

**Information Technologies in support of Organic Agriculture
Knowing & Growing: Regional Training Workshop for Women Entrepreneurs**

May 24th - 29th 2006, Grenada
Workshop Summary Report

Compiled by:
Networked **Intelligence** for Development
Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement

Computer centre



Training workshop



Field study



**ICT Tools & Services in support of Organic Agriculture in the Caribbean
Knowing & Growing: Regional Training Workshop for Women
Entrepreneurs**

May 24th - 29th 2006, St. Georges, Grenada

Implementing Organizations

Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement, Jamaica

Networked Intelligence for Development, Canada

Participants from

Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia
St. Vincent & Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago

Collaborating Private & Public Institutions

Belmont Estate: Organic Cocoa Farm
Green Chocolate: Grenada Organic Chocolate Company
Grenada National Organization of Women
Grenada Network of Rural Women Producers
GRENSAVE Computer Training Center
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States

Invited Local Resource Persons

Julien Dedier, emergency amateur radio society, Trinidad & Tobago
Ruel Edwards, Grenada Broadcasting Network
Christopher Roberts, IT Specialist, OECS- Export Development Unit, Dominica
Roderick St.Clair, Quality Control Officer, Marketing & National Importing Board, Grenada

Workshop Sponsors



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction and Context**
- 2. Thematic Issues of concern to organic farmers**
- 3. Technical Issues covered**
- 4. Participant expectations and workshop objectives**
- 5. Training Methodology**
- 6. Participant Profile**
- 7. Immediate outcomes, proposed follow-up activities, and recommendations**
- 8. Evaluation Results**



Participants enter data into IT forecasting tool



Participants bring their local produce to exhibit

1. Introduction and context

Networked Intelligence for Development in Canada and the **Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement** have been working together since 2003 to build the capacity of women farmers to farm organically through the *Knowing and Growing Network*.

Following a successful joint venture in 2004 where 50 women farmers from 13 Caribbean countries participated in the first *Knowing & Growing* training workshop, the two partner organizations combined their respective applied and technical expertise in organic¹ farming, small business development and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to a second regional workshop in Grenada.

Grenada was deliberately chosen as the workshop venue, following the devastation left behind by recent hurricanes and the opportunity that the workshop would afford local participants in drawing the links between organic farming, and disaster planning and management. The workshop offered comprehensive training on the new opportunities for women-led farming businesses and start-ups within the context of the growing demand for organic produce and products. Thirty participants came together from Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Guyana, St. Kitts & Nevis and Trinidad & Tobago.

Organic agriculture is the fastest growing of all sectors in agriculture, worldwide. Shifting to organic farming is an attractive alternative for small farmers in the Caribbean, as the demand for organic produce and products continues to grow worldwide and as the banana and sugar industries on several of the islands face a downturn. Organic farmers are able to apply local resources and knowledge as well as non-chemical inputs to their farming systems, conserve their soil and land quality, and revive Indigenous Agricultural Practices. This in turn can have a positive long-term impact on food security and promote a return to cultures and systems of holistic environmental management.

Organic farming is, furthermore, a highly knowledge-intensive and intimate method of farming relative to other methods. ICTs lend themselves to more efficient and effective management of these farming practices. Everything from farm management, pest control, the use of indigenous herbicides, crop monitoring, and soil culture promotion to organic standards, certification and marketing requires constant monitoring, data collection and record keeping. At the same time, many small-scale organic farmers farm in isolation and might not benefit from the larger community-based networks that support non-organic farmers. As more farmers adopt organic methods successfully, storing, processing and marketing facilities will need to be developed to ensure that products reach their markets meeting the quality standard requirements. ICTs are important for farmers to use to build and nurture relationships with the entire chain of organic agents including importers, traders and wholesalers. All these factors point to the need for incremental capacity building to nurture a groundswell momentum and sustainability in the organic movement.

At the same time, as in many other regions in the world, women play a vital if under-recognized and unsupported role in food production. They have less access to land, extension training, affordable credit and loans than do men. By implication, women have less opportunity to articulate, negotiate or act upon their concerns in the food production sector at the policy level. These farmers also find it more difficult to establish market contacts for their products, and may

¹ The FAO definition of “Organic” is “certified organic products are those which have been produced, stored, processed, handled and marketed in accordance with precise technical specifications (standards) and certified as “organic” by a certification body.

find the costs of converting cropland to organic a challenge. At the same time, research indicates that not only do they make up to 65% of day-to-day on-farm and 80% of marketing decisions, but that there is also a growing level of expressed interest and commitment to organic farming methods among women, not least because they have already experienced first hand the damaging effects of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and because they are very concerned about their immediate family's health.

NID and JOAM anticipate continuing this work with women farmers over the next few years because the impacts of the training are positive and immediate, and women are demanding this kind of hands on practical training. Over the course of these workshops, it is anticipated that networks of women entrepreneurs throughout the region will grow and support each other in this sector of agricultural development.

2. Thematic issues of concern to organic farmers

While the larger portion of the workshop was devoted to **technical training** on organic farming as well as ICT use, significant macro **policy concerns** were introduced into the workshop discussions at every available juncture. This is because the organisers feel that it is important that the workshop provides participants with opportunities to:

- ◆ draw the links between their individual actions, their collective activities and the political, trade and agricultural contexts that they work in;
- ◆ recognize the potential impact of their local decisions on national, regional and international developments, including food policy and trade;
- ◆ realize that they are members of a worldwide movement that flourishes beyond their immediate communities who share the same goals and visions;
- ◆ engage in discussions around intellectual property rights issues, TRIPS and the implications for organic growers.

Women are often faced with real and immediate choices and decisions – such as whether or not to use GMO² seeds – without all the information at hand. It is striking how many myths, misconceptions, or misinterpretations abound in both organic farming and in ICTs. There are also broader and emerging concerns regarding climate change and its negative consequences for many farmers that the organisers try to address through the technical training.

Some of the key thematic issues that were discussed included the following:

2.1 Climate Change, Food Security and Organic Farming

The mono-crop, slash and burn, high synthetic input agriculture that is practiced in the region runs counter to conserving and nurturing the land, and optimizing natural resources and natural defence mechanisms. The combination and convergence of a number of factors has left agriculture in the Caribbean region in serious crisis and food security compromised.

² The acronym GMO stands for "genetically modified organism," and was first used to designate microorganisms that had had genes from other species transferred into their genetic material by the then-new techniques of "gene-splicing." Applied to crops, the term refers to any genetic plant type that has had a gene or genes from a different species transferred into its genetic material using accepted techniques of genetic engineering. In a real sense, all of the crop cultivars that we use are "genetically modified," in that they were bred to be more productive, more pest resistant, or produce better or different quality of product than did previous cultivars.

By drawing the links between erosion, depletion of soil content, and the damage of hurricanes, participants are able to consider the long-term advantages of managing their farms through a holistic organic system.

Participants consider the value of nurturing healthy soil, to grow healthy food, to feed a local population, and distinguish between organic farming and local (traditional) farming methods and what this means for sustainable local livelihoods. In so doing, the cause and effect of monocropping, stretching the crop to its maximum (as opposed to its optimum), and cycles of famine and low harvests, are drawn. The workshop facilitators also debunk a series of common myths; that to convert to organic requires leaving the farm fallow for three years; that conventional crops have a higher yield than organically grown.

Farmer participants weigh the consequences of food technologies on their personal and environmental health, as well as on the monopolization of global market and are able to draw their own conclusions about the benefits of using local inputs for local farming for local consumption.

2.2 The Organic Export Sector and implications for women farmers

Organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing of all sectors in agriculture, worldwide. According to a recent study³, currently more than 26 million hectares of farmland are under organic management worldwide. This is more than two million hectares more than in the previous year - an increase of almost ten percent. The organic sector is, on average, under half a percent of the total agricultural sector in most countries, the exceptions being Germany and Austria which have between two and three percent of their agricultural area under organic production. The major organic products sold in global markets include in order of importance are dried fruits and nuts, processed fruits and vegetables, cocoa, spices, herbs, oil crops and derived products, sweeteners, dried leguminous products, meat, dairy products, alcoholic beverages, processed food and fruit preparations. Non-food items include cotton, horticulture and livestock.

Opportunities exist to tap into export, regional and local tourism markets, but women farmers tend to be isolated from systematic and easily accessible market information, are not producing to organic export standards, do not recognize themselves as entrepreneurs or farming as a business and are thus less likely to translate their interest and farming practice into economic revenue. A number of women farmers would like to make this leap but need support to do so. The market for organic products from the Caribbean is potentially a large one. There are regional opportunities, which could be explored by targeting hotels and the growing ecotourism market.

In the Caribbean, women own and control less land than do men. The majority of female farmers are small farmers. Despite policies intended to assure equitable development women, they still receive less extension training and access comparatively fewer loans for farm development, product development and marketing. Although there is little available data on hectares in organic agriculture in the Caribbean it is indicated that in every territory a high percentage of women farmers show an interest in farming in traditional and holistic fashions but do not have access to the standards and production processes required for certification.

Women farmers find it challenging to compete effectively in regular markets. For example: regulations for import of tubers into the USA require investment of funds for pre-clearance of

³ The World of Organic Agriculture – Statistics and Emerging Trends, 2005

goods and for washing and packaging at the airports. USA recently put on the back burner a suggestion that soils be tested for certain pests and, if found, tubers from that farm be allowed unrestricted entry to the US. Unable to fund clearance fees etc, women are anxious to match their slender resources to the more attractive markets.

2.3 WTO, TRIPS and regional trade policy

Farmers in the Caribbean are aware of how trade liberalization has negatively affected the banana and sugar industries. The sessions on WTO, CSME and related trade issues help to build awareness of the many additional ways in which WTO regulations and current negotiations affect the agriculture sector. This was addressed through exposure to acronyms, language, conventions (e.g. CBD and CB8 negotiations), agreements (e.g. TRIPS and EPAs), and discussion of the impact of non-trade barriers.

Constraints and potential opportunities afforded to organic farmers by the opening of new markets through CSME and WTO were also addressed.

Videos shown earlier set the context; illustrating the links between the organic movement, the environmental movement, the slow-food movements and the threats to food security perceived by all these movements by continuing emphasis on monoculture, the introduction of GMOs and the terminator seed technology.

2.4 Globalization and trends in ICTs

If organic farmers in the Caribbean are to be active players in the global trend towards organic farming, then it is essential that they have access to the Internet, and that they begin to use ICT based applications for their information management and communication needs. ICTs afford relatively inexpensive access to a wealth of information and networks, market information; comparative data on farm gate prices; consumer analyses as well as organic methods. The latter include not only producing organic products but also ensuring that the products are stored, processed, handled, labeled and marketed accordingly. In addition, information management software affords easier record keeping and by extension, more efficient means of forecasting supply and demand for products and produce.

To help women take advantage of computerization and digitization in the context of existing and emerging organic and natural products markets, there is an urgent need to build on current initiatives. Existing nodes of activity need to be developed into a strong interactive marketing network. This requires training in basic ICT skills, e-marketing skills, website management, vision building, and exposure to ICT service providers, marketing organizations and regulations and standards bodies. One of the main concerns of new entrants into the organic market is the small consumer base and the lack of market premium. An effective way of creating and maintaining these markets would be to put buyers in direct contact with growers, and this is where information technology and connectivity are a key medium exchange.

3. Technical issues covered

3.1 Organic Farming

The workshop program offered women farmers practical information and skills essential to successful organic farming practices. In Session II Components of Organic Farming, illustrating

the organic farm as, ideally, a closed system with all inputs being produced, used and recycled on the farm, practical examples and recipes were given for making manure teas and foliar fertilizers. The report on nutrient values of the foliar fertilizers used on Rowan's Royale coffee farm has since been shared with the group via email. This session also addressed soil management, introducing the concept of "green manures", using common legumes, often termed as "weeds", to enhance nitrogen fixing. The session stressed the importance of re-thinking inter-cropping and crop rotation patterns, particularly in the shift from conventional to organic production methods and shared examples of how this has been and can be done on individual farms. The session also re-emphasized that "leaving the farm fallow for three years" was a myth promulgated by many who did not understand the concept of the "in-conversion" period. Examples of how people managed their farms using methods they considered "organic" were shared, discussed and clarifications as to whether the methods were according to organic principles clarified.

Many of the participants were also processors of dried fruits, mushrooms, jams and jellies and wines. The facilitator included practical information about the organic methods to be used in processing such as restrictions on the types of citric acid used or synthetic thickeners for jellies. Need for HACCP certification was also stressed.

Sessions VI and VII built on the earlier sessions anchoring in specific detail the organic principles and concentrating on how this translates into a required farm management plan. Participants applied these principles and requirements to their own farms in a lively question and answer session. The next steps were the preparation for inspection. Two inspectors walked the participants through the process from request to inspection and certification, giving practical examples of what is required at each stage. The two certified farms in the session provided their input and experience. Emphasis was placed on the necessity to keep accurate records and illustrations given of the types of farm diaries and receipt books that would be required.

Participants were given the task of applying what they had learned over the past days to the upcoming field trip where they would be required to act as "inspectors" on the field visit and report back on their findings.

