BRACING FREEDOM: COMMUNITY BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION IN SAINT LUCIA, WEST INDIES

by

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Acknowledgements

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Glossary

BANCEC: The Banse Community Education Centre based in Banse, Laborie, Saint Lucia

CARCAE: The Caribbean Council for Adult Education

CBECECs: Community Based Early Childhood Education Centres

CBOs: Community Based Organisations

CCC: The Caribbean Conference of Churches

CLC: The Creative Learning Circle (Early Childhood Education community based group) Grace, Saint Lucia

CXC: Caribbean Examinations Council

DCA: Development Control Authority, Saint Lucia

DFID: Department for International Development, United Kingdom

E.C. dollars: East Caribbean dollars currency (One pound = approximately 4.5 E.C. dollars)

ECD: Early Childhood Development

GCE: General Certificate of Education

LABCEC: The Laborie Community Education Centre based in Laborie, Saint Lucia

NAECE: The National Association of Early Childhood Educators, Saint Lucia

NAEYC: The National Association of Education for Young Children, U.S.A.

NDC: The National Development Corporation, Saint Lucia

NRDF: The National Development and Research Foundation, La Clery, Saint Lucia

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NPAT: The New Parents as Teachers

OCOD: Organization for Cooperation in Overseas Development (Canada)

ODA: Overseas Development Agency, presently DFID (U.K.)

PAT: Parents as Teachers

OECS: Organization of Eastern Caribbean States

SERVOL: Service Volunteered for All, Trinidad

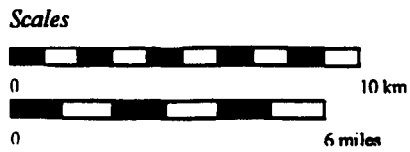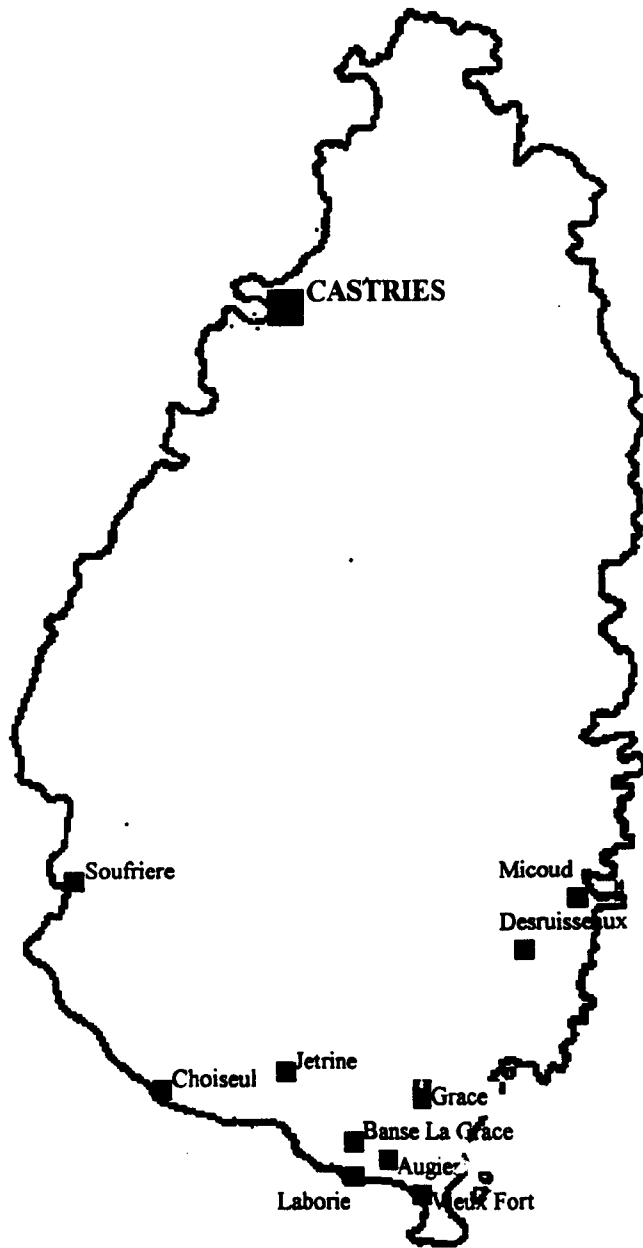SLTU: Saint Lucia Teachers Union

SOUCEC: The Soufriere Community Education Centre, Soufriere, Saint Lucia

UWIDITE: The University of West Indies Distance Education Programme

UWP: United Workers Party of Saint Lucia.

CASTRIES

Soufriere

Micoud

Desruisseaux

Jetrine

Choiseul

Grace

Banse La Grace

Augier

Laborie

Vieux Fort

Scales

0   10 km

0   6 miles

6

Abstract

This thesis is about early childhood education in the West Indies. It focuses on the conjuncture of community and childhood. It recounts the origins, growth and development of a Community Based Early Childhood Centre (CBECE) at Laborie on the island of Saint Lucia between 1983 and 2000.

The thesis is based on the author's experiences of the Laborie centre, themselves cross-validated by parent and staff interviews, questionnaires, home visit records, minutes of local and national meetings, visits to other centres and the published literature on community based early childhood education.

This thesis is about the creation and embedding of formal early childhood education. Chapter one offers an account of the focus of the research. It discusses the methods used to gather information and the ideas utilized to create and sustain an analytic framework. Chapter two explores the values ascribed to community based early childhood education. These are the promotion of democracy, the development of a broad power base, the offering of critical education in classrooms and public arenas and the development of a sense of reciprocal responsibility. Chapter three discusses the origins of the Laborie centre. It focuses on problems surrounding community participation, ownership and management. Chapter four goes on to discuss the growth of community based centres elsewhere in Saint Lucia. It outlines a common set of concerns and initiatives raised in this community process.

Chapter five looks at the development of LABCEC's financial sustainability, with reference to such sources as charities, parents and wider community members. It examines the role of the community and the nation in the funding of early childhood education. Chapter six places the discussion and analyses of this thesis in the historical, social, political and cultural context of Saint Lucia. Chapter seven examines family life in the Caribbean in general and Saint Lucia in particular. It offers a profile of the families who attend the Laborie centre and includes the perceptions of the men, women and children on each other and on their lives in general. Chapters eight and nine study the growth of LABCEC's own ideas against a background of international writings on early childhood education. They examine the core ideas on quality early childhood education and discuss the challenges theorists and pioneers posed among themselves. These two chapters look at the assembled ideas of the pioneers and theorists only as far as quality early childhood education was concerned. They look at how LABCEC's own ideas and attitudes have in cases assimilated, accommodated and reacted towards these assembled ideas. Chapter ten discusses the National Association of Early Childhood Educators (NAECE), as a platform for future action in community based education. This chapter also focuses on the realisation of the ideas of early childhood educators in the development of NAECE.

The concluding chapter of this thesis argues that community based early childhood education offers the possibilities for a quiet revolution. It notes that there is need not only for a non-Governmental institution such as NAECE but also for greater Government involvement if

early childhood education is to have a lasting impact on the lives of the citizens of Saint Lucia.

This thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge. It is the first account of early childhood provision that embraces West Indian life at the end of the twentieth century. It discusses all the elements of early childhood education which are pedagogically appropriate to Saint Lucia and the wider West Indies. It explores possibilities for childhood education and links these changes to broader questions of community development, local autonomy and national democracy.

In short, this thesis has explored a place for community based early childhood education in non Governmental civil society.

Foreword

'Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole' (Walcott, 1992)

This thesis is an autobiographical account of an innovation. It is concerned with power and change. Autobiography is used because it is ideally suited to my learning which was also, although not uniquely, based on experience.

The experience, reasoning and research which led to this thesis tells my story as well as that of many others through the meta-stories of educational research and early childhood education. To this extent, I follow Usher who describes autobiography as 'a special kind of representational practice: a representation of the self through inscription, telling the story of the self through a written text and writing a text through a culturally encoded meta-story' (1998, p. 19). My story, too, is one of life overcome, 'of the progressive accumulation of knowledge and self-realization' (Usher,1998, p. 19).

My progressive scaffolding via knowledge and self-realization constantly grappled with the possible. For, autobiography is a narrative which according to Bruner, traffics 'in human possibilities rather than settled certainties' (1986, p. 26). Further, it entails 'the depiction of reality not through an omniscient eye that views timeless reality, but through the filter of the consciousness of the protagonists in the story' (Ibid).

The consciousness of protagonists raises complex issues of identity reconstruction, not only of myself but of others including the board members of the National Association of Early Childhood Educators of Saint Lucia. Identity reconstructions took place in the interrelationship of past and present and were still, when the narrative ceases in 2000, taking place.

My autobiography is also a story of power and change fashioned in a context of oppressive political policies. It is a story of pain, uncertainty, betrayals, loyalty and love, failures, successes and the kind of madness which 'often goes hand in hand with poetry' (Neruda, 1997, p. 41).

