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CARIBBEAN UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN:
THEIR ECOLOGY AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

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1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the methodology used in the study and the results of the research.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the conclusions of the study and the implications for future research.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the limitations of the study and the suggestions for future research.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the acknowledgments and the references.

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Topic of Paper

CARIBBEAN UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN:
THEIR ECOLOGY AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

by

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INTRODUCTION

1. Internationally, concern for the education, health and welfare of children under six years has been an age-long expression since the time of Plato. In "Emile"⁺ Rousseau made a case for the care and nurture of the child during the important period of "unfolding", and advocated that not only parents but society also should "provide the best growing conditions" for the child during this period of childhood. Rousseau was obliged to make this latter advocacy because before "Emile" the care of children in France was primarily the responsibility of the parents, with the society providing some form of begrudging welfare for children in orphanages.

2. Later, concern for the education of the young child, in Europe[¢], was expressed in terms of providing an environment that would compensate for the psychological and social deficits of children of the poor, after the children of the rich were served. In Germany and Sweden day care centres were established by religious societies to take care of the children of working mothers. These centres, were operated by "untrained" teachers who emphasised a strict form of discipline. Robert Owen's^{*} first

⁺ Ulich, R. History of Educational Thought. New York: American Book Company, 1950.

[¢] Blackstone, T. Pre-School Education in Europe, Studies on Permanent Education. Strasbourg: Council of Europe (No. 13/1970).

^{*} Cusdon, P. The English Nursery School. London: John Gardner, Ltd., 1972.

school in Scotland was established 'for the formation of character', and the arguments in support of the English Factory Act of 1819 prohibiting the employment of children under 9 years, created an awareness of the plight of the children it was intended to protect. It must be observed that due mainly to the writings of Rousseau, the "école maternelle" was created in France in 1833 for providing care and health services for young children. Although early childhood education centres existed in Belgium since 1825, it was the work and teaching of Froebel which contributed to making these centres more than 'places where children were looked after, but also where they should receive their first instruction'. Early childhood education in the Netherlands had a peculiar beginning, in that the first pre-schools were the 'secular minding schools' and the 'religious keeping schools' established by the Roman Catholics and the Protestants in the 19th Century. However, these schools were used by both the poor and the rich, but the former was not asked to pay any fee.

3. During the early 19th Century early childhood education in Canada was considered a privilege to be enjoyed only by children of the wealthy, but in the late 19th Century concern over the life-style of immigrants led to the expansion of this privilege to the poor whose parents were obliged to work, and leave their young children unprotected and sometimes unprovided for. In the United States⁺ pre-schools

⁺ Two well-known names on the American scene are:
 Bloom, B.S. Stability and Change in Human Characteristics. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1964.

Hunt, J. McV. Intelligence and Experience. New York: Ronald Press, 1961.

were started for the education of young children of the affluent, but, here again, the influx of immigrants created severe social problems due to minority groups of different nationalities having to live in ghettos. These problems accentuated by the concern of the psychologists, sociologists, educators and the nutritionists over the learning ability of the children of these people led to the concept of the "Economic Opportunity Act", 1964, under which Head Start was launched in 1965 with focus on improving the poor child's "life chances" by attending to several aspects of his development.

4. Nursery school in particular, and early childhood education in general had a "very slow and late start in the English speaking Caribbean. Nearly everything that has been recounted in the above international overview holds true of the beginning of early childhood education in the region -- the schools were started to benefit the children of the well-to-do; the churches opened day care centres, creches and infant centres for children of poor working mothers (most of whom were the only breadwinners); some sugar factories established the "Family Day Care Home" with a non-working mother or grand-mother as the child-minder. This snail-like development of early childhood education in the Caribbean might have continued, but for the advent of the Head Start Programme in the United States in 1965, the influence of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation Project for Early Childhood Education (PECE) in 1966-1976, and the work of the Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre, 1972-1979. It is interesting

to note that the main thrust of the activities of PECE and RPCDC was in favour of the underprivileged child. Although in the last twelve years, the Caribbean public and private sectors, nurses, doctors, nutritionists, psychiatrists, social welfare workers, educators and parents have become more and more familiar with and increasingly favourable to early childhood education programmes "a decided gap exists between the number of children now benefiting from the nursery programme and the number who might benefit"⁺.

5. This paper is intended to give a picture of the ecology of the deprived child in 13 islands in the English speaking Caribbean, and a general overview of the intervention programmes in operation in these islands. Overall, there are four features which are shared by these islands:

- (a) early childhood education which was established to benefit the children of the "haves", is now being adopted to enhance the "life chances" of the poor child;
- (b) early childhood education is looked upon and accepted as a possible way of providing social justice, equal quality education and services, and an adequate educational preparation for children from poor home backgrounds;

⁺ Grant, D.R.B., Carmen Lusan and Ruby York. The GLY Report (Interim) on the Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre. UWI, Mona, Kingston 7 - 1979. p.2

- (c) early childhood education in each island seems to be influenced by the same people, the same funding agencies, and similar factors;
- (d) each island has a good reputation for developing and maintaining a high level of trust and a good partnership between government and the private sector including welfare organisations and societies, in the promotion of early childhood education for the children of the poor.

Some attempt will be made to highlight some features unique to each island or group of islands, as well as to give a summary treatment of many underlying denominators common to them.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLANDS

7. The English-speaking Caribbean is made up of fifteen islands stretching from Trinidad and Tobago near the North of the South American Continent to the Bahama Islands near the South of the North American Continent. Sizewise, they range from 133 square miles - (Grenada) to 4,440 square miles (Jamaica) in a total area of nearly 9,000 square miles. All, but Barbados and the Bahamas, are mountainous, with the Blue Mountain (7,700 ft) in Jamaica being the highest in the region. Other physical-features-superlative of the region are the presence of 365 rivers in the 272 square miles - Dominica, and the matchless sea beaches in all of the islands, although some of them are more blessed than others.

8. After the colonisation of the region by the English, the plantation system was introduced with emphasis on the production and supply of cane sugar for the English market. The need for labour to implement this system led to the recruitment of slaves from the African continent up to 1807. When it became apparent that the large scale slave trade business was ebbing, a pro-natalist policy was introduced in most of the sugar-cane producing islands, especially Jamaica where there was financial reward to plantation owners for every birth to a slave woman. In fact, any female slave who had six children was exempted from field labour. This could very well have been a contributory factor to illegitimacy and the large size of families which persists to the present time. In addition, indentured workers

from India were introduced on the plantations, particularly in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago where a substantial number of the present population are East Indians. It must be noted that Barbados was not a participant in the indentured-workers-scheme, which perhaps is largely responsible for its low infant mortality rate and policy of fertility control. In the region there is a wide range of population density, with Barbados having one of the highest in the world - - 1530 per square mile, and Grenada (836) and St. Vincent (708) being second and third respectively in the region which has an average of approximately 594 per square mile.

9. One of the vexed problems common to the region is that of unemployment. In Dominica, for example 35% of the population is unemployed or just partially employed, with a poverty index of 3.74. In Antigua 25% are unemployed, and there is a poverty index of 2.68. There are more serious cases of 40%-60% unemployment. World Bank sources put the average poverty index at 4.23 for the less developed countries, and 2.38 for the more developed countries in the region. Much of their position is due to the fact that "Agriculture grew at less than 1% annually, and was unable to absorb the increase in the labour force---- The total underutilization of the work capacity of the region at the beginning of this decade was approaching 29% ---- Studies carried out in the region on different aspects of critical poverty have shown that---- some 40% were in the category of poor, that is below the level of satisfying minimum needs, and --- some 19% were in the category of "indigent", that is, unable to provide even for the cost of food --- The most disturbing aspect of the

situation is --- that the inequality appears to be on the increase."⁺

10. Another disturbing observation is that whereas the per capita income of the poorest 20-25% of the population in the region has either decreased or remained stationary, that of the richest 10-15% seemed to have increase -- a case of the poor getting poorer, and the rich, richer.