3.2 ICTs and Organics

Sessions III, IV and V were dedicated to ICT training in a computer center. The facilitator gave participants a bird's eye view of the growth trends of ICT, the new generations of wireless technology use and why women need to be strategic about their use of ICTs for communications, computing and commercial activities. Participants were also introduced to the concepts of a "value chain of information" and "life long learning" and their own role and contribution to this value chain.

In a discerning knowledge economy, more consumers seek quality information about who created or grew the product, why they did it, and how it was made. An important aspect of ICT training impresses upon participants the value of information and the importance of writing excellent copy when marketing your product. The emotional benefits of a product are just as important as the physical benefits, and this applies very strongly in the market for organic products. Participants were able to visit websites to see how producers communicate the produce origin and the benefits of organic food through adding simple on-pack messages. Participants are also reminded that Internet marketing is only one tool that supplements other online and offline marketing efforts, including phone calls, newsletter or list sign ups, word-of-mouth referrals etc. Participants are offered a list of suggested Web portals on which to advertise, different "tools" that they can use, and how those tools compare with each other.

Participants were interested to hear about examples of businesswomen appropriating ICTs for

their business activities. Some examples were profiled (such as Tortas Peru), while ensuring that the participants did not regard ICTs as a means to an end, but as an effective tool to complement their business plans and farming activities.

4. Workshop objectives and participants' expectations

All participants were asked to identify their goals and expectations for the workshop and to express why they were interested in organics. The objectives can be categorized into three areas:

1. organic farming related objectives
2. computer skills related objectives
3. communications and networking objectives

Participant Expectations

- ◆ Grounded in understanding organic agriculture and certification
- ◆ You are part of a wave of people worried about environmental impacts
- ◆ You value your information
- ◆ Develop and maintain workable habits, ICT skills and applicability
- ◆ Improve product and productivity
- ◆ Learn about organics and links with the ICT component
- ◆ To reach out to young people and their parents
- ◆ To continue to update, improve and learn
- ◆ To inspire women to become organic
- ◆ Learn about ICTs in order to store, save and share information
- ◆ Improve marketing
- ◆ Share the benefits of organic farming with others
- ◆ Learn techniques and put into practice
- ◆ Increase produce sales
- ◆ Computer based networking
- ◆ To become distributors of information

Why Organic?

- ◆ Sustainable
- ◆ Pulls together our role as women on earth
- ◆ Anti totalitarian agriculture
- ◆ Helps maintain good health and life expectancy
- ◆ No chemical residues
- ◆ Ideal method of farming
- ◆ Environmental health
- ◆ Longer shelf life of organically produced food
- ◆ To promote this among young women
- ◆ Lack of water, reliance on manure
- ◆ Witnesses impact of good consumption on younger people

The overall objective of the workshop is to bring together a group of women farmers from the Windward and OECS islands who share a common interest in learning about organic farming and applying ICTs to their activities.

Immediate workshop objectives and changes resulting from the project include:

- ◆ Building the theoretical and technical knowledge base of women farmers in organic farming philosophy and techniques and in organic standards in the region;
- ◆ A raising of awareness of the relevant issues posed by WTO, Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME), fair trading and organic standards requirements;
- ◆ Stimulating the cross-fertilisation of organic know-how and management processes between farming entrepreneurs in the region, using traditional means of communications and evolving information technologies;
- ◆ Strengthening the regional network of women organic farmers whose combined expertise will enable them to supply organic produce to local markets and to bring about changes to the learning, policy and commercial environments in which they conduct their activities;
- ◆ Harnessing those aspects of the Internet, which will provide women farm entrepreneurs in the region with relevant marketing, management and information tools;
- ◆ Continue to widen and deepen the regional information and marketing network of organic farmers initiated in April 2004, to help local farmers market themselves on other virtual networks and to network with each other;
- ◆ Continued refinement of a methodological training model for semi-technical women farmers, documented and distributed to institutions, and educational materials placed at the disposal of public institutions, NGOs and development projects in the region;
- ◆ Ensure that there is more Caribbean participation in similar workshops, exhibitions or related marketing events across North America and in Europe.

5. Training Methodology

Knowing and Growing provides a confluence of interest between women entrepreneurs who need capacity building both in their farming methods and management and in their information and computer skills. ICT training has more immediate outcomes when the training is offered within a context that lends itself to the benefits offered by ICTs – particularly in networking and communications between and amongst interest/user groups. There is additional value in bringing dispersed groups together for technical training because participants often find common solutions to common problems, explore technical skills together and learn from each other, and the learning process and communication channels offered by ICTs bring them closer together long after the training workshop ends. NID capitalizes on the dynamics of bringing women together and offering them the space to explore technical know-how and related experiences and always within a socio-economic and political context.

Networked Intelligence for Development, in collaboration with its local partner JOAM, delivered a tried and tested training methodology that strikes a balance between:

- ◆ Bringing in local content and local stakeholders to contribute local context and analysis to the overall program;

**KNOWING AND GROWING WORKSHOP REPORT
GRENADA MAY 2006**

- ◆ Ensuring that every participant is brought into the dialogue and discussion right from the beginning of the program as equal contributors of knowledge and experience;
- ◆ Providing some structure to the overall program while allowing for fluidity and changes as determined by the participants and other local stakeholders.



Organic Cocoa Farm field visit – Belmont Estates

In this way, a comprehensive training program is designed and developed in collaboration with participants, resource persons and local 'mediator' or 'service' agencies wherever possible. This ensures full and active participation on an ongoing basis between participants and local resource persons, and maximises the learning process. The focus of the training is people centred rather than goal oriented and is guided ultimately by the process of self-discovery. This method of training encourages confidence building, skills in problem solving and self-empowerment. It is a particularly effective mode of training for those who value the creation of networks and peer groups to build alliances and to share ideas.

The workshop provided space for five different components for training interaction:

- ◆ **On-line training sessions** were held over two days in a computer lab equipped with just 15 wireless connected computers. Participants were paired up with low-level users working with a higher experienced partner. Nidhi Tandon and Shannon Pritchard led the on-line training sessions. An IT specialist from the OECS Export Development Unit in Dominica, Christopher Roberts, ran one on-line session demonstrating an off-line computing tool on agricultural forecasting. One evening session was also dedicated to a demonstration of amateur radio for use as a back up means of communication during times of natural disaster.
- ◆ **Issue specific facilitated discussions** on the technical aspects of ICTs, on organic farming and standards, and on organic marketing processes took place over the five days, with participants seated six to a table to encourage group discussion or three to a computer.
- ◆ **Context specific discussions** facilitated by Doriene Rowan Campbell and Nidhi Tandon on regional and international trade and on ICTs and globalization.

- ◆ **Field trips**, one entire day was devoted to visiting a conventional farm, a conventional nursery, a certified organic farm and a certified off farm processor, provided a set of practical illustrations of the principles and theories discussed during the workshop. The conventional farm and nursery belonged to Odette Campbell, a Knowing & Growing member who had participated in the 2004 regional training workshop. Participants put to practice what they had learned – which is that an organic farmer's most important tool is her eyes. Participants were required to put their eyes to work, acting as “organic inspectors” and applied their new learning to identify, on the farms and nursery, at least five examples of organic principles in operation as well as any examples of lack of compliance. The chocolate-making company provided a practical illustration for those who are processors (jams, dried fruit, mushrooms or wines) of the organic requirements for certification of an operation.



Assessing the opportunity to convert a seedling nursery to organic

- ◆ **Video screenings and discussions** took place on one evening session, two videos were provided to NID by www.boilingfrog.ca. “Asking for Solutions” filmed at the 25th annual Guelph Organic Farmers Conference, January 2006, and footage from the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity March 20-31 2006 in Brazil where the future of Terminator was discussed www.banterminator.org

6. Participant profile

The workshop organisers sent out workshop application forms through a wide range of networks across nine countries. In total, 44 registration forms were received from Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, but not from Martinique or Barbados, which were originally included as participating countries in this workshop. A couple of registration forms were received from countries such as Suriname and Belize, which will be followed up with at a later time when subsequent workshops are planned. Participants learned about the workshop through networks including professional businesswomen's associations, rural women's groups, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, Ministries of Women's Affairs and Ministries of Agriculture. At least six participants applied for the workshop through the recommendation of the 2004 workshop participants.

Of the thirty participants registered for the workshop, nine were funded by USAID, sixteen were funded by UNDP, two were self-funded, and three were funded by NID. Canada's IDRC paid for the airfares of two facilitators from within the region, and USAID paid for the airfares of two facilitators from Canada. All participants paid a registration fee of US\$15.00 which went towards the training materials.

All thirty participants who registered for the workshop completed the entire course. Over 50% had used the Internet before, however only 23% were proficient users. Fifteen had already established email addresses; at the end of the workshop all 30 participants were connected with their own email address. Of the 30 participants 25 ran their own farming businesses selling to

local markets. One participant from Guyana is a member of a cooperative exporting organic pineapples on the international market

Age range of participants

Under 20 years	0
20 – 30 years	5
30 – 40 years	4
40 – 50 years	13
Over 50 years	8

7. Immediate outcomes, proposed follow-up activities, and recommendations

A lot of ground was covered in a relatively short period of time and while much of the dialogue and training sessions were vital to specific skill building, on a parallel level, individuals were learning and comparing from and with each other. The most immediate and tangible outcome is the continuing growth of a regional network of women who can share knowledge and communicate with each other electronically. It is safe to say, that in any one country in the region, there will be at least one farmer who is an effective point of contact for the network.

Participants learned fundamental basics about email, setting up domain names and the importance of information quality, were able to discern between websites and use the Internet strategically for their own information purposes. Participants left the workshop with a strong foundation in organic principles and certification standards.

7.1 Proposed follow up activities by individual participants

At the final session, each participant was asked to identify action items they could implement in their community or country. Some of the responses included:

- ◆ Learn more about regional and international trade initiatives and organizations and realize the opportunities they can present if lobbied effectively (CSME, WTO)
- ◆ Provide information to local organizations on what it means to be organic
- ◆ Mainstream organic training throughout the islands and in the school systems Introduce changes to composting systems in local schools
- ◆ Bring organic farming information into an existing network / group
- ◆ Investigate and target hotels for information and marketing
- ◆ Conduct training workshops for Ministry of Agriculture extension officers, so that they can become organically equipped
- ◆ Influence local hotel/tourist industry to buy and serve organic
- ◆ Process other crops to make available to more communities
- ◆ Grow vermiculture, specialty bugs, animal inputs organically (beneficial) inputs
- ◆ Experiment/become creative with regard to organic inputs (e.g. salt seasonings)
- ◆ Establishing a graphics and labelling services business that is environmentally friendly for the organic sector
- ◆ Establish recycling programs
- ◆ Advise established business to consider organic standards (e.g. banana growing in St Vincent)

- ◆ Consider the options to divide island between conventional and organic farming (leeward vs. wayward on St Vincent)

7.2 Proposed follow up activities by workshop organisers

JOAM and NID are planning to hold two more regional workshops in the following years in Cuba and in Guyana using the same methodology and improved materials.

2007: Host country Cuba: for participants from Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Turks & Caicos.

2008: Host country Guyana: for participants from Belize, Guyana and Suriname.

8. Evaluation results

A summary of comments collected from the evaluation survey form is collated below. Some participants commented on the “crash course” character of the workshop and the intensity of information. A total of 23 (77%) participants completed evaluation forms. Main changes recommended for the course and workshop included:

- ◆ include a session on how to shift from the local market to regional/international market
- ◆ include a session on vermiculture, post harvest issues and seed selection
- ◆ more on-site organic sessions should determine where to host subsequent workshops

The most useful components in the organic farming sessions were listed as:

- ◆ step by step composting, mulching and making fertilizer
- ◆ components of organic farming
- ◆ steps to organic certification
- ◆ organic planning
- ◆ importance of observation in all aspects of organic farming
- ◆ principles & standards of organics
- ◆ the challenges of farm planning, with regards to plots, crop rotation, intercropping
- ◆ the practical aspects of organic farming, implementation and benefits

The most useful components in the ICT training sessions ranged across a wide spectrum of interests including:

- ◆ how to source information, browsing
- ◆ ICT applications in agriculture
- ◆ On-line ICT training: websites
- ◆ how to subscribe to an e-newsletter or e-bulletin
- ◆ establishing an email address
- ◆ identifying positive and negative aspects of a website

**KNOWING AND GROWING WORKSHOP REPORT
GRENADA MAY 2006**

- ◆ registering domains
- ◆ searching for market opportunities
- ◆ how to store information found on the web

Participants identified the following as the most difficult aspects of the workshop:

- ◆ linking the possibilities for disaster management for organic farmers
- ◆ intensity of workshop schedule
- ◆ long sessions
- ◆ large quantity of information

On how the workshop would have a direct impact on their activities, participants reported the following:

I know where to start a conversion from conventional to organic farming

I can now prepare composting as a source of income

I will source information from the web on market opportunities

I will join an established rural women farmers' group and share what I have learnt

Being able to source information through the website and find players on the market side who may want to buy my products, as well as the availability of other goods

I will make organic fertilizer

I understand how to implement proper organic farming practices

I understand the dangers of conventional farming

I can create a more organized process for yearly organic certification

I will transform my lifestyle in the way I farm and think

I will teach my workers organic practices

I can now network locally and regionally

I will enriching my compost with seaweed and fish guts

"I am back on the job and I have discussed the details of the workshop at our Executive Council meeting. I have discussed with my colleague, the Secretary for Agriculture, the plans that we are developing for strengthening organic agriculture in schools. Meanwhile I am meeting with the farmers in my constituency to mobilize their interest in organic farming. The seeds will be part of a competition in schools. You will hear more about that. At this time I am developing programmes for interactive multimedia learning centres in the communities and this will involve organic farmers to use ICT to strengthen their farming production and to strengthen sustainability in the rural communities."

**Extract of email from Claudia Groome Duke,
Participant from Tobago, June 2, 2006**

**KNOWING AND GROWING WORKSHOP REPORT
GRENADA MAY 2006**

I understand how important planning is in organic farming

I will produce most of my raw materials to ensure that they are organically certified

I will take the proper approach to organic farming and appreciate that organic farming is an on-going process of management systems

On what impacts will this training have on your business and how you will use it to garner additional sales, participants responded with:

"renewed and rejuvenated to begin an organic movement in Tobago"

"develop a policy to incorporate organic farming in the curriculum and train teachers in the use of ICT's as a tool in the classroom"

"encourages me to start a business"

"it will help me to advertise my business and encourage the community to practice good living"

"I plan to sensitize my rural women producers on how to go organic"

"use the www for marketing of my community's organic products"

"set up my business email"

"promote more agricultural organic crops"

"I have been introduced to new ideas which will lead to a new business venture - Organic Inputs"

"Through networking and website information"

"I made contact with a pineapple farmer from another island"

On the contacts and connections made that will help in your farming/business, participants were pleased about making contacts with regional networks, with over 30 women with similar interests and with importers and business agents through the web.

Other comments included:

"This workshop is necessary for sustainable development in the region. More exposure to advocacy and lobbying methodologies will enhance farmers' capacity to become change agents."

"We returned home safely to Guyana, the group had discussions, was in contact with the President of GOAM MOVEMENT, Dr. Francis we are to make recommendations for improvement to take organic farming to a higher level in Guyana. Lets keep the network alive".

Extract from email from Rodlyn Grant, participant from Guyana, June 1, 2006

**KNOWING AND GROWING WORKSHOP REPORT
GRENADA MAY 2006**

"Meeting other women farmers, hearing of the different experiences about farming as a woman."

"The organizers need to continue their exploring of Knowing & Growing and be mindful that this has only just begun"

"If workshops like this continue and with more advocacy change will eventually come."

"It was a well planned programme, for the organizers had really seen the needs of collectiveness in the region."

"Now I believe we are faced with the real challenge of (im)planting the seeds of knowledge we all embraced so eagerly. Since our return, I called the government agriculture station here, to get information on soil testing. Good news! It is done free in Guyana (which I thought) and you receive the results in five working days, also there is availability of organic compost for \$500,00/50lb bag, (about \$US 2.50)and further you can also buy a bin of worms quite cheaply, but they are out of stock now. I must say the workshop has helped my to focus specifically on what I WANT TO DO AND HOW TO GET THERE! Please let's keep in touch and again it was wonderful meeting and interacting with all of you".

Extract of email from Avette Richards, participant from Guyana, June 1st 2006

Appendices

Appendix I: Core training module

Appendix II: Workshop schedule (final)

Appendix III: Workshop facilitator bios

Appendix IV: Participant details

Appendix V: NID & JOAM Profiles

Appendix I: Core training module

Note on Methodology and Materials

The entire training program, from conception to delivery, is adapted in collaboration with participants to ensure full and active participation between and among participants and resource persons. The focus of the training is people centered rather than goal oriented and is guided ultimately by the process of self-discovery. This method of training encourages confidence building, skills in problem solving and self-empowerment.

The introduction to and exploration of ICTs is most effective when it situates ICT use and applications within an immediate context that brings together participants who *share common information objectives*. In this case, hands-on ICT training will, as far as possible, enable participants to seek and use information pertinent to the organic farming and business sector. We aim to simplify and demystify references to technology, and use clear and unambiguous language that best resonate with our workshop stakeholder groups.

The core module materials are further expanded to include ice-breaking exercises, expectations and objective exercises and a review and evaluation of each day's content at the beginning of the next morning. Specific case studies and best practices are an important component of the training content, and throughout the workshop, new context-relevant materials will be brought into the content depending upon the interests and expectations of the participants.

<p align="center">Opening Session Registrations and Introductions</p>	<p align="center">Session I: Introduction to Organic Farming – the Big Picture (2 hours)</p>
<p>Content</p> <p>Introductions from participants and resource persons Workshop expectations exercise How to get the most out of the workshop Introduction to the global movement for organic farming</p>	<p>Content</p> <p>Discussion on agro-biodiversity, organic farming, food security, what a sustainable livelihood approach to farming is, the linkages between organic farming, local knowledge and livelihoods. What is happening to genetic erosion today and what we can do about this? An introduction to trends and developments in the organic sector.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants share their expectations of the workshop, their expected challenges, and the reasons why they are interested in organic farming</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants understand that their farming activities and the shift towards community markets is a growing trend and that organic farming is one component of an ecological approach (philosophy) of caring for the planet. All participants share a common understanding of what organic farming actually entails.</p>
<p>Video screening to set the context</p> <p><i>Asking for Solutions</i> filmed at the 25th annual Guelph Organic Farmers Conference, January 2006, and footage from the <i>Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity</i> March 20-31 2006</p>	<p>Reference Materials & Handouts</p>
<p>Notes for Facilitator</p> <p>Enabling participants to see their value and contribution to a larger global movement is important.</p>	<p>Notes for Facilitator</p>