My gender, class, education, nationality and status as a mother shaped how I experienced the world and consequently, my discourses and positioning. So, in a contrary fashion, did the authoritarianism of my Caribbean culture. I understood it from the different standpoints of my divorced parents, but, in the end, I was drawn to reject it. Finally, as an individual autobiography, mine is a microcosmic reflection of the bigger Saint Lucian story for, in the words of an Irish writer, 'The date of my birth is cut on the tablets of common existence' (Kavanagh, 1971, p. 9).

Like all autobiographies, mine involves recalling the past 'and through this re-creation, discovering and re-inventing the self' (Usher, 1998, p. 20). As an autobiography, mine also vacillates between a humanistic vision of egos hopefully autonomous and a postmodernist imagery

of decentred selves caught in a web of discursive practices. It stands at the intersection of society, its agencies, culture and myself.

I accept, too, that autobiography is a 'most controversial' form, as Smith has noted (Smith, 1998, p. 187). It 'blurs the borders of fiction and non-fiction;' it is 'a sharp critique of positivistic social science' and in its 'changing forms', it is 'at the core of late twentieth century paradigmatic shifts in the structures of thought' (Ibid, p. 188). Further, autobiography creates 'gaps, exclusions and repositionings' (Kehily, 1995, p. 25). The mastery and self-construction of the subject is always problematic.

Overall, however, this autobiography is about progress. It works to include the synergies of gained experience. Future progress will involve a combination of work and good fortune bearing in mind the meaninglessness of 'progress' among groups excluded from early childhood education in Saint Lucia. Will there be progress or will our children's future be 'irreparably shattered glass' (Neruda, 1998, p. 4)?

Chapter One

Research Methodology

'One learns too late that even the most broadest and useful of lives only reaches the point of learning how to live.' (Gabriel García Márquez, <u>The Autumn of the Patriarch</u>, 1982, p. 205)

This chapter offers an account of the focus of the research, the methods used to gather information, and the ideas used to create and sustain an analytic framework.

<u>Why turn experience into research?</u>

My primary motivation was simple. It was that of ensuring my son found a space in the future of the Laborie community within the framework of ideas that a section of the community held dear. I soon found I was not alone. From work within a single community, a collective effort stretched towards work with neighbouring communities and then to a national structure. My motivation evolved from personal and heartfelt goals to encompass the conscious dreams of committed early childhood educators and the subconscious desires of an entire nation. Overall, I felt that early childhood education offered possibilities for a quiet revolution in Saint Lucia that would contribute to the long term economic, political, social and cultural life of this island.

<u>Research aims</u>

The aims of the research were two fold.

1.   To study and report the origins, growth and development of the Laborie Community Education Centre (LABCEC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Educators (NAECE) and

2.   To examine the impact of these two organizations on community based early childhood education in the island of Saint Lucia. The Researcher as a knowing agent.

I wrote this doctorate wearing many hats. I had trained as a historian, having done my M.Phil with the University of the West Indies on the Social History of Martinique and Guadeloupe. I functioned too as a literary person, a researcher, academic, teacher and Executive Manager. I studied and lived through preparing this doctorate. It is the product of my personal experiences, my perceptions and my analyses. I lived with partial analyses for many years and tested them not only by observation and accumulating evidence from documentary sources but also through my daily life. Systematically, I ordered what was a scattered series of impressions into an integrated account. This first-hand immersion into the sphere of life and action yielded dividends. I became sufficiently immersed in the world of early childhood education at the Laborie Community Education Centre and in Saint Lucia to know about it. Yet, I tried to retain enough dissatisfaction and detachment to think it through.

Along the way, I had to rethink what I was doing. An integral part of the process was to banish as many of my pre-conceptions as possible. I tried hard to hold no pre-conceived theory that dictated my thoughts prior to my research, outside of the theories I had formulated as a historical researcher. I checked my own biases and endeavoured to assert that my understanding arose from the field of observation rather than being imported from the outside. The use of the inclusionary paradigm (see Chapter Two) was also a principal means of diminishing pre-conceptions. Pioneers, theorists, professionals and parents, for example, were stakeholders who sometimes held competing views. I attended to the different stakeholders and incorporated their views and positions. In the struggle to clarify their ideas and prioritize these positions in an inclusive manner, my own ill-judged preconceptions dissipated. Such, as I now know, were my efforts to focus on the reliability and validity of what I was doing and what I was writing. Toward the end of my research my supervisor drew attention to a Swedish definition 'validation should be seen as a scientific outlook where throughout the research process, inferences and interpretations are appraised, questioned, scrutinized and re-examined' (Hamilton, written communication, 7th August 2001).

Much of my re-thinking turned on the ethics of educational research

Power imbalances between researcher and participants were a constant source of tension in my inquiries. Since my work had children as the main, if not the principal stakeholder, it beheld me to concentrate on the ethics of educational research as this related to children.

Research ethics may be defined as the 'making of moral judgments about the aims and methods of a study' (Aubrey, David, Godfrey, & Thompson, 2000, p. 156). For 'most young children are very trusting and wish to please adults' and, so, 'it is often difficult to know if they feel comfortable both with what is being asked of them and with the person who is asking, who may be relatively unfamiliar' (Ibid, p. 164). With school children, I had to find answers to the question as to who should consent. Should it be the children themselves, the head teacher, the school board, the superintendent, or in the case of Saint Lucia, the district education officer, the teacher or the parents? Also, I needed to adopt appropriate practices to provide feedback to those involved. In addition, as Aubrey noted, I faced questions concerning the personal and professional integrity of the researchers and their relationships with sponsors, employers and colleagues (Aubrey et al., 2000, p. 167). Another ethical consideration I encountered was that of beneficience. This means 'that the risk of harm to a subject should be the least possible. The sum of potential benefits to a subject and the importance of the knowledge gained should outweigh the risk of harm to the subject and thus warrant a decision to carry out the study' (Kvale, 1996, p. 116).

I resolved the ethical issue of the power imbalance between the participants and myself – in 2000 from an advantaged socio-economic level – by not doing any of the interviews unless there was a power levelling as in the case of the board members. This was also resolved by interviews with only participants with whom great communicative ease had been established – such as the first parents of LABCEC whose children registered at its inception in 1983. Another ethical issue

was posed in relation to the consent of those seven to eleven year-old girls and boys who wrote the essays referred to in chapter six. However, consent was obtained from the headteachers and through them, from the children themselves. To what extent did these children feel obliged to write these essays because of the power exercised by their teachers? To what extent did the teachers feel forced to request the children to write these essays because they were asked by their superior? Two approaches, however, eased this ethical issue. One was that the children felt comfortable with their teachers and there was never any report of any dissent about writing these essays. Laborie is a tiny village and had any dissent existed it would have become evident immediately. Another was that both headteachers met once a month with other board members and myself as part of the board. They were both intimately involved with the development of LABCEC and felt accountable for its success. They thus felt easy with the process and with me and accepted to request the children to do these essays promptly.

In post-slavery societies, such as Saint Lucia where lies and force co-exist in the mainstream of political and economic power, ethical questions need to be taken with a grain of salt. Yet, simultaneously and contradictorily, they are of acute importance. As the South African Nadine Gordimer said: 'We didn't despise prostitutes in that house – our house – we saw them as victims of necessity while certain social orders lasted' (Gordimer, 1979, p. 68).

Accordingly, researchers, or more precisely put, interviewers and parent educators or home visitors, were chosen with care. They were three of these beside myself. Two were health care workers with the Ministry of Health, attached to the Health Centre in Laborie. Both of them had done home visits with community members in Laborie for more than ten years before they began doing home visits and interviews with LABCEC, that contributed to this research. The other was a former primary school teacher who was recommended to me by her own Headteacher.

Did the sum of the potential benefits to the participants and the importance of the knowledge to be gained outweigh the risks of possible harm that could be done to them? This question posed itself particularly both in the home visits with the women and, in the interviews with the men reported in chapter six. The information gleaned was vital in learning to deal better with both the children and their mothers with whom home visits were done and with whom group meetings were conducted. The content of these home visits and interviews has not been revealed in any public fora – such as newspapers – which could cause any embarrassment to the subjects. All the interviewers assured the participants of anonymity and maintenance of confidentiality. In all interviews it was explained to the participants before they did the interview that no other people would have any right to access the information. Only the interviewers including myself would see their responses. Yet, had the participants wished to challenge our views, these procedures would have eased not solved the process. However, there were no expressions of discontent around these home visits and interviews over a period of fourteen years or so. This lack of challenge and discontent were very much related to the relations of trust which the participants developed with their interviewers and myself.