11. Roberts* claims that "for all populations the most important age range for starting child-bearing is 15-19 and once more proportions are greatest for East Indians." In St. Vincent fully 81% of the births are to unmarried women under 20 years. His detailed analysis of the age specific rate points out that maximum fertility occurs in the age range 20-24. A study of employment statistics shows a high percentage of unemployment among women in this age range. The significance of this latter statement lies in the fact that births to married women account for about 4% of all births under 20 in Jamaica, and 7% in Barbados. In the age group 26-29 about 41% and 26% of the births in Jamaica and Barbados, respectively are to married women. Another significant observation is that the highest degree of fertility seems to occur in St. Vincent, one of the least developed islands. The family size there ranges from 5 to 6

⁺ Terra, Juan Pablo. The Situation of Children in Latin America and The Caribbean: a paper prepared by the UNICEF Regional Office for the Americas, 15th March, 1979, par. 27, 31, 32.

* Roberts, G.W. Fertility and Mating in Four West Indian Populations. Kingston: ISER, University of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1975.

plus children. In Barbados it is under 5, and the average for the region is approximately 4.5, with nearly 40% of the Caribbean population having 1.9 persons to a bedroom.

12. During the last two decades the concentration on the health and nutrition of young children, has resulted in a decline in infant mortality. In St. Vincent it is 54.8 per 1000 - (the highest in the West Indies); in Dominica it is 33.4, St. Kitts 42.1, St. Lucia 52.3, Jamaica 23.5. An examination of the causes of death shows that gastroenteritis accounts for from 19.1% to 50.4% of the deaths among young children of the poor with parasitic and infectious diseases being responsible for another 10.8%. In the light of these observations it seems safe to assume that among the surviving children of the poor, there is every possibility that a sizeable fraction continues to live and grow with some form of illness sufficient to cause deficit in physical, behavioural and cognitive development.

LIVING CONDITIONS

13. Regionally, poverty, hunger, and poor health are acknowledged as national problems which need urgent amelioration. Poor children are exposed to poor food, poor sanitation, poor housing, and sub-standard medical care. According to Dorothea McCarthy⁺, who researched about 17 studies, 'environmentally deprived children tend to enter

⁺ McCarthy, Dorothea. "Language Development in Children". In Manual of Child Psychology, Leonard Carmichael (ed). New York. John Wiley & Sons, 1954, pp. 584-586.

school at a considerable disadvantage when compared with their counterparts in the middle and upper classes.' Other research studies show mothers who were themselves exposed to and lived under poor conditions are likely to become adults 'less well grown and at greater biological risk as reproducers than is the case with their more fortunate sisters.' In fact, from the Caribbean point of view, it seems incontestable that these women who begin to bear children young, are not only likely to continue child-bearing for a longer time, but also through pregnancy to be subjected to poor health, suboptimal nutrition and medical care. The result, puny offsprings.

14. On the international scene, birth weight and height are generally associated with privileged and deprived people, as well as with developed and under-developed countries. In the Caribbean the under weight of children at birth is a common feature among the poor. If $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs to $7\frac{3}{4}$ lbs were to be accepted as the standard weight of a Caribbean baby at birth, then only about 16% to 20% of the births of the poor meet this standard. The exceptions to this conclusion are Barbados with 60%, Antigua with 56%, and Jamaica with 53.5%. From the educational and health points of view the concern is over the extent to which these under-weight children support Drillien's⁺ findings that "they are likely to work below their intellectual capacity in school", and become very susceptible to every form of illness floating around. Additionally,

⁺ Drillien, Cecil M. The Growth and Development of the Prematurely Born Infant. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1964.

there is accumulated evidence⁺ on poor people from different parts of the world to show that growth rates of their babies which appear to be normal during the first six months of life, begin to be depressed after six months.

15. Other factors may contribute to abnormal growth rates, but there is agreement on the fact that depressed nutritional status is probably the single most important factor in producing stunted growth among the poor. A report^{*} from the Jamaica Nutrition Advisory Council states inter alia,

"Malnourished babies go hand in hand with lack of energy, lack of concentration, and difficulty in learning..... some 50,000 Jamaican children are significantly undernourished. It is estimated that 70% of the Jamaican people are not getting enough to eat or are not eating the right foods. More than any disease, malnutrition is responsible for killing large numbers of Jamaica children."

To a large extent the adequacy if not the quality of a family-diet bears some relation to the income level, therefore, the 70% mentioned in the report must be taken very seriously, since there is no reason to believe that the position is much better in most of the other islands.

16. It is clear that the rate of infant death in any country is an indication of the level of the unhealthy conditions under which the people have to live. In all the Caribbean islands, although the water supply may be considered fairly satisfactory

⁺ Jackson, C.M. The Effects of Inanition and Malnutrition Upon Growth and Structure.
London: Churchill, 1925.

^{*} Daily Gleaner: August 6, 1976.

to good, the toilet facilities and the process of garbage disposal leave much to be desired - both are breeding grounds for disease carriers. Medicine available to the affluent may not be within the reach of the poor.

17. Earlier attention was drawn to the reasons why mothers are the sole breadwinners in a large percentage of the poor homes. Coupled with this is the increase in the proportion of single adult households, and a decrease in the proportion of the multi-generation type family. The result is that the care of the young child becomes the responsibility of the older sibling who has no idea about 'early stimulation', and therefore the child grows up without experiencing certain 'adult care', and the older sibling's attendance at school becomes irregular.

18. Without any doubt one has to agree that the housing people occupy can influence their health, their attitude, and their behaviour. The conditions under which most poor Caribbean families have to live deprive them of proper privacy, foster family clashes, stimulate sloven habits, and may even smother family loyalty. Because of the lack of elbow room, and the need for the breadwinner(s) to "hustle", parents have very little time to play with their children. In Jamaica, for example, of 803 households surveyed - 175 and 404 of which were dilapidated and needed repairs, respectively -- only in 5% of them did the parents find the time to play with their young children, and conversation with the children through stories, etc. was even less common. On the question of discipline, misbehaviour is followed by "flogging"

in 78% of the households of the poor - there are very few privileges to be withheld, there is no time to reason with the child, there is no love to withhold from the child. The larger the family the greater is the tendency "not to spare the rod and spoil the child!"

PROVISIONS FOR CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION

19. Every child - rich and poor - needs a home which can give him/her affection, security, feeling of belonging, personal worth, and some measure of self-fulfilment, and guidance in overcoming the strains of life. Where all or some of these are absent because of poverty, the schools, the public and private sectors, and voluntary agencies are expected to provide ways and means whereby the deficiencies may be compensated for before it is too late. In the Caribbean the institutions which serve the 0-6 year olds provide major avenues through which a variety of services reach the child population enrolled in them. From a study of the records, about 13% to 20% of the population in the region is in the age group 0 to 5 years, (in Anguilla it is 50%, and in St. Vincent it is 35%), and, only except for Barbados and Jamaica, less than 10% of these children are enrolled in pre-school institutions.

20. Since the extended family is no longer a common phenomenon in the region, and more mothers are forced to enter the labour force, the demand for pre-school institutions for the 0-6 year olds has increased during this decade. This has forced governments like Barbados, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica and Montserrat to make public commitments -- fullscale and partial -- regarding the

provision and development of early childhood education. In most of the smaller islands recent commitment has taken the form of appointing an island "Co-ordinator", of early childhood education as the first step toward a qualitative input in the existing institutions and services.

21. Institutionally, there are different types of day care and pre-school services available to the under 3 year old poor child in the region. There is the CRECHE, few in number in the region, and usually operated by a government or a welfare agency (single handed or in partnership with the government) to serve children aged 3 months to under 3 years. The more popular institution in the rural areas is the FAMILY DAY CARE HOME, (sometimes referred to as the Backyard Nursery) which offers only custodial care. In Jamaica the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of the West Indies, investigated the Backyard Nurseries in the August Town and Hermitage areas and had nurses visit them to offer advice to childminders. A third type -- the most popular -- is the DAY CARE CENTRE (including the PARK MODEL of the Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre, UWI) which is expected to offer coordinated and comprehensive services to both children and parents.

22. The quality of the teacher, the teaching and the teaching-learning conditions for the 3-5 year olds varies from island to island. In Barbados most of the teachers are college trained and therefore have more than average professional training for the task entrusted to them. The following descriptions given of the qualitative dimensions of the situation in Jamaica are typical of what obtains in the region.

22.1 Pre-schools are very much the domain of females. Almost half of the Headteachers and 54% of the Assistant teachers have no more than primary education. Table I gives the breakdown of the teaching force in schools in the eastern parishes of the island.

TABLE I

Showing Educational Level of Teachers of the 3-6 year olds.

PART A - HEAD OR SOLE TEACHER

Highest Grade Reached or Examination Passed	KINGSTON		ST. ANDREW		ST. THOMAS		PORTLAND		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fourth Standard	0	-	3	1.2	2	2.5	7	8.8	12	2.6
Fifth "	1	2.2	6	2.3	2	2.5	9	11.3	18	3.9
Sixth "	16	35.6	94	36.3	42	51.9	35	43.8	187	40.2
Prelim. Examination	1	2.2	4	1.5	4	4.9	0	-	9	1.9
First J.L.E.	0	-	47	18.1	12	14.8	15	18.8	74	15.9
Second J.L.E.	11	24.4	48	18.5	11	13.6	7	8.8	77	16.6
Third J.L.E.	11	24.4	40	15.4	7	8.7	7	8.8	65	14.0
Jam. School Cert.	0	-	2	.8	0	-	0	-	2	.4
G.C.E.	1	2.2	7	2.7	1	1.2	0	-	9	1.9
Attended Teachers' Colleges	4	8.8	8	3.1	0	-	0	-	12	2.6
TOTAL:	45		259		81		80		465	

PART B - ASSISTANT TEACHERS

	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fourth Standard	0	-	5	3.4	0	-	0	-	5	2.1
Fifth "	0	-	8	5.4	0	-	0	-	8	3.3
Sixth "	28	57.1	73	49.3	4	18.2	13	56.5	118	48.7
Prelim. Exams.	1	2.0	1	.7	0	-	0	-	2	.3
First J.L.E.	5	10.2	21	14.2	12	54.5	6	26.1	44	18.2
Second J.L.E.	7	14.3	18	12.2	4	18.2	2	8.7	31	12.8
Third J.L.E.	4	8.2	3	2.0	1	4.5	0	.	8	3.3
Jam. School Cert.	2	4.1	12	8.1	1	4.5	2	8.7	17	7.0
G.C.E.	2	4.1	7	4.7	0	-	0	-	9	3.7
Attended Teachers Colleges	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	49		148		22		23		242	

It will be observed that about 34% of the Headteachers and 32% of the Assistant teachers have passed some form of higher level examinations.

22.2. In terms of the quality of the teaching, the teacher-pupil ratio is nearly as important as the qualification of the teachers. The ratio of the child-minder to child in the 0-3 year old institutions, and of the teacher to pupils of 3-6 year olds is 1 :12 and 1 : 30 respectively, with some classes having up to 45 children.

22.3. Unsatisfactory working conditions tend to lead to lowering of morale and achievement among teachers and children in the institutions for the 3-6 year olds. Some of the schools meet outside (under a tree) as they have no buildings,

30% meet in churches or buildings loaned for the purpose, 25% meet in a private house owned by the teacher, 10% meet in community centres, about 5% meet in a car porte, and one meet in a market from Monday to Thursday.

22.4. One of the duties of the teacher of these children is to plan for and provide the kind of physical environment that will facilitate and foster creative experiences, individual learning and group relationships. To carry out such a programme, the availability of space for children to learn through exploration and to practice making adjustments to others is a sine qua non. Throughout the region the indoor space available for these activities ranges from 4.9 square feet to 11.8 square feet per child. Clearly this sparsity of space does impose some restriction on the type of programme that can be initiated in the schools. Seating is adequate and appropriate in less than 50% of the schools -- especially in the rural areas.

22.5. If the outdoor space available to the schools for the 3-6 year olds were adequate, this would help to alleviate some of the problems created by the restricted indoor space, as many open-air classes could be held. But, in the urban areas about 65% of the schools have inadequate outdoor space or none at all, and 32% to 53% of the schools in the rural areas have adequate outdoor space, some of which have been made available by citizens or clubs in the area.

22.6. Children in this age range should be exposed to a variety of toys, games and play equipment. Unfortunately, only 10% of the schools have such facilities indoor and/or outdoor. The situation is a bit improved in some islands because of UNICEF's contribution in this area, but not many teachers know how to make effective use of the equipment -- children are left to jump and hop on them without much guidance for growth. In addition, nearly all of the school programmes are characterised by a lack of instructional, concept building, and reinforcement materials.

23. Although some gains have been made in the inclusion of handicapped children in early childhood education programmes, it must be admitted that these gains have not been general throughout the region. However, some islands are making provision for incorporating programmes for these children in the facilities for normal children. In Jamaica, in addition to the Hope Valley Experimental School (4-12 year olds) where the physically handicapped work side by side with the normal children, plans are afoot to have at least 10% of the handicapped children included in the regular Day Care Programme. Trinidad and Tobago do not provide a planned pre-school education programme for the handicapped, but the voluntary organisations receive government subvention for helping different types of handicapped children.

24. All of the governments in the region are not only fully aware of the importance of early childhood education (0-6 year olds), but are also committed in varying degrees to its development. In Guyana, the government has assumed full responsibility for early childhood education

(0-6 years), in Barbados there is nearly 100% government support of pre-school programmes, in Jamaica the government's budget for early childhood education totals nearly J\$8 million per annum in subsidies. The government of Montserrat makes an annual grant of EC\$42,000 to \$60,000 to the Nursery Schools' Association for use in nursery schools. Positive demonstration of interest by the Government of Dominica is shown by subsidies to schools through the Social Centre and duty-free concessions on all materials imported for the early childhood education project.

25. Early childhood education and its supporting services are financed regionally and nationally by local, regional and international agencies. In the islands financial support is received from:

- (a) the governments, in the forms described in paragraph 24,
- (b) voluntary agencies raise funds to support the pre-school institutions under their charge,
- (c) church and church-groups sponsor some of these early childhood education institutions,
- (d) Service Clubs, friendly societies and organisations undertake to adopt institutions that provide day care services for the underprivileged.

26. CADEC is one of the regional organisations to provide assistance of different kinds for day care centres in some of the islands. International agencies like UNICEF, CANSAVE, CIDA, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, and US-AID give financial and technical assistance to

each island in the region. In some islands like Jamaica, Dominica and Guyana the community is closely involved in the operation, management and financial support of pre-schools.

27. Because the greatest aggregates of malnourished children are to be found among the underprivileged, some of the early compensatory programmes were concentrated on food and nutrition. In some islands CANSAVE spearheaded the health and nutrition programmes for pre-school children with the specific purpose of 'supplementing protein diet of children.' Other agencies like PAHO and UNICEF have trained community Health Aides to augment the health delivery teams in the islands. The health and nutrition programmes vary from island to island and the range of services, though limited include:

- (a) prenatal services to mothers, are available in all the islands;
- (b) immunisation against polio, diptheria, etc. is provided through clinics and health centres;
- (c) some form of medical care is obtainable in "integrated health centres",
- (d) the Ministries of Health and of Education monitor the World Health Food Programme,
- (e) preparation of teachers' college students for teaching health education and family life education is now general;

- (f) school health programmes aim at promoting healthy living and the prevention of health defects.

28. The governments spend from 10% to 19% of the annual budget on health and allied services. In most islands the dental services are very limited, and the existing ones are confined mainly to extraction, as there are practically no provisions for conservation.

29. Prior to the decade of the 70's legislation relating to the family and the child was based mainly on the English laws which provided limited protection for illegitimate children, who formed 50% to 75% of the children born in the islands. The Regional Pre-school Child Development Project, funded by UNICEF, initiated a study of the family laws in the region. As a result of this, family laws were, and are being reviewed in many islands, with a view to enacting legislation for the care and protection of the child. In Guyana 'the laws of the country provide specifically for the care and protection of children who cannot be taken care of by their own parents.' Jamaica has led the way in the establishment of:

- (a) a Bureau for Women's and children's Affairs, headed by a Minister of State,
- (b) the Family Court,
- (c) the Status of Children's Acts.

30. Horizontally, early childhood education should be the joint responsibility of home, school and community. Experience has shown that out of this relationship will emerge programmes for parenting and parent education. Teachers engaged in the field of early

childhood education in the Caribbean recognise that their efforts will be of little avail unless they are supported by community interests.

31. Nearly 90% of the pre-schools in the region are "Community" institutions. In Jamaica, all the Basic Schools (1,619) are Community Schools - built by the community, managed by the community, and maintained by the community. The Day Care Centres, receive a grant from the government, but they are dependent on the community for support and survival. During the 1975 Labour Day, over 19,000 people worked on Basic Schools/Day Care Centres and nearly J\$80,000 was contributed in material, labour and cash. The prisoners, through the foresight of a PECE staff member, formed themselves into groups for making toys and moulds of instructional materials to be made by the teachers. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago the National Council of Voluntary Associations for Child Care and the Village Councils finance aspects of the Nursery School programmes, including sanitation, the care and safety of equipment, and the supply of mid-morning snack for the children. Guyana has the government - community partnership approach to the provision and development of early childhood education, and in Dominica community participation is seasonal and specialised, depending on the cue given by the Social Centre.

32. The importance of establishing functional inter-activity between the home and the school cannot be over-emphasised in the Caribbean. It is difficult to understand how the teacher and the parent who should have joint responsibility for the welfare of the children, spend little time, and in most cases no time together in mapping strategies, sharing information and planning

for the child's well-being. Parents of deprived children in the region, are by and large interested in the education of their children, therefore they exhibit exhuberant cooperation when called upon to support fund-raising functions, but are unwilling to become involved as partners in the business of the school. It is for this reason that 66% of the Parent Teachers' Associations are inactive for a greater part of a year. However, many individual schools have effective programmes which include:

- (a) Home visits by teachers on a regular basis;
- (b) School open-days/doors for parents;
- (c) Parent education programme;
- (d) Parenting education programme;
- (e) Income-generating projects for mothers of children enrolled in the schools;
- (f) Radio and television programmes utilised by personnel in related disciplines for parent and community education.

33. The school is one of the institutions that can give the parents of deprived children the positive self-concept needed to make them want to understand the school and to contribute to its purpose and direction. By involvement in the school, parents should come to feel a sense of colleagueship, a sense of dignity, and an overenlarging identity with their children's school, in particular, and education in general.

PROGRAMMES

34. During the past one and a half decades several early childhood education programmes for the 3 to 6 year olds have emerged. These programmes have grown in numbers, in scope of content, in the variety of methodology, and in areas of emphasis. One of the outstanding philosophies of particular interest to the Caribbean has been the belief that "early childhood experiences can be designed to counteract the experiential deficits children suffer from due to poverty."⁺ It is generally accepted that not all poor children suffer certain inadequacies and deficiencies, but, with the exception of Barbados, the underprivileged child in most of the islands, do in varying degrees share the following blighted sketch usually attributed to poor children within and outside the region:

- (a) Language inadequacies, including syntactical structure and limited vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- (b) Difficulty in maintaining thought sequence, due to slow development in handling abstract symbols.
- (c) Unfamiliarity with "standard" speech patterns, and the interference of patois with the "standard" speech.
- (d) Deficiency in their visual and perceptual development.

⁺ Passow, A. Harry. Education in Depressed Areas. New York: Bureau of Publication, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1963.

Deutsch, Martin, et al. The Disadvantaged Child. New York: Basic Books, 1967.

- (e) A low self-image - resulting in low aspiration and lack of self-confidence.
- (f) Inadequate and/or inappropriate adult role models to motivate them to want to achieve and "become".
- (g) Short attention span due to a deficient experiential background, narrow interest span, and low physical stamina.

One of the first programmes designed to ameliorate the deficits of these children was the Enrichment Programme of the Institute for Developmental Studies, under the leadership of Martin Deutsch. It must be acknowledged that the programmes in the Caribbean are designed after The Bernard Van Leer Foundation PECE⁺ programme which was influenced in its initial period by IDS.

35. In 1966 the Bernard Van Leer Foundation in response to an application[¢] from the UWI Institute of Education agreed to fund the Project for Early Childhood Education (PECE). The Project was launched on 1st April, 1966, and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation of Jamaica was incorporated with power to "promote and support such schemes or projects as will enable children who are handicapped by their economic, social or cultural backgrounds or environments to achieve the greatest possible realisation of their innate intellectual potential."^{*} The authors of the Project hypothesised that:

⁺ "Project for Early Childhood Education", UWI, School of Education, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica, W.I.

[¢] University of the West Indies Institute of Education Project for Early Childhood Education. Proposals for Training and Research for the Benefit of the Disadvantaged Child in Jamaica, 10th December, 1965.

^{*} Oscar Van Leer's letter to Dr. Phillip Sherlock, Vice-Chancellor, University of the West Indies, 2nd June. 1966.

- (1) the vicious cycle of educational deficiencies among the underprivileged can be minimised only by instituting an educational programme of quality in the schools of deprived communities;
- (2) equality of education opportunities will not have the same meaning to the privileged and deprived children of a society, unless the schools for both the "haves and the havenots" do their jobs so well that the children's educational performance will no longer reflect the income level or social status of their parents;
- (3) change in the attitude, confidence, competence and image of the teachers will influence the wealth of their pupils' educationally related experiences.

36. On the basis of these hypotheses, the Project set out not only to initiate active programmes of compensatory education for underprivileged children, but to ensure that they are consistent with current knowledge from various disciplines and are based on diagnosis of the needs of the individual and the group they are intended to upbuild in motivation, confidence, and experiences. The aims of the Project were defined as follows:

- (1) "To develop a strategy (or strategies) for improving teachers in early childhood education (Basic Schools) through in-service training."
- (2) "To develop experimentally, more appropriate methods and content of education for early childhood."

