



In Dominica, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works to promote women's empowerment. To do so, all our projects include gender equality initiatives. Below are some of the engagements UNDP is currently implementing in partnership with the Government of Dominica and Community Based Organisations.

Celia Seraphine – A yam growing champion in the east!

Want to perfect your yam growing? Take a trip to Castle Bruce and ask for Celia Seraphine.

Celia has been growing yams commercially for over 20 years. She clears and ploughs the land to ensure sufficient soft dirt to avoid twisting and breaking the yams during harvest. In addition this allows for proper aeration and drainage of the yam mounds. Yams plants secured from previous harvests are then treated and planted. Stakes are then obtained for support of the growing yam plants.



Two months later Celia weeds and fertilizes the growing tuber. Within 6 to 8 months the yams are harvested. Celia plants 4 varieties of yam including white, yellow and a small variety called 'sucoon', the latter like 'babaoulay'..

Celia practices crop rotation as although yam is her specialty, she multi-crops to avoid depletion or in her terms tired land. This also helps as a natural and economical way of pest management. The other plants include toleman, sweet potato, cocoa, ginger, lettuce and other vegetables and cassava. She contributes to community food security

as one of the most prolific producers of vegetables and seasonings, at times the sole producer and supplier. Most of Celia's vegetable production is under a greenhouse ensuring a steady water supply that is gravity fed from a storage tank on the farm. Her water harvesting practices combat drought periods and ensure year-round vegetable supplies. She also agro-processes cocoa into coco sticks and cassava into farine and cassava bread. Celia is an avid collector of plant seeds. Once she is

given a plant, she incorporates concepts of a germ plasm in her production to reproduce the stock, so she never wants that variety in the future.

Like many women in Dominica, most of the land on which Celia farms is leased and so adds to her cost of production. Fortunately, some of the land on which she farms is close to her house, reducing transportation fees and facilitates her housewife and farming roles seamlessly. Earlier on in her farming career Celia considered going deeper into agro-processing but felt challenged combining it with her family duties. Her oldest child is now a mature adult and the youngest is at secondary school.

Celia is very ably supported by her full-time farmer husband who prepares the yam banks to perfection.

Celia has built a reputation of consistent high quality and her yams are so sort after that she rarely experiences glut. In any event the yams can be stored in her shed for up to 4 months after harvest.

What is next for Celia in her farming journey? In preparation for her retirement and understanding the need for value-added products, she plans to broaden her cocoa production and expand her markets.



Celia is advised by Agricultural Extension Officer Hilroy Alfred. She has been a participant on the UNDP's Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) training through the Strengthening Disaster Management Capacity of Women in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Dominica DPO welcomes first UN Volunteer

Curticia Wade is thrilled to be the first UN Volunteer in Dominica. From September 2021, she will contribute to the Strengthening disaster capacity of women in the Cooperative of Guyana and the Commonwealth of Dominica (GUYDOM) Project in two main areas, namely the cross-cutting area of Gender, and thought leadership of A week of Activities that celebrates the project's achievements to date.



Curticia hails from the Kalinago Territory, the home of Dominica's indigenous communities. She brings to the project her social media skillset, creative thinking, gender analysis skills and even some backyard gardening. She feels privileged for the opportunity to contribute directly to the achievement of UN sustainable goals 13 (climate action) and 5 (gender equality). For Curticia gender equality is at the heart of human rights and is a means to a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. "In this project team I am surrounded and supported by powerful women who are committed to sustainable change. I cannot be more excited to contribute to and learn about climate action and gender". Curticia's remarked during her first week as UN Volunteer.

Engender

In October 2020, 45 female business owners gathered at Salisbury Adult Education Centre for a two-day business empowerment event. The Dominica Gender Bulletin team revisited these same participants almost a year on to find out how useful the course was to their business development.

The 2020 course was in direct response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The format was through two panel discussions entitled “Financial Empowerment in the midst of a Pandemic” and “Diversifying your business during a Crisis” in which participants explored how to diversify their businesses to mitigate crisis situations. Panelists were Financial Management specialist Kelvin Toussaint, and Sales and Marketing expert Aliane Abel. While, participating financial institutions included:

- Dominica Agricultural and Industrial Bank (AID)
- Dominica Youth Business Trust
- National Bank of Dominica
- West Coast Cooperative Credit Union



The Dominica Gender Bulletin team was told that during the two-day training the less experienced business owners learnt from the more seasoned entrepreneurs. Among the tools and knowledge, participants have gained since the course, bookkeeping, stock taking templates (like google form) and procedures for ordering supplies were included.

Benefiting businesses included JD’s Naturals’, Graceson John, Ashma McDougall, Leandra Lander and Jodie Shillingford Trew and Fredrica Alexander from Fredrica Sweet Treats and Eats. Fredrica had the following to share: ‘We all found the presentations very helpful. It was good to learn from other female entrepreneurs over the two days of their successes and how they overcame challenges. I came away very encouraged. I cater for parties and other events and work from home but look forward to the day when I will have a shop’

Financed under the UNDP EnGenDER programme, the training was organized by the Bureau of Gender Affairs in collaboration with the Adult Education Division.

Understanding Gender

In this edition of the Gender in Dominica Newsletter, we are examining gender terms related to the division of work. By understanding gender role and how division of labour is perceived, we can make meaningful change to support gender equality.

Sexual Division of Labour

In all societies, tasks and responsibilities are typically undertaken by either women or men. This allocation of activities on the basis of sex is known as the sexual division of labour, and is learned and clearly understood by all members of a given society, as are the circumstances under which the typical practices can be varied, and the limitations of this variation. The sexual division of labour is perhaps the most significant social structure governing gender relations.

Gender roles & responsibilities/division of labour: Productive work

This is work that produces goods and services for exchange in the marketplace (for income). Some analysts, especially those working on questions of equality between men and women, include the production of items for consumption by the household under this definition, even though they never reach the marketplace, regarding this as consumption of a form of non-monetary income. Both men and women contribute to family income with various forms of productive work, although men predominate in productive work. Historically, in most societies, changes in economic structure, and hence in the structure of productive activities, have led to changes in the sexual division of labour and gender relations.

Gender roles & responsibilities/division of labour: Reproductive work

This work involves all the tasks associated with supporting and servicing the current and future workforce – those who undertake or will undertake productive work. It includes child-bearing and nurture, but is not limited to these tasks. It has increasingly been referred to as “social reproduction” to indicate the broader scope of the term than the activities associated with biological reproduction. Socially reproductive activities include childcare, food preparation, care for the sick, socialisation of the young, attention to ritual and cultural activities through which the society’s work ethic is transmitted, and the community sharing and support which is essential to the survival of economic stress. The fact that reproductive work is the essential basis of productive work is the principal argument for the economic importance of reproductive work, even though most of it is unpaid, and therefore unrecorded in national accounts. Women and girls are mainly responsible for this work, which is usually unpaid.

The intersection of peoples’ productive and reproductive responsibilities with policy priorities, has repercussions at all levels of an economy and society. This intersection is usually the principal focus of a gender analysis.