In search of sources

My resolution of ethical questions was, as noted earlier, made easier by access to texts on educational research. Initially, I was able to draw upon an individually accumulated body of knowledge and skills which grew from meetings and knowledge of people, facts and events. But after 1983, I also sought insight elsewhere. Through LABCEC and NAECE, I bought books recommended by early childhood education amateurs and professionals. I had to do this because of the paucity of books in this field available in the libraries in Saint Lucia. Also, the possibilities of inter-library loans were so slow as to be virtually non-existent. This acquisition of books expanded with the initiation of my doctoral studies and the advice then extended to all the contemporary pioneers and theorists with whom I interfaced. Access in particular to the university bookstores saw a marked increase in purchases. In instances, university libraries in Liverpool, Manchester and London as well as Internet sources furthered my body of knowledge.

Finding a focus

Besides providing 'distance' and enabling me to stand back from what I was doing, these sources also helped with a range of strategic questions concerning the research process. Above all, I struggled to find a manageable focus. My first step, having already selected my area of interest was to formulate an objective to report the initiative and establishment of a Community Based Early Childhood Education Centre in a village and later, a national association in an island site, in the Antilles. I then focused on administrative and organisational factors and procedural problems. Next, I concentrated on decisions concerning the extent and range of information so as to meet the stated objectives of studying the origins, growth and development of LABCEC and NAECE and examining the impact of these two organisations on community based early childhood education in Saint Lucia. In turn, I was able to identify a methodological profile that would serve my objectives.

Bricolage

To appreciate my methodological profile, I began to think in terms of *bricolage* – an everyday French word taken up by anthropologists (e.g. Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17). Bricolage means working with – and playing with – whatever is to hand. My sense of bricolage, and my personal sense of being a bricoleur, evolved gradually both with reference to the development of my theoretical understanding and my analysis of the data. Its evolution was a long process beginning in 1983, almost thirteen years before my doctoral work officially started. The multiple methods of qualitative research which I used may be viewed as bricolage. As a bricoleur, I did not set in advance the research tools to use, nor did I know beforehand which research practices I was going to employ. My research practices became dependent on the questions I asked.

As a bricoleur, I read widely on many aspects of early childhood education - pedagogy, administrative areas, fund-raising and others. So, I worked between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms, in the sense used by Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 4).

I understood, functioning as a bricoleur, that my own biography, sex, social class, race and personal history shaped my research in an interactive process. My research findings had political implications, as evidenced through the letter from the Cabinet of Government to me prohibiting me from working on community based early childhood education outside of the immediate village of Laborie. Knowledge was power, I learnt. Yet, I also learnt that there is no value-free knowledge. The product of my bricoleur's work was a bricolage. This led to, in Denzin and Lincoln's words, 'a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation' that represented my images, understandings and interpretations of the phenomena or worlds which I analysed (1998, p. 4). It was a most creative struggle.

Participant observation

One element of my methodological profile was participant observation. Reading about participant observation enabled me to focus on what I was doing and what I might learn from such work. I soon realised that participant observation is one of the best ways to collect data from non-verbal behaviours provoked, perhaps, by my own participation in a social process. As Yin points out 'you may assume a variety of roles within a case study and may actually participate in the events being studied' (Yin, 1994, p. 87). Accordingly, I, the investigator, had both to 'work as an external observer and' at times, had 'to assume positions of advocacy roles contrary to the interests of good scientific practice' (Yin, 1994, p. 89). In addition, I did find myself in the dilemma where I began to face the contradiction of being an integral part of some of the groups studied and possibly giving too much attention to participating rather than observing (Yin, Ibid). Flick puts this in different words when he notes that the 'dilemma of participation and observation becomes relevant in the necessary distancing' (Flick, 1998, p. 55).

The main outcomes of my participant observation were interviews, documents and field notes (Aubrey et. al, 2000, p. 58). Participant observation, like all methods, has its problems. It is never possible to participate in every aspect of life and at all times. As Flick notes, 'biographical processes are difficult to observe' (Flick, 1998, p. 147). He also notes that events or practices which seldom happen can only be captured if the researcher is lucky, if at all (Flick, Ibid). My own participant observation helped to dog bad luck.

Nevertheless, I was an integral participant. In cases, there was total immersion in the research process because, for example, as Director of a centre I shared the same fate as the other centres I studied. I was, thus, swimming in the salutary sea of empathetic understanding of the early childhood education directors and teachers whom I was studying. My observation provided the foundation for my preliminary survey research. I then shared my work with the board members of NAECE. I was a participant as a core founding member of both LABCEC and NAECE. Through participant observation, I was able to collect essential data. I was, consequently, engaging in the very activities which I observed.

Distancing was not easy. Yet, my own personal paradigms helped in this distancing. At Secondary School in Guyana, my school mates often said that I lived in another world. It was as

if I was from the planet, Mars, or another one. So, there grew an elimination of the separation of the process of research from the product of this research.

Historical method

In dealing with the biographies of persons and institutions, I was able to turn to my earlier experience as a historian. I functioned with awareness that one of the principal differences between historical research and other research is that historical research must deal with data that already exist. I adopted an 'interpretive point of view' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. XIX) and interrogated social phenomena in their historical context, involving the use of written records of the past. I realized acutely that history is the story of lived experience. As lived experience we all live history. It is not only memorization of the past but has continuing relevance for the present (Tuchman, 1998, p. 240).

I used both secondary and primary material. For instance, in addition to these sources cited above could be added 54 sets of minutes of Board meetings within nine communities between the years of 1993 and 1996 and 18 sets of Board minutes for NAECE between 1995 and 1997. Minutes from 5 annual general meetings of LABCEC and one annual general meeting of NAECE were used. In addition about 3000 letters received and sent by LABCEC and 800 letters received and sent by NAECE were also perused. There were also 18 performance appraisal forms of the staff at LABCEC and about 50 staff interviews of this same staff between 1996 and 1997. During the 1996 academic year, the teachers made three observations each of 41 children between the ages of one to five years old. 88 essays of 42 boys and 46 girls between the ages of seven to ten completed these quantitative measures. I was able to interrogate evidence from the past. Previously, while doing my M.Phil, I had evaluated the writers of these primary sources in terms of their training, their competence, relationships to the events, intents, habits and accuracy. In addition, I had examined the extent to which they were under pressure to distort or omit facts, too antagonistic or sympathethic as well as their agreement with independent witnesses. I also looked at the length of time after the event that they recorded their testimonies. This affected my research to the extent that I could appreciate these writers' own biases and limitations as well as their strengths.

Interviews

However, in creating a narrative account, I not only used documentary sources but also used interviews. I also found my external research sources of great help in understanding what I was doing. For instance, I realized that I was using documentary and interview sources to cross-validate each other. That is, I triangulated from one to the other. I was able to recognise too the complexities of the interview process – as discussed by Kvale (1996) and Oppenheim (1992).

As a founding member and the Executive Director of NAECE, together with Justina Ernest, part time employee of NAECE, I interviewed 80 Pre-School Administrators with an interview form which included 26 items (see appendix four). These interviews took approximately half an

hour each. Two trained community health aides interviewed 33 men in Laborie representing a 1 in 20 sample of the men from the Laborie community between the ages of 25 to 78 years. Their interview form had 12 items (see appendix five). Six parent educators, including three community health aides, two trained Peace Corps volunteers and one local pre-school educator visited 200 mothers paying 2,000 home visits between the period of November 1993 and July 1995. These 2,000 visits took between one hour and two hours and accounted for approximately 3,000 hours of time paying visits. Minutes of these visits filled 4,000 pages and 300,000 words. These same six parent educators interviewed 59 parents to whom home visits had been paid in July 1995. Time for these interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes. The Deputy Principal of LABCEC interviewed 29 mothers who registered their children at this centre in 1997. The time of these interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. The registration form now consists of 80 items. I also interviewed the first 11 parents who attended LABCEC as well as nine Board members of NAECE in meetings which ranged for 30 minutes to one hour and covered 18 items. At times, these interviews provided qualitative (i.e. categorical) information, at other times such information was represented in quantitative terms.

The interviews served several purposes. They were used to test interpretations, to propose new ones or to identify dimensions and relationships. The interviews were also utilized in conjunction with other methods. In addition interviews were used to follow up unexpected results, to validate other methods or to inquire into the motivation of the participants and the reasons behind their responses.

Oppenheim notes that there are two kinds of interviews – exploratory interviews which are depth interviews or free-style interviews and standardized interviews used, for instance, in market research, public opinion polls and government surveys (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 65). I used both. Exploratory interviews were done in the home visits with the women, for example, while standardized interviews were used with the early childhood educators. These also followed the form that Kvale describes as semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1996, p. 124). They consisted of a set of items and possible alternative subsequent items depending on the responses obtained. The unstructured interview is a completely informal interview concerning the general area of interest and allowing the conversation to develop within this area. Of the above two, only the semi-structured interview was employed as when the researchers interviewed the men, for example.

Like some of the training, some of the interviews were non-conventional in that they took place in my office, at homes, on the telephone and even in my car. However, most of these interviews took place in homes. In the case of the home visits for example, there were instances where they were directive and other times - generally during the second half of the interview - when they were non-directive. During this period, minimal control or direction were exhibited by the interviewer or parent educator and the parent expressed her feelings as fully as possible. There was evidence, particularly in the minutes of the home visits, that the parent educator or interviewer sought and provided answers that supported preconceived notions. This tendency was observed and discussed by the parent educator and me after the submission and reading of these minutes. Interviews were used rather than questionnaires because the rate of illiteracy in

Saint Lucia hardly favours the use of questionnaires.

The high illiteracy rate in Saint Lucia lended itself naturally to the fact that oral data, such as interviews, form a significant part of the qualitative data in this thesis. In this context of illiteracy much information and opinion is passed on orally. For many people in Saint Lucia the creation of written records and historical accounts is unlikely. Relatively powerless persons within the community boards were good candidates for such oral work. Such oral history was managed by a team. Thus, for example, the chapter on NAECE was discussed with members of the team of NAECE's Board for examination.

These interviews, for example, had to be piloted. I realized from the beginning that 'pilot work is expensive and time-consuming, but avoiding or skimping on pilot work is likely to prove more costly still' (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 47). The aim of the pilot is to see if the interview makes sense, to test certain questions, to refine some of them and to check whether the instructions are clear. The aim of piloting is also to remove items which are irrelevant, to change the sequencing and to include questions which may have been originally excluded. In addition, pilot interviews allow the researcher to focus on some areas previously unclear, develop and solidify rapport with participants and establish effective communication patterns (Janesick, 1998, p. 43). Every question, sequences of questions, inventory and scale in an interview or survey needs to be piloted (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 49).

So were the home visits – a kind of unstructured interview - piloted during the 13 years before this doctorate had commenced and were, thus, refined by then. Through visits and telephone calls, the other researchers suggested the removal of irrelevant items, the inclusion of questions originally excluded and changing the sequences of questions. The other interviewers from the health care Ministry and the primary school teacher were already skilled in effective communication patterns.

Following my reading, I also gave attention to questions of reliability and validity in interviewing. I checked, for instance, the capabilities of the interviewers, the form and content of the interview schedule and whether my interviews addressed the research question (Flick, 1998, p. 133). Equally, I was careful in crafting my interpretations, mindful of Kvale's accounts of 'categorization of meaning, condensation of meaning, structuring of meaning through narratives, interpretation of meaning, and ad hoc methods for generating meaning' (Kvale, 1996, p. 187). I also paid particular attention to the use of multiple interpreters (Kvale, 1996, p. 207).

The analysis of interviews is an interpretation process. It entails, as I gradually recognised, the constant comparison of phenomena, cases and concepts and the formulation of questions which are addressed to the text (Flick, 1998, p. 179). Theory is developed through the development of categories or concepts and their inter-relations. The development of categories and concepts was relatively opportunistic in my work. I used the interviews as texts which, under scrutiny, yielded insights that I could use in advancing not only my thinking but also my practice.

Case studies

The studies of LABCEC and NAECE are research in depth. They provide illustrative examples of interest in the English speaking Caribbean, if not in developing countries per se, and they observe the characteristics of two organizations with relation to the development of community based early childhood education.

The distinctive feature of the case study method, as that of LABCEC and NAECE, is that it is an empirical enquiry which investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context and does so even when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1994, p. 13). As other case studies, mine were based on two cases which were in some way significant enough to require close scrutiny and analysis.

My bricolage, therefore, incorporated 'a small number of naturally-occurring cases and non-representative cases with 'purposive' sampling in which a potentially rich initial case (or cases) influences the selection of subsequent cases as each decision is based on what has been previously learned' (Aubrey et al., 2000, p. 39). The approaches were multi-method in strategy. However these case studies were also defined by interest in individual cases and not by the methods of inquiry utilized (Stake, 1998, p. 86). Different sources of evidence were combined.

Yin notes that there are three types of case studies, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. Case studies can be used in varying situations. These include community psychology and sociology, organizational and management studies and for dissertations and theses (Yin, 1994, p. 1). On the other hand, Stake identifies three other types of case studies. These are what he calls the 'intrinsic' case study where the study is undertaken because the researcher wants more thorough understanding of a particular case. There is, he continues, the 'instrumental' case study where a case is examined to give insight into an issue or refine a theory and the 'collective' case study which is the instrumental study extended to several cases (Stake, 1998, p. 88). Indeed from the preceding sentences, one is reminded of Aubrey's note above in this chapter that research methodology in education is indeed in its early stages. In fact, I did not choose the type of case study or studies I was doing from the outset but wrote as I conceived.

I tried my best so that my case studies could be exemplary, significant, complete, consider alternative perspectives, display sufficient evidence and be composed in an engaging manner (Yin, 1994, pp. 147-151).

The case studies of LABCEC and NAECE were both critical cases in Saint Lucia as well as being unique and revelatory (Yin, 1994, pp. 38-40). My evidence for this dual case study came from five of the six sources suggested by Yin (1994, p. 78). They were documents such as agendas, announcements, written reports, proposals, progress reports, newspaper clippings and minutes of board and parent meetings, direct and participant observation.

The dance between the qualitative and the quantitative

The general use of interpretation also raised questions about the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. I combined quantitative and qualitative methods regarding them as mutually constitutive. As Hamilton has pointed out, 'quantification presumes – and is thus inseparable from the creation of categories basic to qualitative research' (see Hamilton, forthcoming). Further, Aubrey et al. also suggest that the total rejection of the quantitative perspective would lead to the loss of the right to claim factuality for one's results. However, the complete rejection of the qualitative might lead to a loss of the right to claim meaning (Aubrey et al., 2000, p. 34). We need, they continued, 'a quantitative perspective to keep a grip on complexity and a qualitative perspective to keep a grip on subtleties' (Aubrey et al., 2000, p. 100).

From a qualitative perspective, I studied the 'use and collection of a variety of empirical materials......that describe the routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 3) . I also used quantitative studies which stress on the measurement and analysis of associations between variables. A further step in the dance related to the selection of interview samples. I used representative (or stratified) sampling (choosing a sample that has the same sort of composition as the population), as in the case of the interviews with the men where income, race and age were used as bases for selection. And I also employed theoretical sampling, itself defined by Glaser and Strauss as 'the process of generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 45). In fact, theoretical sampling assisted the selection of cases or case groups in much of my research. The dynamics of the situation, for instance, suggested that certain settings were more likely to yield pertinent information than others. And it was the analysis of these situations that, heuristically, advanced my study.

Reliability and validity

As noted, questions of reliability relate to the scientific outlook adopted throughout research. I became comfortable with the definition of reliability offered. Within interpretative research, therefore, the concept of reliability does not have the same denotation as it has in test development. Interpretative researchers cannot make the same appeal to what they regard as pseudo-objectivity. Rather, their 'researcher status and position' are completely dependent on the researcher's social relationship with the participants. The ethnographic data is totally dependent on the researcher's social relationship with the participants.

I recognized, for instance, that interviews took place in different settings – school and home, on the telephone and even in cars. They were influenced by my own analytic constructs and premises as a researcher. Finally, my interpretation was also a function of the methods of data collection that I used, and the means by which I recorded, stored and retrieved such data (see

Flick, 1998, p. 223). Sometimes, reliability is assessed in terms of 'fitness for purpose'. Is the research using the correct tools, and have they been suitably sharpened? A further element in discussions of research reliability – from a reflexive perspective – is that the procedures are adequately documented (cf. Yin, 1994, p. 36) – as in this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis. Moreover, most of the data – even including the published literature – is available at the two offices at LABCEC and NAECE in Laborie in the island of Saint Lucia.

In my search for reliability I was able to understand how it relates to validity, that the 'quest is typically for *increased confidence* in the dependability of the judgments without the preoccupation with or the illusion of 'objective" judgments' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 150). So, I was able to understand that 'reliability is equivalent to credibility and dependability, as compared to validity, which is closer to confirmability' (Ibid).

To enhance the credibility of my research, the interviewers were trained. Their communication approaches were sound and the triangulation of methods, such as investigator triangulation, were more effective than the single method approach. As previously mentioned, the biases of the researchers were discussed on an ongoing basis with them on the streets, in my office and on the telephone after I had read their minutes during the thirteen years preceding the initiation of this project. The interviewers or researchers both wrote well, apart from a few grammatical errors. Spot checking was done on the fact that the visits were paid, for example, as a parent visited my office or I met her on the road or I called to elucidate points raised during the visits. Although the case study protocols were not written down, all the steps were formally and systematically taken. Second readers, including board members of LABCEC and NAECE, were used. So, different judgments were continually tested and intertwined as others influenced me and I did the same to them. Multiple sources of evidence were used as discussed in the section under quantitative and qualitative sources and chains of evidence established.

The concept of validity is currently controversial in educational research, following the intervention of Messick (1989). Much of the early writing developed in the area of test construction, but following Messick, attention also came to be given to test use. Gradually, Messick's ideas about use as well as design have been taken up throughout educational research. Thus, validity has come to relate to the unintended as well as the intended consequences of research, and to the extent that the research has been conducted according to ethical as well as methodological principles. The foremost areas of the validity controversy are two-fold: (1) the use of hypothesis testing (or falsification) in research and (2) the design and use of controlled experimentation.

Until the 1950's, a piece of research was valid because it followed the ideas about falsification popularised by Karl Popper. Since that time, however, Popper's claims have been gravely undermined by the so-called 'Duhem-Quine' thesis which suggests that 'theories are underdetermined by evidence' (see Sokal and Bricmont, 1999, p. 66). Thus, the advance of science, through successive acts of hypothesis testing, is not quite as straightforward as envisaged by Popper and his followers – and it is for this reason that I have been sparing in my use of the

word 'hypothesis' in this thesis.

The second controversial area in validity studies – the design of experiments – has become problematic because it is increasingly realised that the assertion of control in an educational experiment is usually counter to ethical considerations. Thus, a piece of research can be methodologically valid (because it uses a controlled experiment) but ethically invalid (because it jeopardises the human rights of the participants in the research). Mindful of these difficulties, themselves examples of differences in scientific outlook, my own work is, nevertheless, conscious of the distinction between 'descriptive validity' and 'explanatory validity' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, pp. 105-106). 'Descriptive validity' refers to the extent to which the research describes the intention of the study, gives a description of that intention and also whether this description is accurate, whereas 'explanatory validity' is the extent to which the research renders an account that is reflexive – an account that provides support for the substantive analysis also included in the report.

Validity is a critical factor in all the methods of data collection, for example. In the case studies described in this thesis, I, focusing on different time slots, the use of different sources of evidence and the use of a research team helped to enhance validity. They also involved the consideration of alternative interpretations of material and whether the participants agree with our description and interpretation of their own reality. Attention to validity also included testing the outcome of one case on the next case and giving sufficient detail about the research procedures to allow for the reader's evaluation of the study.

In a search for rigour and for internal validity, multiple sources of evidence were used and a chain of evidence established (Yin, 1994, p. 34). I had to grapple with the fact that the external validity of my case studies also concerned the point of whether the study's findings could be extended beyond the immediate case study. Equally, it is also true this trinity of generalisability, validity and reliability is questioned in Denzin and Lincoln – in particular the notion of generalisability which it is said 'limits the ability of the researcher to conceptualize the role of social science in education and human services' (Janesick, 1994, pp. 50-51). I adhere to this view for I confess that although generalisability could be ascertained in enough instances to form theories related to community based early childhood education, it might also compete with specialness and unique developments in varying communities.

So what is the interpretive validity of this work? As noted at the beginning, this chapter offers an account of the focus of the research, the methods used to gather information, and the methods used to create and sustain an analytic framework. That is, this chapter includes support for the substantive analysis. Overall, the work described in this thesis has been built on a platform of five assumptions.

1.   This thesis is a history of change. It is an account of contemporary history, experience, reasoning and research

2.   This thesis arose from a personal recognition of shortcomings in my circumstances and

it recounts the personal efforts which I made to change the way things were

3.   This thesis forms an integral part of the development of the Caribbean. It assumes that early childhood education starting within homes and extending through institutions can support major structural reform in the Caribbean, a part of the world that still carries with it a slave, colonial and still post-colonial history

4.   This thesis accepts that in a struggle for social change and action, there are no absolute solutions. My educational development will never terminate. Even when I write the last line of this thesis. I will continue to elaborate and amend it, "knowing more now than when (my) research was formally concluded" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 256)

5.   My doctorate is only a moment in the never-ending process of generating change.

Building New Foundations for Early Childhood Education

'The smallest act can be more binding than the largest principles.' (Nadine Gordimer, <u>A Guest of Honour</u>, 1973, p. 394)

This chapter considers the rationale for Community Based Early Childhood Education. It defines and explains Community Based Education Centres (CBECEs) as well as discusses in detail the characteristics of community based early childhood education.

<u>Definitions</u>

Community based early childhood education centres can be defined as non-Governmental early childhood education centres which the community conceives, owns and manages. A community based early childhood education centre may also be one which is owned and conceived by a private person, but managed by a community Board.

According to Clifton, community based agencies are those whose 'mission is primarily focused to meet a specific social or human-service need within a given community' (1993, p. 9). He defines the community demographically. While community may be demographic in this thesis, it does not necessarily have to be so. Clifton's definition is, in fact, too narrow. Renard has an expanded view. This latter view of community will also be adhered to: 'a group of people who consciously share a common functional link, such as kinship, occupation, religion or place of residence' (Renard, 1991, p. 4). Community based institutions, thus, may or may not correspond with a particular political or geographic unit.

<u>Participative Democracy</u>

Quality community based early childhood education offers solid structures in the foundation for a true democracy. Politically, for Dewey, participation is essential behaviour for citizens in a free society. Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, Dewey defined a slave as someone who carried out the intentions of another person. A slave was prevented from framing his or her own intentions. To be a thinking citizen in a democracy, Dewey maintained, 'a person had to take part in making meaning, articulating purposes, carrying out plans and evaluating results' (Shor, 1992, p.18). Dewey defined democracy as 'more than a form of Government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint experience' (Dewey, 1966, p. 87). Democracy, Dewey insisted, was a process of open communication and mutual governance in a community of shared power. In such a process of democracy, all members had the chance to express ideas, to frame purposes and to act on intentions. Unilateral power destroyed democracy, in Dewey's conception, because a few monopolized authority to give orders and define purposes. This limited the experience of others. As long as 'some wield dominating power and others took orders, as long as unequal power and wealth shape the education offered students', Dewey

doubted that democracy or learning could flourish (Shor, 1992, p.136). Community based early childhood education centres are, like schools should be, important public services that educate students and all their participants to be critical citizens who can think, challenge, take risks and believe that their actions will make a difference in the larger society (Shor, 1992, p. 16).

<u>Functional Democracy</u>

Participative democracy is linked to functional democracy. In Saint Lucia, the population gained the right to vote in 1951. Democracy was perceived as having the right to vote for the party of one's choice every five years. While democracy in terms of the right to express opinion subtly has always existed in the Saint Lucia sugar and slave society, it still has not transformed itself into the public expression of contrary opinion without vengeance often being exerted. Nor have local community groups organized themselves to ensure that their rights are respected and transformed into responsive actions by Government, at least not on a systematic basis and not on a wholesale level in communities which collectively oppose the party in power. In groups or associations in Saint Lucia, for example, votes are rarely if ever taken on matters of concern to the group. The persons who can talk the loudest and the longest prevail over the feelings of the group. The decisions taken may not even reflect majority opinion.

One example of functional democracy occurred at a pre-school in the community of Augier. The HAPPY HOUSE Board on Wednesday, September 6th, 1995 discussed whether poor mothers could work at the centre en lieu of a scholarship for one or more of their children. One person said adamantly that the poor mother should pay at least half of the cost. Another said the opposite but was skeptical of a vote on the matter. A vote was taken and it emerged that all of the Board members, including the adamant member who respected the traditional Caribbean desire for consensus, agreed that the poor mother should pay no cost at all. The point is that when votes are taken for matters for which votes are not traditionally taken in Saint Lucian communities, the decision actually adopted may be the opposite of one taken when the loudest and longest talker prevails.

CBECEs have a broad power base. Like all institutions in society, they are sources of political power. CBECEs concern themselves with children. As such, they do not encompass direct elected political power. With CBECEs, there are no openly visible individual political winners or losers. Yet, the entire society is the clear winner in the long term. CBECEs restructure political power from the base in a manner which is extremely difficult to quantify. CBECEs also restructure power in a manner where the conflict among the main stakeholders of early childhood education may be transposed into open personal, social and political conflict.

In this field of broad based political power, CBECEs resemble all other institutionalized areas of civil society. Examples of these institutionalized areas in Saint Lucia include organisations like the community based youth groups and mothers and fathers group as well as national based groups such as the National Youth Council, the National Research and Development Foundation, the Folk Research Centre, the National Trust and the local press or newspaper bodies. Each of

these groups or institutions plays a part to varying degrees in the restructuring, development and growth of the wider political power. The part each played depended on their developmental bases. However each of these bodies have fundamental political roles.

It is worthy of note, nevertheless, that because CBECEs concern themselves with children, at the heart of societal interest, they can be one of the central figures in this broader political restructuring as well as in personal and social growth. The national press can be another one, in a different way, if it so galvanizes itself.

One follow up of this argument is that the democratic growth of the Saint Lucian societies - as other societies - can only be strengthened through the fostering of all creative institutionalized areas of civil society. Examples of such institutionalized areas can be found in community based centres like LABCEC and national organisations like NAECE. This fostering does not preclude the fact, however, that at certain points of time these institutions may come into direct conflict with the narrower political elected power. For instance, the Saint Lucian party in power was rejected in the 1997 elections. The opposition won by a landslide (16-1). One of the reasons for the landslide was that the pre-1997 Government had been truly inimical to progressive civil institutions. While, it is true that the organisational force of the opposition party which won the elections was tremendous, it is also true that the force of such civil institutions like two national newspapers - the Mirror and the Star, had created a political and social climate where the Government could be evicted. Thus, a centralist party was replaced by one with a different, participative view of democracy. This changeover may not only be important for Saint Lucian society in general but also for CBECEs. The party in power, from 1997, thus, deserves careful highlighting and support. The role of CBECEs may therefore change from being passive or confrontational to one of compromise and liaison without abnegating their continued questioning and reinforcement of civil society.

Community based early childhood centres which respect the traditional forms of Caribbean political behaviour, then act as the springboard for the promotion of democracy in Saint Lucia. Yet, as Freire noted, teaching tolerance and democracy requires the coherent testimony of parents as teachers. How, he asked 'can we teach tolerance to our children and students if we deny them the right to be different from us, if we refuse to discuss their positions, their reading of the world, if we refuse to see that their world places demands and challenges on them that ours did not?' (Freire, 1996, p. 148). Such tolerance and democratic patterns are the result of community based action where consensus among different stakeholders is realised.

Inclusion of Stakeholders

Community participation in CBECEs involves what Pence and Moss call the 'inclusionary paradigm' (1994, p. 173). This inclusionary paradigm consists of broad access to the process of definition. It involves power distribution rather than power participation. Many voices are heard rather than a few. Dalberg and Assen's (Moss and Pence, 1994, p. 166) ideas on an 'associative' model for governing offers perspective on the concept of community education. The associative

model combines 'the professional and the political model with the idea of civic participation and democracy'. As Giroux notes: to bring schools closer to the concept of polity, it is necessary to define them as public spaces that seek to recapture the idea of critical democracy and community (in Moss and Pence,1994, p. 167).

Thus, in fact, community based early childhood education programmes can be termed: associative early childhood education programmes. This associative model, or 'inclusionary paradigm', projects the idea of many good ways instead of one good way (Moss and Pence,1994, p. 179). As Moss notes, fundamental to the associative model is that institutions for early childhood education and care are viewed as institutions bearing cultural and social values (Moss and Pence, 1994, p. 166). These institutions or programmes in their wider form concern, therefore, not only politicians, administrators, experts, Board members and volunteers but the broader citizenry.

So, CBECEs involve a wide cross-section of varying stakeholders. Through the participation of these different stakeholders change is facilitated. All stakeholders should be involved in the definition of quality - parents, children, teachers, politicians, researchers and other community members. Only with this 'associative' involvement, this 'inclusionary paradigm', could quality be realisable. This might mean that the achievement of quality would be a slow process since consensus would need to be reached. Such consensus would not mean the greatest common denominator of the position or point over which consensus is being sought. Rather, it would mean that all views would be taken into account and incorporated into the final solution sought without negatively affecting the stakeholders who are the children. The achievement of consensus would also mean that the realisation of quality would be a long-lasting process. This consensus, since it is not simply the greatest common denominator, would also mean that solutions on each issue would involve prioritization which would necessarily include conflict and compromise.

One question arises: how do we deal with cases which will inevitably arise when the values of the stakeholders are so different that compromise seems impossible? Here is an example - parents and the writing of names.

At the inception of LABCEC in the 1980's, many parents complained that the children were not writing enough. Some still do. Administrators all over the island complain that the parents still want to see their children write their names. Some professionals respond to this parental concern stating that writing and especially writing of names does not correspond to research findings in the field of early childhood education and care. They refuse to teach writing at all. A few others are in the opposite direction. They enter into strenuous academic learning in their centres. But is either extreme appropriate? Research has shown that a programme which emphasises the total development of the child offers the best hope for success in school and life (Siraj-Blatchford, 1995, pp. 1 and 2). To follow this up, it should be noted that investigations of compensatory education have shown that traditional play school has little to offer the children of the poor. According to Simmons, programmes should inculcate cognitive skills, language skills

and number skills (1980, p. 106). Research at LABCEC has resulted in an acceptance of Simmons' conclusion that the inclusion of language and number skills is a necessary part of the curriculum for children of the poor. On the other hand, it is counter-productive to say that the traditional play school has little to offer such children. On the contrary, the social, emotional and other strengths gained are likely to be essential in their success in life if not in school.

The outstanding organisation High/Scope also refutes Simmons' assertion. Quality early childhood education involving play or 'work' has much to offer poor children, as High/Scope suggested after a 27 year longitudinal study (Schweinhart et al., 1993). However, as noted, the question has been raised of the potential damages of rearing children uniquely in play directions which are often too diametrically opposed to the socio-cultural behaviours of their primary caregivers. LABCEC has solved this problem by integrating the Piagetian approach which High/Scope espouses as its principal method, and the Montessorian approaches as well as the approaches by Paulo Freire to the teaching of reading and writing with its own experience and research.

The parents' concern with relation to the literacy practices centres employ does have a practical base. These parents are aware that writing is essential for their children's success at school. Many parents also have an emotional basis for their concern. Saint Lucia has two languages - Creole and English. Many parents are purely Creole speakers or inadequate English speakers. The level of illiteracy in Saint Lucia is as high as 27% while that of functional illiteracy is 19% (National Literacy Survey, n.d., p. 6). These parents suffered great emotional damage at school because they did not master either spoken or written English well. They know how they suffered and they do not want this sufferance repeated on their children.

The Montessori approach to teaching feels that writing can be taught to young children at an early age, so much so they can read as well as the children in the first grade of elementary school, eg. 5 years (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 17). Even in centres where the Montessori approach is not used, professionals are aware that some children are ready for writing well before the age of five. Why then, cannot a compromise be reached to accommodate both of the stakeholders acutely interested in this matter - the parents and the professionals - without hurting the integrity of either stakeholder?

Had the inclusionary paradigm not been used at LABCEC in the instance cited above, then the views of the professionals would have prevailed. There would have been an avoidance of teaching children to write by these professionals except for a few children who proved exceptionally ready. However, research at LABCEC shows that the parents are not wrong. The majority of children can be made ready to write before they leave pre-school without any pressure being exerted on them to the sometimes amazement of the professionals. On the other hand, the professionals' concern about the importance of action and interaction with people, tools, objects and ideas must be incorporated into the broader picture. Knowledge, is, after all 'essentially an active and operatory assimilation' (Piaget, 1969, p. 28). Achieving the parents' aim of their children writing was principally one of methodology. The children could not be taught to write by

recent emergent literacy approaches which require highly literate teachers. Rather, the Montessori approach of touching and colouring worked for these children. Including stakeholders, thus, assists in destroying biases by one group of stakeholders when systematically challenged by another group. In this case, such inclusion became an important justification for the community based approach through discussion followed by research.

Moss and Pence support the fact that sometimes inclusionary processes may be adversarial and conflictual. At other times they may be based on genuine respectful partnerships. When these processes are conflictual, some participants must have the skills to manage disagreement constructively (Moss and Pence, 1994, p. 126).

Reciprocal responsibility

Another component of community based early childhood education centres is the development of a spirit of 'reciprocal responsibility' (O'Connell, 1985, p. 290). Reciprocal responsibility can be defined as the assumption of responsibility for persons and institutions for each other. This development of reciprocal responsibility strengthens the fabric of communities. How then would this spirit of reciprocal responsibility translate itself in terms of real practices in the community? In other words, how does one go about demonstrating that a result of community based early childhood education in the centres under investigation in this study has been the transformation of the centres themselves so that they attain the development of a sense of reciprocal responsibility among participants strengthening, thus, the fabric of the society?

To demonstrate this, even if only to some extent, it is necessary to look at the non-structured ways in which the different stakeholders have achieved and demonstrated this sense of reciprocal responsibility. LABCEC, for example, has received some funding from the Ministry of Community Development since its inception. Since 1993, however, it has received no such funding. One official at the Ministry suggested that there were other centres who needed this funding more, thus the decision to halt the funding. Also, LABCEC's funding cut from this Ministry was confirmed when this Ministry's budget for subventions to Day Cares was also cut by more than 50% in 1995-96. At least two of LABCEC's Board members are on the Board of the Credit Union, the local community bank. At LABCEC's request and with these Board members' support, the Laborie Credit Union has replaced this funding by the Ministry by more than half. This funding replacement would not have been considered had not some Board members at least developed a sense of reciprocal responsibility or, in other words, assumed a certain sense of responsibility for LABCEC.

Still another example could be used, again concentrating on the Board members as stakeholders. SOUCEC had a problem of securing land in an area where land is extremely scarce. Through the District Representative of Soufriere, a town located on the southwest of Saint Lucia, land had been donated to the Mothers and Fathers group in this area. Two of the Mothers and Fathers' executive members are on SOUCEC's Board. Along with the chairperson, and independent of me, LABCEC's coordinator and their project advisor, the Board members

managed to persuade the district representative to allow this land to be used also for an early childhood education centre. Had these Board members not been committed to the development of community based early childhood education in Soufriere, had they not developed a sense of reciprocal responsibility, then such an achievement would have been impossible.