(3) "To develop experimentally, instructional materials for use in the programme."

(4) "To identify and train personnel."*

37. Because the teachers and their approach stand at the central point of the teaching-learning activities of the Project, a special training programme was developed for them. The course of direction adopted in this programme included proposals for,

- (i) altering their expectations;
- (ii) changing their teaching techniques;
- (iii) building a reference system common to them and their "help-agents", the Project staff.

38. The schedule of the training activities included annual four-week courses, fortnightly workshops and follow-up visits to the schools. Over the six year period of PECE an aggregate of 1,440 days were devoted to courses, 2,592 hours of workshop were attended by the teachers, and 8,640 instructional visits were paid to the schools by the PECE staff. The role-functions of the staff in the execution of these three activities involved using techniques of WAYS OF WORKING with people and WAYS OF EFFECTING CHANGE.

39. The terminal objective of the teacher-training programme is "to improve the quality of teachers in early childhood education through in-service education." To achieve this objective the staff, assisted by Peace Corps Volunteers employ a variety of teaching techniques and

* University of the West Indies Institute of Education Project for Early Childhood Education Proposals for Training and Research for the Benefit of the Disadvantaged Child in Jamaica, 10th December, 1965, p. 9 (Mimeograph).

instructional strategies for acquainting the Basic School teachers with a variety of teaching styles, with the Lesson Guides developed to meet the deficiency and developmental needs of the children they teach, and with the methods by which the aims of the teaching-learning activities in the Guides might be achieved.

40. In developing a curriculum for the "inexperienced"⁺ children in the Basic Schools account was taken of such factors as the skills and competence of the teachers, the teaching-learning conditions, the parents' attitude toward the school, and the children's own school readiness experiences. It is because of these considerations that the Lesson Guides[†] were not based on the theories of any single philosophic system. Instead, since the home situation of these pupils make socialisation, perception, concept formation and language development difficult, the Lesson Guides suggest the content (the WHAT) the sequence (the WHEN) and the methods and materials (the HOW) of helping the pupils experience growth in these areas.

41. The purpose of the Manual[‡] is to place at the disposal of Basic School teachers and their Trainers, Supervisors, and/or Education Officers suggestions and ideas for developing educative teaching-learning activities relevant and appropriate to the needs and maturity of the children attending these early childhood education institutions.

42. The programme and methodology developed in the Manual are geared to motivate the children to relate to

⁺ The Term "inexperienced" is used in PECE to describe the child who lacks acquaintance with adults outside of his family circle; who lacks familiarity with toys, books, stories, and games; who is a "verbal have-not", who is unstimulated at home, and who does not experience a dependable pattern of life, or a design for living.

[‡] The Lesson Guides have been published in book form under the title of PECE MANUAL 4 or 5 or 6.

materials and people and to attend to tasks assigned to them. The premise is that through the activities developed in these Lesson Guides the children will learn the value of conversation to human relations, the use of verbal expressions, as well as the value of listening. They become aware of the process involved in a two-way communication, they learn new concepts and generally extend their verbal capacity, and gain satisfaction from the use of language as a medium for developing new levels of competence so essential to the building of their self-hood.

43. In addition, it is realised that the Basic School programme must be articulated not only with the home experiences of the children, but also with their future primary school career.

44. Grant and Gbedemah⁺ in supporting the need for In-service Teacher Education, point out that,

"it is impracticable for Teachers' Colleges alone to meet the 'trained' teacher needs for the country.....traditional methods of training teachers are increasingly seen as inadequate.....In fact, it is quite clear that in developing countries there is need for a reallocation of the existing training personnel, and the training of new such personnel in order to use more effectively and creatively these resources for the preparation of a new kind of teachers....."

Continuing the comment on the need for in-service education, they observe that "this is specially applicable to teachers who are sometimes immature, who lack sound

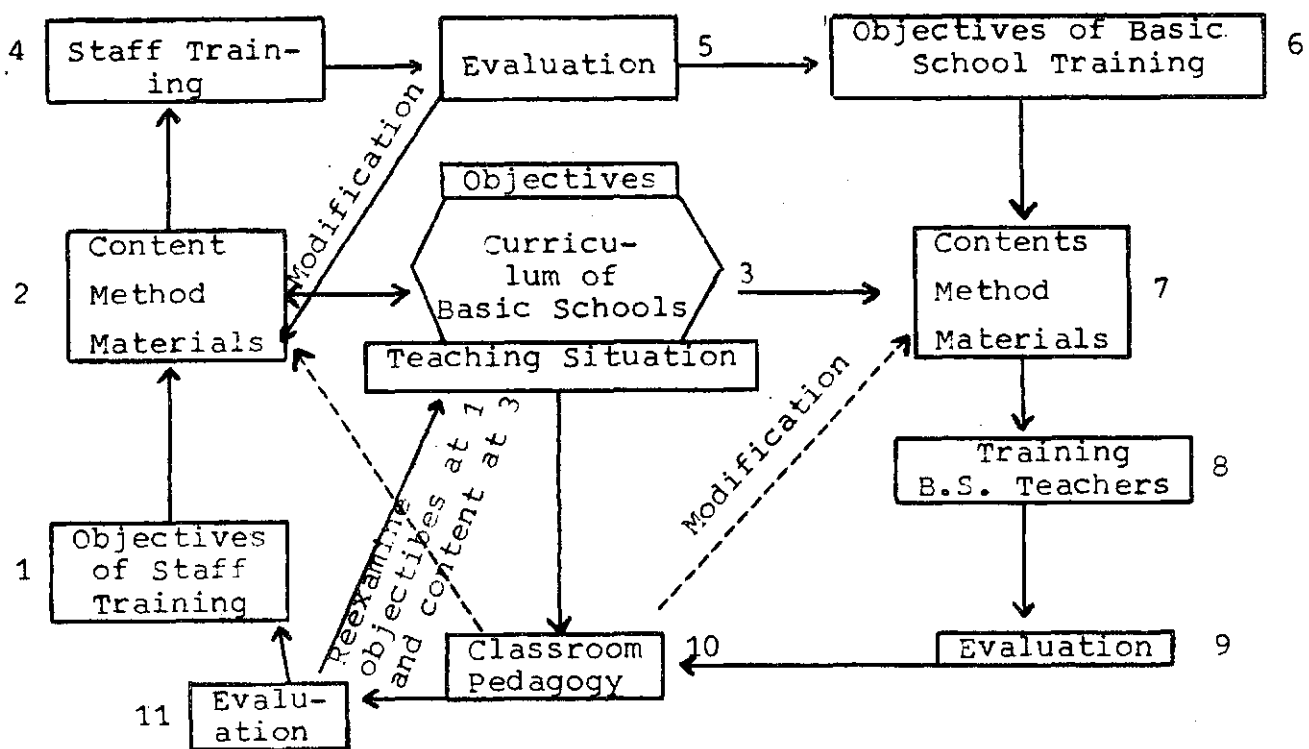
⁺ Grant, D.R.B. and Gwen Gbedemah. Report on an Evaluation of the In-Service Teacher Education Thrust. Ministry of Education, 1976-1977, U.W.I. School of Education, Mona, 1977.

educational background and opportunity to see good teaching, and so are unable to analyse and improve their own teaching." Herein lies the rationale for experimenting with and developing strategies for training Basic School teachers. The statistics on teacher qualification and other data on the present and future staffing of schools like these, show the largely unfulfilled need for above-modestly educated, and professionally trained teachers will continue to be the pattern in developing countries for the rest of the twentieth century and during most of the twenty-first century. It is for these teachers (para-professionals) that a training programme with more competency orientation than is characteristic of the traditional in-service education is necessary. For them the programme is being directed toward making good their deficiencies in the subject matter to be taught and in professional skill. It is an on-the-job teacher education programme serving a pre-service teacher training function, inexpensively operated, and capable of serving large numbers of teachers.

