relationship of family, home and business after the pilot project. This empowerment was used both in the women's micro-businesses and in community organizations. The women learned about the leadership that is not based on self-interest or greed but the leadership that is based on care and sharing of power (Antrobus, 1998). It is transformative women's leadership. This type of leadership learned from the WLEIT&T pilot projects brought positive changes to the women. It impacted on the women's contribution to their communities.

Although the women became leaders in micro-businesses, the communities and religious organizations, two women encountered problems in funding for the start up of their micro-businesses. The findings show that women find difficulty in acquiring
loans for their businesses. They find difficulties in accessing loans from financial agencies due to gender biases within funding agencies. The issues of gender biases in private and public financial institutions prevent women from starting or expanding their businesses. However, the gender biases at the funding agencies did not prevent the two women to be successful community leaders.

Once the WLEIT&T develops more innovative ways to educate its women participants on the issue of gender biases within funding agencies, it should be able to support its participants better. To do this, the WLEIT&T should look to improve its participants' negotiating skills of acquiring funding for their micro-businesses. The WLEIT&T must emphasize gender biases in relationship to the larger society, especially where the financial organizations are situated. Finally, after the WLEIT&T completes a special programme on negotiating skills for acquiring funding at private and public agencies, a study could be done on the women who approach funding agencies for financial assistance.

Recommendations

The study has shown that the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (WLEIT&T) empowers women with transformative leadership skills to be leaders in micro-businesses, communities and religious organizations. The study also makes the following recommendations in order that the WLEIT&T continue to achieve its mandate of personal and self-development of women.
1. The WLEIT&T should be a permanent institution to effect social change through women's leadership. The participants can become long term activists within the Institute for a more gender and socially just society within Trinidad and Tobago.

2. The WLEIT&T should follow up the leaders' trajectory in businesses and communities. The feedback information should be helpful to the WLEIT&T, for it will provide appropriate support to individual leaders on a regular basis.

3. Girls and young women should be encouraged to participate in the WLEIT&T, in order to empower them with self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy and decision-making roles. The WLEIT&T should support, prepare and promote girls and young women for their roles as future leaders.

4. The WLEIT&T should emphasize negotiating skills for funding with its women participants. This would assist the women participants to overcome gender biases at funding agencies.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Our Mission Statement

To effectively promote Gender Equity and Gender Equality through the process of Gender Mainstreaming in all Government Policies, Programmes and Projects.

Gender Equality

This means that there is no discrimination on grounds of a person's sex in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in the access to services. Gender equality may be measured in terms of whether there is equality of opportunity, or equality of results. (Note: The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, defines justice for women in terms of gender equality).

Gender Equity

An approach using gender equity is directed towards ensuring that development policies and interventions leave women no worse off economically or in terms of social rights and responsibilities than before the intervention. This approach tries to make equity visible by using indicators which reveal the human cost of many activities: provision of fuel, water etc. This approach tries to ensure that women have a fair share of the benefits, as well as the responsibilities of the society, equal treatment before the law, equal access to social provisions; education; and equal pay for work of the same value.

Current Programmes and Projects

- Comprehensive and Integrated response to domestic violence through the work of our National Domestic Violence Unit. Activities of the unit include:
  - 24 hour, toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-SAVE);
  - Community-based Drop-In/Information Centres
  - Building linkages with the Community Policing Unit, Shelters, and Service Providers;
- Male Awareness/Support Programme
- Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute
- Training and Sensitization in Gender and Development, targeting governmental, non-governmental, and community-based organizations, in addition to the wider society.
- Inter-American Development Bank funded Regional Programme of non-traditional training for women.
- Development of an effective National Gender Policy.
- "Cultural Immersion" Programme targeting children at risk (with a special emphasis on young males, ages 12-15)
- Development of gender-sensitive statistics and indicators, with a current focus on "Counting Unremunerated Work"
- Addressing critical gender-specific issues through regular conferences, consultations and seminars.
- Financial and technical support to community-based organisations

The National Women's Machinery

(A national mechanism responsible for the Advancement of Women)

An Organogram of the National Women's Machinery
# APPENDIX II

## TRAINING SCHEDULE

Women's Leadership & Enhancement Institute February 22-26, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>Opening/Gender and Development</td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>Micro-Enterprise Development</td>
<td>Department and Communication</td>
<td>Leadership/Team Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 am-12:00 am</td>
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<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>Micro-Enterprise Development</td>
<td>Department and Communication</td>
<td>Leadership/Team Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm-3:00 pm</td>
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<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>Micro-Enterprise Development</td>
<td>Field Visit</td>
<td>Leadership/Team Building</td>
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<td>Evaluation</td>
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APPENDIX III

INITIAL CONTACT LETTER

May 7, 1999

Project Execution Officer

Attention:

Re: Request to Research the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago

I am a Master of Arts student attending the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, Canada. I appreciated the information you sent to me via *********, on your government's project on the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute. The information has left me so impressed about gender development in Trinidad and Tobago that I decided to develop my Master of Arts thesis research on the area. I am also very interested in gender development in developing countries.

This letter is to request further information on the 1998 and 1999 projects that you successfully completed with women. I intend to visit Trinidad in the coming future and an interview with you, the staff and women entrepreneurs of the project would be greatly appreciated. I cannot state a specific date as yet for my visit to Trinidad, as I am still in the planning stages with my advisor at the university. I only know that it should be in the coming summer or fall months of this year. When a definite date is reached with my advisor on my schedule trip to Trinidad, you would be informed well in advance of my arrival.

I look forward in meeting you, the staff and the women of the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago. I also thank you for the opportunity to research a gender development project in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Patricia Yearwood
APPENDIX IV

Consent Form to Participate in Research

This is to state that I agree to participate in a MA thesis research being conducted by Marilyn Patricia Yearwood of the Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology Department of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

1. Purpose

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to evaluate how the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute of Trinidad and Tobago empowers women to become leaders in micro-businesses.

2. Conditions of Participation

_____ I understand the purpose of this study and know that there is no hidden motive of which I have not been informed.

_____ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.

_____ I understand that the material from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) ________________________ DATE ___/___/1999

SIGNATURE ________________________________

WITNESS SIGNATURE _____________________________

TELEPHONE NUMBER(S): HOME __________ WORK

ADDRESS __________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX V

THANK YOU LETTER

July 21, 1999

Project Execution Officer

Attention:

I sincerely thank you for accommodating my request to interview you and participants of the Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute. I am in the process of transcribing the collected data and hope to further contact you after completing an analysis of the data.

Through meeting with you and the participants, I have learned a lot about the assistance given to women in Trinidad and Tobago to become leaders and economically self-sufficient.

I sent the information that you requested through the mail. Feel free to contact me if you need further information. Once again, thank you for the courtesy that you extended to me.

Sincerely,

MARILYN YEARWOOD
MA, Community, International and Transformative Learning (candidate)
Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto