



Short Report for GPN Website

The Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers (JNRWP) was established in 1999 and is comprised of over six hundred (600) members. JNRWP partners with other agencies, e.g., the Rural Agricultural Development Agency (RADA), the Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) and the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (UWI). The network promotes economic empowerment for women through training and human resource development, sensitization of the needs of women producers and financial, managerial and leadership training.

In its continued efforts to empower our women, the network hosted a series of Zoom Competency Workshops during the period November 25 to December 9, 2021, in all its four regions: Central Region, Western Region, Northern Region and Eastern Region.

This is in keeping with the organization's thrust to empower rural women by providing training in the application of digital technology for the development of agro-based SMEs. The workshops were conducted in partnership with our international sponsor, the University of Kassel under the broader Global Partnership Network.

More than one hundred (110) women farmers and entrepreneurs have benefitted from the series of training which began on Friday, November 26 in Clarendon; Westmoreland on November 29; St. Ann on December 1; and ended in Portland on December 9, 2021.

On March 10, 2020, Jamaica was thrown into a frenzy with the announcement of its first Covid-19 case. As infections mounted and panic surged the government responded with tighter measures and restrictions on face-to-face gatherings.

Almost immediately, other sectors latched on to Zoom as the "new normal" in strategic communication and the platform became the tool for keeping many businesses afloat. What became glaringly obvious however, was that the farming community (and in particular many rural women farmers) were late adapters to this technology.

The Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers (JNRWP) was among the organizations greatly impacted by this hesitancy among our rural women producers and farmers. Quite often, training, and other opportunities offered by the JNRWP were hindered by farmer's lack of knowledge in the use of the platform.

As indicated in prior reports, women are disproportionately impacted by the economic loss brought on by the pandemic, which has resulted in the disenfranchisement of many persons worldwide. With the economic fall-out in the tourism sector (the country's largest foreign exchange earner) and the 'temporary' loss of this market segment, farmers are forced to find other buyers for the glut of produce now on the local market. Therefore, networking has become a necessary tool for survival and economic recovery among rural women producers amid the pandemic. Networking provides an environment of support among women, the sharing of best practices and an opportunity for exposure to new markets.

The workshops were also geared towards changing the "mindset" of farmers to become more receptive to technology and adaptable to the "uncontrollable" events, which are a consequence of the environment we live in. Change is inevitable and farmers will have to adapt. If the industry is to survive, rural women will have to rise to the challenge of the evolutions in technology.

Photo 1: JNRWP President; Miss Tamisha Lee address welcome participants at ZOOM 101 Competency Workshop at College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) on December 9, 2021.

Photo 2: Miss Kimberley Lowe (Presenter) presenting on the Zoom Communication Platform at ZOOM 101 Competency Workshop at Village Academy on December 1, 2021.

Photo 3&4: Participants at ZOOM 101 Competency Workshop at CASE and Village Academy.