<p align="center">Session II: Components of Organic Farming (2 hours)</p>	<p align="center">Session III: Introduction to ICT tools and applications (3 hours)</p>
<p>Content</p> <p>Discussion on seeds, nutrition management, pest management, water and soil management and the links with sustaining production.</p> <p>How to convert from conventional to organic</p>	<p>Content</p> <p>What are ICTs, introduction to terminology, components, terms and trends? Introduction to the different aspects of ICTs. Why it is important to be connected, to network, communicate and manage information. What globalization of information and communications mean for women farmers in this region.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants understand the fundamental similarities and differences between organic and traditional systems of agriculture.</p> <p>Participants will compare and contrast traditional systems of intercropping, crop rotation, land clearing and husbandry, and the lessons that would apply to organic systems. They recognise that they have to move beyond traditional to attain organic standards.</p> <p>Participants are introduced to “in-conversion” phase of organic farming.</p> <p>They define what organic production systems mean to them as a group.</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants recognize three dimensions of ICTs, computing, connectivity and commerce. They share a common understanding of the importance and significance of accessing and contributing information to the WWW. Common myths and misperceptions of the Internet and software tools are dispelled.</p> <p>Participants dissect an email and website address and learn to distinguish between the two.</p> <p>Participants are introduced to notions of life long learning and implications for their information objectives and their own information value chain.</p>
<p>Reference Materials & Handouts</p> <p>Canadian Organic Growers: Reference Series # 6: From Conventional to Ecological Agriculture, a Guide to Crop Transition</p> <p>Canadian Organic Growers, Reference Series # 8: Organic Gardening: The First Steps</p>	<p>Reference Materials and Handouts</p>
<p>Notes for Facilitator</p> <p>Prepare a checklist to help participants to determine how organic traditional systems of agriculture are.</p>	<p>Notes for Facilitator</p> <p>Many participants use their mobile telephones to connect with each other and to forward SMS messages from their faith-based institutions. Use this as an example of their role in the “value chain” of information distribution.</p>

<p>Session IV: On-line training; basic ICT tools and applications (3 hours)</p>	<p>Session V: On-line training; introduction to websites (3 hours)</p>
<p>Content</p> <p>Setting up an email account, do's and don'ts. Understanding the workings of a search engine, introduction to different kinds of search engines. Effective use of a search engine, understanding the basics of web page information, how to use the web to help you make informed choices.</p>	<p>Content</p> <p>What are ICTs, terminology, components, terms and trends? Introduction to the different aspects of ICTs. Why it is important to be connected, to network, communicate and manage information. Case examples of innovative ways in which women in rural development initiatives use the Internet, virtual networking and communication tools.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants come away from the session with an established email account by the end of the day and will have sent and received email from each other. They will also understand how search engines work and use different search engines to find information specific to their interests.</p> <p>By the end of this practical participants are able to: Send and receive email Open an Internet browser i.e. Internet Explorer Search the WWW through entering a web address; browsing web pages, using search engines and information gateways.</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>How to join a network or subscribe to an e-newsletter, examples of existing monthly e-newsletters of interest to women, portal site visits.</p> <p>Using a search engine, the importance of metatags, understanding the basics of web page information, how to use the web to help you make informed choices.</p> <p>Any myths about the complexity around web design are dispelled and participants begin to understand that it is content that matters more than design. Participants usually appreciate the potentials of web tools to both access information and present information. In this practical you will gain a valuable understanding of the key features of the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW).</p>
<p>Reference Materials & Handouts</p> <p>NID Web-Navigation Exercise NID Web search exercise</p>	<p>Reference Materials and Handouts</p> <p>Search Engine Placement tips Major Search Engines and Directories</p>
<p>Notes for Facilitator</p> <p>Ensure that all website references are of direct interest to participants. Ensure that participants understand importance of security issues, personal information and of logging out of email systems when completed.</p>	<p>Notes for Facilitator</p>

<p align="center">Session VI: Organic Planning & Certification (3 hours)</p>	<p align="center">Session VII: Steps to Organic Certification</p>
<p>Content</p> <p>Revisiting Organic principles: Applying these principles to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Planning for an organic farm, (crop rotation), ◆ Developing a farm management plan, (soil management, pest management) <p>The four principles of organic farming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Health of all living things ◆ Ecological balance ◆ Fairness to all ◆ Care <p>What a well-managed organic system requires.</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Steps to organic certification – procedure example of an international certification agency operating in the Caribbean ◆ A standard inspection program – the inspection day ◆ The catalog of sanctions – how to deal with non-compliance
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants understand that it is not the land nor the product that is certified but the “process”. Participants learn about planning and growing plants that best suit the local ecology, they understand the importance of the biological composition of the soil, the importance of identify crop/soil interface, how to get a measure of what can be grown.</p> <p>Participants begin to recognize that farming organically is in fact an ongoing process aimed at improving processes, planning and management.</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants learn what they will need to do to prepare for regional or international organic certification.</p>
<p>Reference materials</p> <p>Canadian Organic Growers, Reference Series # 2, Seed Sources for Organic Gardeners</p> <p>Sourcing Organic Seeds – handout</p> <p>Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement, Organic Farming Handbook, A Guide for Extension Workers and Farmers, 2003</p>	<p>Reference materials</p> <p>Short Introduction: Steps to Organic Certification. According to EU Regulation 2092/91 and/or the US National Organic Program (NOP)</p> <p>Standard Inspection Program for Organic Production according to the EU Regulation 2092/91, the US National Organic Program (NOP), JAS and CERES Standard interpretation</p> <p>Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement Standards for Organic Production and Processing July 2003</p>
<p>Notes for Facilitators</p> <p>Farmers also want to know what they need to be doing to build awareness among their consumers.</p>	<p>Notes for Facilitators</p>

<p>Session VIII: After Certification – to market and trade (1.5 hours)</p>	<p>Session IX: ICT Applications in agriculture (3 hours)</p>
<p>Content</p> <p>Key principles of advertising and internet marketing, tactics and options within the context of organic farming which should prioritize the feeding of our neighbours before feeding people in other places. Presentation by local Marketing Board representative on the experiences, challenges and opportunities of marketing organic produce overseas. Sources of organic market price information www.growingformarket.com Sources of information on the markets www.naturalgrocerybuyer.com Sources of info on consumers www.organicconsumers.org Internet trading sites www.organictrader.net</p>	<p>Content</p> <p>Participants input farming data into a spreadsheet that is generated by database inputs listing farmers, grower data, which then forecasts harvest data? Pineapple growers currently use the tool.</p> <p>Participants break into groups to assess four different websites: www.intracen.org/dbms/organics/index.asp www.foodsfortrade.com/database/add.php www.fibl.org/english/index.php www.internationalmarketing.com</p>
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Examples from Guyana Pineapple joint venture and Doriene's coffee – individual vs. community initiatives and experiences</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Participants understand the value of computing and the applications of software for data collection and forecasting. Participants determine what makes an interesting website that attracts repeat visits, are user friendly, informative and current. Participants will follow up with contacts that they found and made creative suggestions on how some of the websites could be improved. The exercise helps participants to consider how they might present information if they were to develop a web-based marketing presence for their farming activities.</p>
<p>Reference materials</p> <p>National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: Organic Marketing Resources Marketing and Business Guide, June 2004 www.attra.ncat.org</p>	<p>Reference materials</p> <p>NID handout: your e-identity</p>
<p>Notes for Facilitators</p> <p>Identify two to three participants who have already marketed to the local and international markets. Ask them to build a case study on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ At what point did your product move from local to wider market? ◆ What did the farmer do to build consumer interest? ◆ How did you brand your product, what mediums did you use? ◆ Which agencies and government institutions helped in your marketing? ◆ What solutions did you use to face challenges? 	<p>Notes for Facilitators</p>