Consensus and solidarity

Another argument in favour of community based centres is that they 'provide a rallying point for social and political actions that build consensus and solidarity' (Myers, 1995, p. 43). This rallying of political and social consciousness is not solely political. According to Freire, 'the democracy that is solely political denies itself' (Freire, 1996, p. 146). Solely political democracy offers to the people only the right of vote. Community based programmes recognise that children are a critical rallying point for community interest and action and take them as such. Since the welfare of children is seen by most people as a fundamental issue, it is thus also seen as a 'safe' political issue or, if not, so fundamental that it is worth any political battle which might ensue. Children are often perceived as one of the most, if not the most, important reasons for being. Community based centres thus, using children as their rallying point, can build firm foundations for community consensus and solidarity in which community members recognize what Freire notes as:

'the right to justice, without which there is no peace; to life, which implies the right to be born; to eat; to sleep, to have good health; to have clothing; to pay respect to the dead; to study; to work; to be a child; to believe or not to believe; to live one's sexuality any way one deems appropriate; to criticize; to disagree with official discourse; to read; to play regardless of age; to be ethically informed about what happens on a local, regional, national and world level; to move, both to come and go; and not be discriminated against, whether on the basis on gender, class, race, or any other reason, such as being too fat or too thin'. (Freire, 1996, p. 155)

In a discussion of community based action and its effects on rallying political consciousness, it should be recognised that community based action is impossible in areas where positions are so entrenched as to deny discussion. Such was the case of Haiti, for example, during the Haitian more recent dictatorships. On the other hand, in India, for example, under the British Raj, there were some avenues open for democratic action - Parliament, mass rallies and demonstrations, and the press. Under settler-colonialism such as Algeria, Fanon asserted, 'armed struggle is the only avenue open' and it is legitimate and justified (Fanon, 1965, p. 3). In communities like Saint Lucia, however, there are enough safety valves in civil society to lend themselves to community based action. There is, in fact, a continuum of democracy. The forms of community action depend on the location of a given society along that continuum.

One example of children serving as a rallying point in an exceedingly difficult political, social and cultural context as well as an example of the building of consensus and solidarity could be taken from Happy House in Augier. Happy House was initiated by me after the only pre-School in Augier, the Bourgeois Pre-School, closed down because of financial difficulties. After this pre-

school closed down and after Happy House was initiated, the Minister of Education put down a foundation to be used by the Bourgeois Pre-School which had closed down. The Administrator and other community members made valiant efforts to secure funding to finish this pre-school but only managed to go up two blocks from the foundation in more than one year. They would not involve me because it was said that I was not a member of their community. Eventually through Happy House's own Board members, in particular a representative for Augier for the ruling party and a District Education Officer, they accepted my help. A proposal was written and funding was found to complete a solid building. Three members of Happy House's Board were then co-opted on the new Board of the Augier Pre-School. The whole process took three years with much time from the Board members of Happy House but at the bottom line were the children of Augier. Were the children of Augier not at the heart of the matter it is doubtful whether the new Pre-School would have been constructed and running as a community based early childhood education centre. The real point here is that Happy House has helped to bring opposing factions together, across political divisions, and this is positive for the community as a whole.

Freedom

Another justification for the development of community based education centres is closely related to the above, that is that 'the individual braces his freedom and enlargens his perceptions through actions on behalf of others which he initiates voluntarily and for which he is willing to assume personal responsibility' (O'Connell, 1985, p. 312). So do intellectuals brace their freedom. In fact, according to Fanon, the more the intellectual imbibes the atmosphere of the people, the more completely he abandons the habits of calculation. The intellectual puts aside silence, mental reservations and shakes off the spirit of concealment (Fanon, 1965, p. 37). When individual donors support children at LABCEC systematically over a period of extend years, they are freely assuming this responsibility through their own enlargened perceptions. Likewise, when Board members accept to come to Board meetings to the rate of 100% over 16 or more years, they are bracing their own freedom and enlargening their own perceptions. Community based centres which go beyond early childhood education and stretch into areas such as youth, as LABCEC is attempting to do, demonstrate the bracing of individuals, including the intellectuals, of their own freedom.

Government awareness and policy and institutional reform

There is another component related to the development of community based education centres. This is that the development of these centres can heighten Government awareness and provide a most effective mechanism to policy and institutional reform. It is not suggested that the sector should compete with Government. Rather it should complement and humanize it (O'Connell, 1985 p. 312). Better still, the sector should work in partnership with Government. Activities which are popular tend to gain greater moral, and possibly, financial Government support. Through Government advocacy by Board members, SOUCEC, an early education centre in the town of Soufriere, was able to get two politicians' written endorsement and, thus, secure land. In addition, one of Happy House's Board members, a political candidate on the side

of the ruling party, was able to secure Government financial assistance for the parents as teachers programme in his area. It remains to be seen in what other direct ways that these community based centres can get support from Government either through Governmental advocacy by the prominent stakeholders involved, or by popular demand.

To achieve a heightened state of Government awareness, there is need for community based institutions to associate and form area or national based organisations. Such associations and organisations are demonstrations of the saying that there is strength in numbers. It is true that community based institutions can create forums or 'arenas for discussion and reflection where people can engage as citizens with devotion and vision' (Moss and Pence, p. 166). However, only associated community based organisations adhering to possibly one non- Governmental organisation can bring this discussion in the case of Saint Lucia to the point where Government will take notice and perhaps act correspondingly, including financial action. More participation at the national level means more influence on policy and better chances to reform according to the wishes of the people.

Building existing knowledge bases

Community based organisations, in this case community based early childhood education centres, are also advantageous because they rely on and build upon an existing knowledge base of community based early childhood education. Will community based groups be reactionary or progressive? This depends largely on the education and the process of the education itself. There is need for education on different aspects of child development, on attitudes including leadership skills and self esteem, on diet, nutrition and exercise for personal well-being, on matters of health, on family matters, youth and politics among other areas. Without this education within the context of a democratic process, the communities may be doomed to inflexibility among other negative behavioural patterns. The communities may regress. This is particularly important in the light of certain autocratic patterns which are ingrained not only in the top levels of the society but among the popular folk.

Community based early childhood education offers critical education in classrooms and adjoining public community arenas. As such, it is one activist way among many to question the status quo while promoting democratic values for self and community (Shor, 1992, p.189). Because it starts before birth to the age of eight, community based early childhood education lies at the very roots of the education system. It can, thus, have a critical impact on citizens at the beginning of their lives as well as on other participants, such as parents, around children, who stand at a focal point of their concerns.

The community approach allows one to rely, build on and enhance knowledge in other sectors as well, from the skills of the carpenters who build the schools to the talent of local violinists and drummers who may come regularly to play for children and teachers. The community based approach helps enhance the community's human and social capital and this helps it deal with other developmental needs.

Community Change

The fulfilment of all these needs which form the justifications for the development of community based early childhood education institutions in Saint Lucia can only result in community change, yet another component of the establishment and development of these centres. That this change is there is evident. For example, while according to the task commission on discipline only 20% of Saint Lucian families thought that there was anything wrong with physical punishment (National survey on Discipline, 1994, p. V), 80% of mothers participating in LABCEC's parents as teachers programme felt that physical punishment was an inappropriate method of discipline by the end of a one-year parenting programme. Aligned with this is the fact that community based early childhood education addresses grave problems such as crime and juvenile delinquency at their very base.

Institutional Building

Community based early childhood education centres also imply institutional building. Community organisations, in Saint Lucia as in the rest of the Caribbean, are weak organisations. The value of the CBECEs is that they build not only on the occasional goodwill and skills of individuals, which can disappear at any time, but they build durable institutions. They build upon the capacity of the community to provide the services and deal with the issues on the long term. What happens to the private pre-school when the owner leaves or retires? In most cases they are handed over to another operator. In a few cases they close down. However, under what terms and conditions does the next owner take over? Who is to determine whether the quality under which it operated goes up or down? Here is yet another justification for community based early childhood education centres - the question of continuity with quality.

Negotiation with the wider society

The following justification for CBECEs is that they do permit the community to negotiate with the larger society. Take Laborie, for example - it was, until 1997, a community which supported the opposition party. The opposition party won the elections in 1997 after 25 years of rule by a party the majority of Laborians opposed. LABCEC for years received recurrent expenditure of $10,000.00 E.C. from the Ministry of Education. What happened to the financial support of LABCEC when the Government changed? Although the moral and other support increased, the financial commitment disappeared. Here is one area where the community could negotiate with the larger society. Another example of this negotiation with the larger society which is not Government could be given. Parents of children attending LABCEC were very concerned about the play oriented approach at LABCEC. As far as the parents were concerned, the children were not learning anything. They were playing too much. It was principally the intervention of the Board members through their unofficial explanations to the parents of the importance of the concept of play in early childhood education that this attitude was changed. Also helpful were the parents' meetings where parents attending were initiated into the importance of play in early childhood education. However, it was made clear as well that

LABCEC was also doing the structured activities essential for low-income children whose parents lacked the time and the education to help stimulate them enough. These parents then served to negotiate with the wider community of parents along with the Board members, with particular reference to the Principals of the Infant and Primary Schools.