45. In P.E.C.E. it was argued that if the training of Basic School teachers is to be effective, a two-tier "Instructional System" would have to be designed with the first tier being staff development for the Teacher Trainers. This conception as a pre-requisite of any training programme for Basic School (para-professional) teachers is based on the belief among the PECE staff, that changes in its ideas about adult motivation and the way learning occurs within an instructional setting must be learned and understood before assuming the role of "trainers" of para-professional teachers. It becomes important, therefore, for the training of both tiers to have a heavy

emphasis upon cooperative problem-solving, and the development of a new relationship between Teacher Trainer and teacher. The Teacher Trainers, to be effective are expected through training to develop sensitive attitudes toward the teachers, the pupils, and the teaching situation before they can hope to change the attitudes of the trainees. The complete training programme is schematically represented in Figure A.

Fig. A



46. By a study of Figure A it will be observed that it consists of three components with different interrelated functions. It shows also that the nature and direction of change in one component (4) could affect the achievement of objectives in the other components (8) and (10).

Additionally, the diagram shows how the three components function and interact with one another.

47. It must be emphasised that in this Training and Instructional programme each of the functional parts 4, 8 and 10 of the "system" (1) to (11) is characterised by "corrective feedback loops" designed:

- (a) to bring about specified, measureable and achievable outcomes;
- (b) to make available continuous evidence as to the effectiveness of the process that contributes to the achievable outcomes;
- (c) to use the evidence as to the effectiveness of the process to modify the objectives and/or content, method and materials.

47. The Teacher Trainer and the Basic School teachers who are exposed to their respective training programme content, (2) and (7), are made aware of the significance of the curriculum and teaching situations (3) to their training at the same time that they are required to apply their "new" knowledge, skills, and understanding to the classroom (10).

48. The training model developed by PECE to cover the programme of training detailed above is characterised by the following features:

- (i) An ongoing staff development programme that is consistent with the demands of their role as Teacher Trainers to provide as an integral part of the whole training programme. In order for trainers to be able to help Basic School teachers learn to define lesson objectives, select and organise curriculum materials, use appropriate teaching

methods and techniques, and evaluate their teaching and their pupils' learning, it is necessary for each staff member to experience these activities in her new role.

- (ii) Relevant and appropriate instructional materials (using "junk") are developed, experimentally, by the staff, made and utilized by the trainees in their classrooms, and evaluated and redeveloped by the staff and the trainees.
- (iii) Demonstration Schools centrally located in each parish, are organised by the Teacher Trainers to provide training at local sites, using the staff (trainees' peers) of these schools for demonstration purposes. Sometimes one week of the four-week Courses are conducted on these sites.
- (iv) The trainees are not only taught the technical skills of teaching, but they are also helped to use them in a total teaching act.
- (v) The objectives of the training programme are very specific: to teach the para-professional teachers how to help their pupils through the Experience Units to use language easily and clearly, to clarify and understand certain basic mathematical concepts; to develop certain problem solving and socialisation skills as well as to have a positive image of him/herself as a person and a learner.

- (vi) The primary training medium is the practicum, through which the sequenced theory-practice contiguity is accomplished through practice and critique teaching, simulation, observation of a teaching act, (live or video taped).
- (vii) Basic School teachers are shown, and they practise how to make use of two kinds of strategic interactions considered essential to a good teaching performance:
 - (a) the non-personal interaction which involves the teaching resources, the teaching conditions, and the organisation and administration of the classroom, including arrangement of furniture,
 - (b) inter-personal interactions as they refer to the classroom transaction between teacher and pupils which gives rise to the setting-up of a psychological climate conducive to learning. They include rapport between teacher and pupil, pupil and pupil, and pupil and resource person.
- (viii) There is provision for evaluation of each Course and periodical feedback of the effectiveness and classroom influence of the Workshops. The trainees are not only kept informed of the quality of their professional development, but, where necessary, parts of the programme are modified to meet new emergent needs among them.

48. That children and adults differ in their ability to learn is incontestable. Similarly, there is agreement on the theory that people differ in their ability to train others to teach. Therefore, there is need for a thorough programme of training for those who will be engaged in the instruction of these teachers.

Because the role which Teacher Trainers play in the training of para-professional teachers is determined by their own understanding of both the meaning and the nature of the term "training" as applied to these teachers, and of the psychology of change, it is imperative that they be trained in the ways and means of helping each para-professional teacher develop the skills, understanding, and attitudes that will ensure the provision of a better educational programme for the children. This is a major role of Teacher Trainers who must be sensitised to:

- (1) the objectives and principles of teacher-training and/or upgrading teaching competence,
- (2) the elements of a training programme and the processes involved. The methodology of conducting:
 - (a) Course activities (for two or more weeks),
 - (b) Workshop activities, (for one day to under two weeks),
 - (c) Classroom visits and conferences,
 - (d) Evaluation of each phase of the teacher training programme.

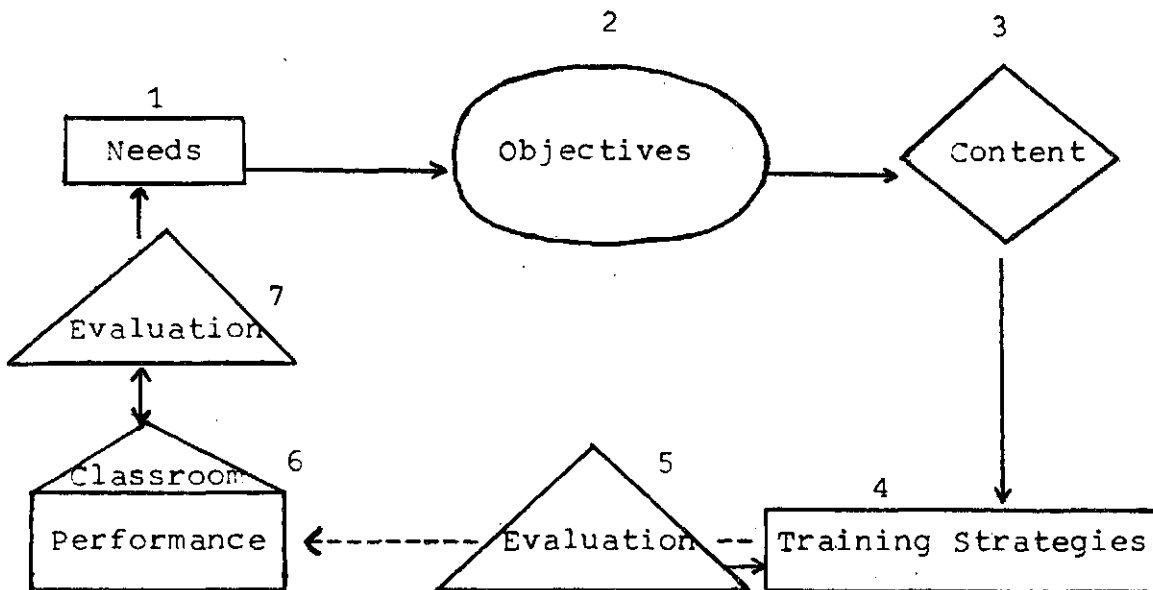
- (3) Some teaching skills to be developed.
- (4) Building the self-image and confidence of the teachers.
- (5) Developing teaching aids, and making use of "found materials" and community resources (people, places, things).
- (6) Relating theory to practice:
 - (a) observing and analysing a teaching act, interaction system in a class,
 - (b) helping trainees prepare a teaching assignment for Teacher Trainer/peers to critique,
 - (c) demonstrating learning-activities for fellow Trainers to critique,
 - (d) critiquing a lesson observed in a class,
 - (e) reacting to and interpreting teacher's reaction to Trainer's suggestions on visits to school,
 - (f) conducting meetings, and simulating school-related situations.