Appendix II: Workshop schedule (final)

	Day I	Day II	Day III	Day IV	Day V	Day VI
Morning Sessions		I: Intro to Organic Farming – the Big Picture	IV: On-line training – basic ICT tools and applications	VI: Organic Planning and Certification	Field trips	IX: ICT applications in agriculture
		II: Components of Organic Farming		VII: Steps to Organic Certification		
Afternoon Sessions	Arrivals Registration Introductions Expectations	III: Intro to ICT tools and applications	V: On-line training – introduction to websites	VIII: After certification – to market and trade		X: ICTs and Organic Farming – recap and evaluation
			Product	Exhibition		
Evening Program	Video Screening and discussions	National broadcaster Presentation & discussion		Emergency Amateur Radio presentation & discussion	Lessons from field trip & WTO presentation and discussion	Workshop close and distribution of organic seeds

Appendix III: Workshop facilitator bios

Marcus Braun is an organic certifier and europGAP Inspector for CERES in Caricom; Orga-KniX – founder and coordinator of organic initiative for the development of organic operations with an associated organic grower group, basic processing/packaging facility and an innovative marketing strategy. A facilitator of workshops and seminars on organic farming, Markus is an Organic Inspector for BCS – Ökogarantie; Consultant for Organic Farming Allied Farm, Jamaica; Member of *Caribbean Herbal Business Association*; member of WEF (Waitukubuli Ecological Foundation) Dominica; Director of JOAM since 2003, and member of IFOAM. Marcus is an organic farmer currently operating a five-acre farm for the local Jamaica market. marcusbraun68@hotmail.com

Shannon Pritchard is an IT Project Manager with a major Canadian telecom company. She is also a trainer and project manager for *Networked Intelligence for Development*, having coordinated and trained on ICT projects in Cameroon and Jamaica. She has worked in Central and South America and speaks Spanish and French. Shannon was the administrative manager for the Grenada workshop. Shannon@networkedintelligence.com

Dwight Robinson has a PhD in entomology from UWI Mona and Certificate in Organic Farming and Community Grower Group Inspection. Current chairman of the *Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement* (since 2003); Chairman of the *National Organic Agriculture Steering Committee* of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Jamaica; Lecturer in the Department of Life Sciences, *University of West Indies*, specializing in entomology and pest management. Dr. Robinson is also facilitator and resource person for workshops and seminars on principles and techniques of organic agriculture and integrated pest management. dwight.robinson@uwimona.edu.jm

Dorienne Rowan-Campbell has been working on a wide range of women, gender and development issues for more than 30 years. Her organic farming experience has widened the emphasis to include questions of export, access, business management, ICTs and organic production. Based out of both Canada and Jamaica, which affords a useful “bifocal” world vision; she works as an independent development consultant and is affiliated with *Networked Intelligence for Development*. Dorienne owns and manages a small, certified organic farm and produces Rowan’s Royale Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee. She is a qualified organic crop inspector, Board Member of the *Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement* and interim Vice Chair of the fledgling *Caribbean Regional Organic Agriculture Movement (CROAM)*. Darc@cwjamaica.com

Nidhi Tandon is the founder and director of *Networked Intelligence for Development* and has worked for several years training women to use the Internet and web-based communications and network tools in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. She works with grassroots communities to promote their visibility and voices in the “*Networked Economy*” and brings resources and information to a wide range of community organisations. She designs training materials and is a trainer and facilitator of participatory “on-site” learning workshops. Nidhi was the overall coordinator and manager of the Grenada training workshop. Nidhi@networkedintelligence.com

Appendix IV: Participant details

Last Name	First Name	Business / Organisation	Country	Address details	Email
1 Alexander	Yvonne	Owner, farmer. Vegetables (Carrot, cabbage, tomato, lettuce)	Grenada	Bylands PO, Grenville	yvonestandrews@yahoo.ca
2 Andrews	Glenda	Richmond - owner, vegetables are organic	Grenada	Richmond, LaDigue, St Andrews	Glenrich64@yahoo.com
3 Biroo	Anna	Owner, farmer. Fruits and vegetables sold to hotels	St Lucia		philovern@yahoo.com
4 Cato	Dauphine	Owner, farmer - vegetables	St Vincent	P.O. Box 1052, Kingstown	iica@vincysurf.com
5 Croney	Theresa	Owner of local wines company selling to local market Agronomist, Min of Agric. Member of steering committee	Grenada	Grenville PO, Grenville	croneywine@yahoo.com
6 Dupal	Hannah	Hewanorra Organic Agricultural Movement. Grows vegetables, fruit, herbs	St Lucia	Research union, 3 Tabernacle St, Massade, Gros-Islet	hanadee24@yahoo.com
7 Edwards	Amorelle	Owner, Farmer, vegetables, fruits, root crops	St Vincent	Fitzhughes, Chateaubelair Post Office	Mallia116@yahoo.com
8 George	Margaret	Small farmer, fruit and vegetables, hot pepper, seasonings and spices are organic but not certified	Tobago	Network of Rural Women Producers, c/o IICA T&T Office, 3 Herbert St, Port of Spain	Junei55@yahoo.com
9 Gillard	Denise	Owner, juices, fresh fruit and vegetables	St Kitts	Newton Ground Village	Pambee25@yahoo.com
10 Grant	Rodlyn Natasha	Organic Mushroom production -not certified and Secretary of GFYA	Guyana	Guyana Forum for Youth in Agriculture 18 Brickdam, Stabroek	Rodbarn2001@yahoo.com
11 Groome-Duke	Claudia	House of Assembly member, supports the direction and control of Education in Tobago, area representative of the electoral district	Tobago	TLH Building, Milford Rd, Scarborough	groomeduke@hotmail.com
12 Henwood	Veronica	Henwood's Product - owner/manager	Grenada	c/o LaDigue, St Andrews	Vwood15@yahoo.co.uk
13 Jones	Odessa	Owner, farmer. Vegetables and fruits. Selling to local market	Grenada	Spring Gardens, St Pauls	odessamcmeo@yahoo.ca
14 Lashington	Christiana	Owner, farmer. Fruit and vegetables	Grenada		Chrislash2006@yahoo.com
15 Marryshow	Theresa Andrea	T&C Vegetable, Herbs & Poultry Farm - owner and manager, semi organic culinary herbs and eggs	Grenada	Ballies Bacolet, St Davids	tcvegetablefarm@yahoo.com