The Teacher Trainer is seen as a person with successful teaching experience and a good professional background, as well as someone who demonstrates the potential for being able to provide training assistance to para-professional teachers.

49. In developing the qualitative dimension of the para-professionals' training programme, emphasis is placed on helping them become sensitive to the skills, understanding and attitudes which they can use effectively to bring about appropriate learning in the

children they teach. A schematic representation of the training process reflected in the training model is shown in Figure B.

Fig. B



50. A study of Figure B (a component of Figure A will show:

- (a) the objectives (2) of the teacher training programme is specific in terms of the needs (1) of the trainees; that is, the competences needed by them to teach better and to help the children learn more appropriately,
- (b) the processes (1 to 7) are so ordered that the Teacher Trainer can ascertain (at 5) the extent to which the activities at 3 and 4 contribute to the achievement of the objectives (2), and the trainees are able to determine their accomplishment (6 and 7). This is the general pattern of every phase of the

training model which is classroom competency oriented with built-in "corrective feedback loops" at (5) and (7).

It is important to observe also, that the content (3) is based on a knowledge and an understanding of the competences the teachers need to bring about the pupil outcome at (6) as agreed on by educators. Of great significance is the teachers' understanding of the children they teach -- their life style; their learning style and readiness for learning; their value, aspirations, self-understanding, and their behaviour pattern. The content (3) must provide opportunities for the trainees to acquire this type of wisdom.

In addition, since Basic Schools are community schools, the teachers are taught to perform tasks with parents and the community that are supportive of their teaching functions. It is therefore necessary for the content (3) to include those competencies which when mastered will help them accomplish the supporting tasks appropriately. The programme of training is spread over four summers, (one for each of the 3 to 6 year old age group), the fortnightly workshops during the school term, and the face-to-face activities in the actual teaching situation.

51. It will be observed that these learning experiences are interrelated and interdependent, and are more or less directly concerned with instructional and curriculum functions, as well as with the teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil, school-home and school-community interaction systems. Because, as a whole this programme is designed to prepare these teachers to enrich and reinforce the learning behaviour of the children they teach, each para-professional teacher is helped to develop an understanding of the "Experience Units" (the curriculum content)

and to attain the level of competence needed to produce and maintain creative educational experiences in their classroom.

52. From the above statement of philosophy it will be observed that the Project did not set out to follow any single philosophic system in the process of developing a Basic School curriculum that is to form the basis for the teacher-training programme. In fact, an examination of the Manual will show an ~~selection~~^{selection} consisting of a fusion of the 'socialisation theory of instruction', the 'developmental pattern', and the 'instructional pattern'. The techniques include the organisation of activities around Developmental Experience Units geared to motivate children to relate to materials and people, and to grow in the development of a positive self-concept. Throughout the Manual, emphasis is placed on the use of people, places, and things (especially 'found materials') in the community for enriching a lesson and the children's experiences, and for developing basic skills and understanding.

53. Since the home situation of the Basic School pupils makes socialisation, perception, concept formation, and language development difficult, and in view of the para-professionals' need for guidance, the Manuals suggest the content (the What), the sequence (the When) and the methods and materials (the How) of the teaching-learning activities which provide for:

- (a) cognitive development whereby the pupils learn inter alia,
 - (i) to observe, explore and experiment;
 - (ii) to grow in the use of words and to communicate with others, and express themselves in a variety of ways.

- (b) social and emotional development, so as to help them experience a sense of security and self-respect, and understand their social world, and develop independence and resourcefulness;
- (c) physical development by their participation in creative movement activities, and attention to health and nutrition.

54. Because in the Manual purposes are linked to activities, constant evaluation of the training programme forms part of the Course and Workshop activities, and the reproducible areas of the programme are evaluated for evidence of appropriateness, of the scope and sequence of the curriculum materials. In general the PECE research design sets out to:

- (i) help sort out those components of the training and learning programmes that help teacher and learner overcome "affective concerns",
- (ii) act as an aid to establishing criteria for relevance,
- (iii) generate new practices, and help everyone concerned relate a hypothesised practice to the total situation in which the practice is, and/or is likely to be in operation,
- (iv) provide definitive evidence of the effect(s) of the new practices.

55. Although evidence is inconclusive there are sufficient data⁺ to support the conclusion that parents of Basic School children have changed their opinion regarding the purpose of Basic Schools as well as their attitudes toward the school and the school fees.

56. It is obvious that the Project has made a significant contribution to the morale as well as to the personal and professional growth of Basic School teachers. In most schools there is evidence of growth in self-esteem among the pupils and teachers, as well as in their classroom behaviour.

57. Probably the most significant result of the research programme is that it is possible to train Basic School teachers. Most of them have changed their attitude toward their work and the children they are teaching. Observations of Basic Schools in action indicate that the teachers in the Project schools taught in a more positive manner than did the teachers in the Non-Project schools.

⁺ Wein, Norman. Initial Evaluation of PECE, 1971.
 " " Longitudinal Study. Progress Report I, 1972.
 " " Validation Study of Caldwell and PPVT, 1971.

Bruinsma, J.H. Evaluation & Research in PECE, 1967-1969.

" " Teacher Attitude and Information, 1970.

Bruinsma, J.H. & Elinor Waters. Report on PECE Research Studies, 1971.

Waters, Elinor. Profile of Basic Schools in the Four Eastern Parishes of Jamaica, 1968.

Alexander, George. Follow-up Studies of PECE Children of 1971-72, October 1975.

58. When children in the Project Schools were compared with Non-Project pupils the results showed that the children in the Project Basic Schools "change" more during the four years in which the testing had been in progress.

59. On the regional scene the influence of the Project has reached the English speaking Caribbean islands. This was evidenced at the Van Leer sponsored Caribbean Conference⁺ held October 1971, for the purpose of examining procedures, actions and strategies relative to the "present and future dimensions" of early childhood education in the region.

60. Three years later, during which period four more Van Leer funded "projects had emerged," a Curacao Seminar^{*} was sponsored by the Foundation, with emphasis on an "examination of the content of early childhood education as it might operate in the region, with possible Caribbean variations in approach within the overall field."

61. After the termination of the activities of PECE in 1972, the Foundation funded the UWI School of Education and Bernard Van Leer Foundation Centre for Early Childhood Education (CECE) from 1st January 1973. In keeping with the major objectives of CECE the tasks performed over the period 1973 to 1978 included consultancy services to Ministries of Education and Projects locally, regionally and internationally, helping to prepare long-term plans on

⁺ Bernard Van Leer Foundation. Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean. The Hague: Netherlands, 1972.