**KNOWING AND GROWING WORKSHOP REPORT
GRENADA MAY 2006**

16	Mcdermot	Julia	Elementary School teacher Ormond's Organics- joint owner, manager, pig production, herbs, flowers, vegetables, banana	Tobago	Scarborough	julmactt@yahoo.com
17	Ormond	Catherine	Catalyst Gardens - Manager and proprietor, greens and culinary herbs	Dominica	Bellevue Chopin	kathom2002@yahoo.com
18	Pilgrim	Ratoya		St Lucia	Anse La Raye	rp0333a@hotmail.com
19	Richards	Avette	Small organic farm. Pepper, Pineapples and citrus	Guyana	Project Outreach, Kitty, Greater Georgetown	avettej2000@yahoo.com
20	Sanderson	Mavis	Owner, Farms on 4.5 acres of land, bananas, cassava, ground provisions	Dominica	Good Hope Village	sandersonmavis@hotmail.com
21	Seraphin	Mary	Owner, Farmer. Yams, ginger, organic cassava.	Dominica	Good Hope village Network of Rural Women, PO 1077, Port of Spain	maryseraphine@hotmail.com
22	Taylor	Gia Gaspard	Coordinator and training officer. Farmer, herbs, fruits and vegetables	Trinidad		iearntrinidadntobago@yahoo.com
23	Trumpet	Jocelyn	Owner, Farmer vegetables	St Vincent	Spring Village, Post Office	Joycelyn2trumpet@yahoo.com
24	Tyson	Vilma	7.5 acre farm: poultry, citrus, cherries, cash crops of eggplant, poi, bokchoy, cucumbers, cabbage.	Guyana	Tyson Farm Upper West Watooka. Wismar, Linden	Watooka_farma@yahoo.com
25	Wallace Primus	Gene	Owner, seedlings, fruits, vegetables	St Kitts	P.O. Box 1851, La Guerite Ext., Basseterre	gwallaceprimus@yahoo.com
26	Wight	Ada Kate	Bbackyard garden. Hopes to gain skills for a larger scale production	Trinidad	30 Old Paddock Rd. Blue Range, Diego Martin	adakatemarie@yahoo.com
27	Williams	Mary	Organic pineapples and heart of palm, sold to international markets.	Guyana	Red Lock, Mainstay Lake, Anna Regina, Essequibo Coast	sopwils@yahoo.com
28	Williams	Cleaver	Owner – fresh fruits and vegetables. Selling to local market	Grenada	Clozier, St John's	Souperr06@yahoo.com
29	Wilson	Christine	Owner, agro processing and craft production	St Lucia	Moreau Post Office, TI Rocher/ Micoud	krissee729@hotmail.com
30	Winston	Julia	Julia's Organic Farm - owner: juices, fresh fruit and vegetables	Dominica	Petite Soufriere	julwindomi@yahoo.com

Appendix V: NID & JOAM Profiles

Networked Intelligence for Development (www.networkedintelligence.com) is a Toronto-based network of independent consultants and trainers specializing in new media, information and communication technologies, the creative industries and international development. Our consultants have held senior positions in multi-lateral organizations, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, broadcasting and media institutions, research institutes and non-governmental organizations.

We are able to provide advice and know-how on a wide range of economic development concerns offering a first-hand understanding of grassroots, small business and government-level policy planning. Established in 1997 with a commitment to promoting economic and social equity, we work with a wide spectrum of communities at different levels in developing and transition countries.

Our common mission and objective is to harness the benefits of evolving information and communication technologies and new media, to enable people to tell their own stories, to bring out their creativity and to express their informed choices about the decisions that affect their lives and identities in the information era.

The Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement Limited (JOAM) www.joam.org.jm is a non-profit, non-governmental organization created to foster an organic agriculture industry in Jamaica. The mission of JOAM is to facilitate the development of a sustainable and economically viable organic agriculture sector in Jamaica while maintaining organic integrity, promoting health, environmental consciousness, and social responsibility.

History and Objectives:

The Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM) was established in May 2001. In its years of existence, JOAM has made significant strides in the development of the local organic industry and is considered the leading organic agriculture organization in the Caribbean region. The main objectives of JOAM are to:

- ◆ Lobby for and assist in the development of an effective local organic agriculture industry
- ◆ Assist local producers who are interested in the conversion to and certification in organic agriculture
- ◆ Promote and facilitate the production, distribution and consumption of all types of organic agriculture products
- ◆ Advance and promote better environmental and human health through the acceptance and practice of organic farming techniques

Activities:

The focus of JOAM over the last two years has been in strengthening the organization, increasing organic production and certification, and laying a framework to build and strengthen the local industry. JOAM continues to be the source of knowledge on organic agriculture and has been involved in the training of farmers, extension officers and technocrats in the principles and techniques of organic agriculture. In continuing its effort to provide training in all aspects of organic agriculture, JOAM will be hosting a Basic Organic Farm Inspection Training Course in association with the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) in June 2006. It is expected that thirty persons from Jamaica and the region will participate in the course. Since March 2005, JOAM has been working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Jamaica, as part of a National Organic Agriculture Steering Committee (NOASC) to develop a National Organic Agriculture Enhancement Project. It is expected that this project will further strengthen the local organic industry. The main objectives of the NOASC include:

- ◆ Develop a National Policy on Organic Agriculture
- ◆ Carry out and sensitization and training activities
- ◆ Prepare and disseminate literature on organic agriculture
- ◆ Develop an organic seed production program
- ◆ Fund research into some key areas in organic agriculture
- ◆ Facilitate the certification of organic farms in Jamaica.

The success of this workshop was assured due to the support of a large number of people. Our thanks and acknowledgements go to:

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Patsy Evelyn	CROAM, Guyana
Noni Francis	The Flamboyant Hotel, Grenada
Mott Green	The Grenada Chocolate Company
Elaine Henry McQueen	Grenada National Organisation of Women
Jennifer Hosten	Jenny's Place, Grenada
Sandra James	UNDP, Grenada office
Cosmos Joseph	IICA, Grenada
Angela Julien	Grenada National Organisation of Women
Paula Lewis	Belmont Estate, Grenada
Angelica Ospina	IDRC, Canada
Joseph Peltier	IICA, Barbados
Leisa Perch	UNDP, Barbados office
Kelly Reinhardt	BoilingFrog, Canada
Georgia Wallen	Inter American Development Bank
USAID	Caribbean Open Trade Support Program