^{*} Bernard Van Leer Foundation. Innovation in Early Childhood Education - Report on the Second Caribbean Seminar. The Hague: Netherlands, 1974.

early childhood education for governments within and outside the Caribbean, and monitoring projects within the region. To develop personnel, four Regional Training Institutes in Instructional Supervision were conducted for an aggregate of 107 of the leaders of early childhood education in the Caribbean, and 21 workshops for up-grading the teaching competence of early childhood education teachers were mounted in all but two islands. In addition, the Centre helped in developing curriculum renewal and action research activities in 12 islands, in designing innovative programme models for 12 countries (five continents) and in making presentations at six regional/international conferences on early childhood education. The models for training leaders of early childhood education in instructional supervision, and for training para-professionals to teach the 3 to 6 year olds have become standard practices in the Caribbean and in some developing countries. Additionally, in October 1977 the School of Education, UWI, began its Certificate of Education and Bachelor of Education Courses in early childhood education.

62. Other regional activities which have influenced the development of pre-schools in the region are:

- (a) the 1967 conference on "The Needs of the Young Child in the Caribbean" held in Barbados. An outcome of the deliberations is the Regional Child Development Centre charged with functions such as, studies in child development and training of personnel for working in Day Care Centres.

- (b) the UNICEF's assistance in each island in the form of (i) "training stipends for participants in local courses, and (ii) basic play equipment and construction materials for children's centres,"
- (c) the in-service six-month training being offered by the CANSAVE Child Welfare Training Centre in St. Vincent,
- (d) the funding of the SERVOL Project in Trinidad and PEP in Dominica, by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, as well as the financing of regional Training Institutes by them,
- (e) the successful efforts of JAMAL in breaking the back of illiteracy in Jamaica over the last four years.

63. From this perspective on pre-schools in the region, and the Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre, it will be observed that PECE and CECE have influenced this phase of education in the Caribbean. Early childhood education for the 0-6 year olds has gained momentum in most of the islands; more is known now about the pupils, the parents, the schools, the teachers, and the needs of each; but there is more to be discovered.

PROBLEMS and ISSUES

64. Public concern for the protection and care of young underprivileged children in the Caribbean has been expressed by private and public organisations in the region. But the high birth rates in some islands,

the changing national beliefs and values in each island, the new and growing understanding of the place of the handicapped in the society, as well as the effects of a shrinking economy on the standards of living, cause certain problems and issues to limit the horizontal expansion of early childhood education at a rapid pace.

65. Among the glaring and current problems are those concerned with teacher preparation and attracting people with high educational qualification to opt for working with this age-range; influencing architects and builders to erect school buildings that are functional and appropriate to the needs of young children; the development of regionally minimum standards that refer to facilities, equipment, safety, sanitation, health, nutrition, and social services.

66. One of the major effects of the uncertain aspects of the economic status of the islands (except Trinidad and Tobago) is the uncertainty of funds for child-care institutions and some funding agencies. A shift in the level of financing is sure to retard the progress of programmes of health, education, welfare and shelter throughout the region. The degree to which these essential services for the underprivileged is financed by the governments alone or in partnership with funding agencies depends upon the future course of the national, regional, and international economy.

67. There is great and urgent need for more teachers to work with more pre-school children. Each island must be helped to formulate, develop and implement long-range plans for providing a cadre of new and qualified teachers who can assume leadership role in local emergency and in-service training programmes.

68. Reports from the different islands show that some gains have been made in developing programmes for handicapped children. Unfortunately, these gains have not been general. However, the parents of these children, teachers, and the policy-makers are beginning to realise that a high percentage of these children have "superior mental, emotional, and social characteristics." It is apparent now that there is need for some funding agency to place strong emphasis on:

- (a) identifying the handicapped children within as short a time as possible,
- (b) developing diagnostic and remedial services,
- (c) establishing educational facilities at all levels, for these children, especially in areas where they have not yet been established,
- (d) preparing teachers, social workers, occupational therapists and guidance officers, to work with these children,
- (e) developing parent education to help parents provide more adequate home care and nurture.

69. Because all early childhood education programmes in the region are too often hampered by lack of motivational, concept-building and reinforcement materials, it seems imperative that some effort be made to fund a "Project for the Development of Materials for Pre-Schools." Additionally, some experiment with the adequacy, quality and use of indoor space, the type of furniture, etc. should be undertaken, with an eye on the financial constraints now being experienced by the governments.

70. Research and evaluation have been used to promote vitality and stimulate improvement in the field of education. To achieve this in early childhood education there must be greater interrelationship between the researcher and the teacher, and more participation by early childhood education personnel in defining research designs. In addition, it is important that the researcher reports his findings in language that is easily chewed and digested by teachers in early childhood education institutions.

71. During this stage of the development of early childhood education in the region there is need for some detailed study (over and above those on child-rearing practices and child development) on:

- (a) the way children respond to the new situation posed by their enrolment in a pre-school institution at 0-3 years and 3-5 years, in order to ascertain their "readiness" and/or "security" level.

- (b) the parents' attitudes toward each of these pre-school institutions and how they affect the child's school experiences and/or childhood confusions due to conflicts between school and home "standards".

72. With the exception of PEP, Dominica, there is no early childhood education Project in the region which includes "follow-through" programmes to the primary school as an integral part of the project. From the early introduction of early childhood education, it must be recognised that education is a continuous process, therefore the "educational services (should) be extended downward and that these extended services (should) be closely integrated with the rest of the programme of public education"⁺. This is a crucial issue in the Caribbean, and should receive the imperative attention of funding agencies and the Ministries of Education.

73. During this decade much has been achieved in the area of community involvement in the development of early childhood education for the 0-6 year olds. However, while the functional interactivity of school and home was getting greater and stronger, the coordination of efforts in attacking the problems of the underprivileged in the Caribbean, by the many funding agencies in the region, still remains to be actualised. At the 1979 UNICEF Conference in Mexico delegates from developing countries emphasised the need for an external-agency - integrated approach to Projects

⁺ Educational Services for Young Children. Washington: Educational Policies Commission, NEA, 1945.

dealing with the health, education and welfare of the young child. "It had been agreed that coherent policies were needed not only to alleviate the symptoms but also to eradicate the cause."⁺ Many of these external agencies express regret over the lack of integration among the local Ministries that have to do with the young child, and one would hope that these same agencies would by example and precept show how effective their integrated approach can be. The underprivileged child has been an inhabitant long enough of the "empire" of many organisations, each claiming his citizenship, with eligibility for some of the scarce benefits. Is there room for experimentation in an external-agency integrated approach to improving the "child's life chance?" The region as a whole, and the individual islands are small enough for this. Let 1980 be the beginning of INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION in an effort designed to help the underprivileged child in the Caribbean experience the trinity of self-awareness, self-fulfillment, self-direction.

74. Despite some of the inadequacies and shortcoming described in this paper, it is true to say that every government, every welfare organisation and every service club in the Caribbean, individually and collectively, is committed to the development of the services for the young child, especially the underprivileged. The sincerity of this commitment is demonstrated by national efforts to finance services and to seek

⁺ Terra, Juan Pablo. The Situation of Children in Latin America and the Caribbean. Paper prepared by the UNICEF Regional Office for the Americas, 15th March, 1979 par. 115.

external funding for programmes that will benefit the 0-6 year olds. It is true also, to say that the public and the private sectors, some parents, and the community in each Caribbean island are waking up not only to what they have to do for the young child, but also to the possibilities of achieving it -- some need to be helped and shown how to achieve it. The problem is, will it be achieved NOW or in the NEAR FUTURE, and the young child's question is, "How NEAR is NEAR?".