Social Justice

With relation to the low-income children referred to above, one is led to the fact that an important component of community based early childhood education is its implications for social justice. Take LABCEC, for instance, where in January 2000 the cost for developmentally appropriate early childhood education is approximately 2,000.00 E.C. dollars per year. Yet all but one of parents at this centre pay only one quarter to one-third of this sum for that is all they can afford to pay. Eight of the 52 parents of children registered in 2000 even paid less. Of these eight parents only two mothers have secondary education. The rest have primary education. Likewise only two fathers have completed secondary education. The number of people living in these eight homes range from three to ten and their yearly incomes is under 4,000.00 E.C. per year and as little as under 1,000.00 E.C. per year. (In Saint Lucia, according to the 1991 census, the highest number of people earned between 6,001.00 and 8,000.00 E.C. per year. This same census gives the average salary of the pre-school worker as 267.00 E.C. per month). Five of these eight families have pit latrines while three of them do not have running water in their homes. Four of these eight mothers have two or three different fathers for the children they bore while four of them got their first child before they reached 20 years. However, most of children live with these eight mothers, four of whom are single. Five of these mothers are bi-lingual and speak both Creole and English.

So, none of the parents with children attending LABCEC can afford to pay more than one-third of the cost of quality early childhood education. The eight referred to above can afford to pay even less. While Board members are disturbed about young mothers with two or more different child fathers receiving scholarships, these moral concerns do not impinge on the humanistic ones that their children need to be fed and educated. The question of social justice then is one of high priority in community based early childhood education centres.

Conclusion

CBECEs help communities in general not just children. According to Myers 'the real beauty of the community and parental approaches is that adults also benefit in the process' (Myers, 1995 p. 35). Pantin, Executive Director of SERVOL, agrees with Myers when he notes that 'the hidden agenda' of SERVOL is 'the work with the parents' (see Cohen, 1991, p. 59). In addition, the youth, community organisations, poor community members and influential community members are also among those helped in the community based process.

Community based early childhood education centres also encourage civic participation. Through the involvement of Board members, parents and members of the wider community, the

discussion of community based early childhood education is not only kept alive but leads to another advantage - that of empowering the citizenry. During this process conscientization is achieved. A person who is conscientized is, according to Freire, able to connect facts and problems (1996, p. 183). He or she has 'a different understanding of history and his or her role in it. He or she will refuse to become stagnant, but will move to mobilize and change the world' (1996, p. 183). Community based early childhood education centres like new community partnerships in general develop people's understanding of the systems that 'dictate the working of the world around them, and how to manipulate those to get what they and their community want; and they develop confidence in their ability to take local action - to take local responsibility' (MacFarlane, 1992, pp. 14-15). Moreover, as noted in the definition in the first paragraph of this chapter, community based early childhood education programmes involve common ownership by the community which normally has few financial assets in common.

Community based early childhood education centres have a number of components:

- favouring continuity, and
- increasing the ability of the community to negotiate with
  the larger society (thus moderating the possible effects
  of periodic political and economic changes). (Myers, 1985, p. 35)

In fact the work of community based early childhood education centres and that of voluntary organisations which are by definition also community based are indistinguishable in that they:
- are constructive of community
- assure democracy and restrain authoritarianism
- seek to develop genuine partnerships
- begin to pervade corporate and Governmental structures
- enhance social justice by addressing the difficult questions
    of how to eliminate unjustified inequalities
- enable understanding of society.

and build what de Tocqueville called 'habits of the heart' (Til, 1988, p. 194).

However, the fact that an early childhood education centre is community based is not the only programme characteristic for quality. Rather, early childhood education programmes should serve at-risk children, be integrated (education, health and nutrition), be flexible, based on but not restricted to local ways, financially feasible and cost-effective (Myers, 1995, p. 83). This chapter focuses only on the rationale for, and the programme characteristic of the community based approach. However, the rest of the thesis discusses also the other programme characteristics noted above, that early childhood education programmes should serve at-risk children, be integrated and be flexible.

The community based approach which has taken root in Saint Lucia may develop. However the extent of its growth will depend partly on the social and political culture of Saint Lucia.

According to Moss and Pence, 'The social and political culture of a society will determine whether nor not an inclusionary approach to quality can take deep root and flourish. Once the concept has taken root, work is needed to put it into practice' (Moss and Pence, 1994, p. 175). To add to Moss and Pence's quote, it is important to note that the effect of the social and political culture operates in a spiral fashion as well. The inclusionary approach to quality, in whatever field of non-Government area it operates, helps create, over a long-term process, a favourable social and political culture. And so it was in Saint Lucia in 1997 with the community based inclusionary practices of NGOs and other voluntary organisations. So even if the non-Governmental associations, like LABCEC, were only surviving in rocky, barren political soil, this soil was transformed into a favourable political culture through social work. Continued work also helps ensure the maintainance of that favourable social and political culture.

At the roots of the preceding theoretical ideas on community based early childhood education was one tiny rural community education centre. This was the Laborie Community Education Centre (LABCEC).

Chapter Three

A history of the Laborie Community Education Centre (LABCEC)

'It's not just about Chalk and Talk.' (Winifred Hunter, Froebel trained Director of an early childhood education centre which began in 1935 in Guyana and which I attended, in a telephone conversation on 2nd March, 1997)

If the story of LABCEC remained simply as that of one Early Childhood Education Centre, it may still be worth telling. However were this story confined to only the one community of Laborie it might not lend effective guidance to other rural community based institutions. The story of LABCEC is important because of its growth and development as one community based rural institution which sparked the fire of community participation, involvement, ownership and management of community education institutions elsewhere in rural Saint Lucia.

This chapter will look at the origins of LABCEC. It will give a profile of some of the first parents and the founding member. The chapter will then proceed to discuss the original design, organization and implementation of the centre including the staff, Board, curriculum and programmes. The chapter will finally make a link with the follow-up chapter reporting the replication of LABCEC in other communities in the south of Saint Lucia.

Origins of LABCEC

The Laborie Community Education Centre (LABCEC) emerged initially as a germ of an idea from me - its founding member - who was dissatisfied with the early childhood education services offered in the south of the island. In Laborie, for instance, one aged beautiful old lady sometimes dozed before rows of children sitting quietly on school benches. True, there was one centre of some quality nearby but it was middle-class oriented and not community based.

My son, Djamal Rodney, provided me with the stimulus. I could not envisage sending him to any of the centres in question.

So it was that I called a meeting at my home sometime in April, 1983. At this meeting were approximately eight parents. This meeting confirmed the need for a quality early childhood education centre.

Who were these parents? What is it that they wanted and received? 9 parents of the first 11 graduates were interviewed in 1997. The purpose of these interviews was to collect recollections about LABCEC's early days. These semi-structured interviews have been discussed in Chapter one on the research methodology. The interviews were informal ones based on a pre-arranged interview sheet. They were conducted at the homes of the parents. One of these interviews took place in my car. 8 of the parents were female and only 1 was male. This male had demonstrated a commitment to LABCEC from its inception and had showed a clear willingness to become involved as events indicated that LABCEC had something special to offer the children and the

community of Laborie.

All nine parents were born in Saint Lucia, except myself who was born in Guyana. I am, however, now a citizen of Saint Lucia. At the time of the foundation of LABCEC, one of these parents was under 20 years of age, four parents between 20 and 30 years of age and four parents between 30 and 40 years of age. Most parents were of African origin although half of the parents had some European or East Indian foreparents.

Most parents came from humble backgrounds although none seemed to originate from the very poor of Saint Lucia. In three cases the mothers represented the petit bourgeoisie ie the Principal of a Primary School, a postmistress and a primary school teacher who was my mother. In only one case a father came from the middle to upper middle class of the Caribbean. This was my father who retired as a Permanent Secretary of a Government Ministry and who had been brought up by his uncle, a judge, first Chancellor of the University of Guyana. Yet, in my history too, humble origins were destined to play a huge part since the divorce of my parents forced my mother to move to working class sections of the town of Georgetown, Guyana. The other mothers were housewives (2), a shopkeeper, a baker and a market vendor while the fathers ranged from a seaman, a mason, an emigrant to the island of Curacao in the Netherland Antilles, an electrician and a Port Authority worker.

The majority of these parents remember their own parents beating and shouting at them a lot. Only two parents, including me for my father only, remember their parents as not beating at all. All of their parents, except one, tended to converse little with them although there was some conversation such as the retelling of stories of long ago.

One parent who reported that she had been very scared of her mother received no schooling at all. Three received only primary schooling. Three went to secondary school. Two of these three only to Junior Secondary School and two went to University including myself.

Three parents were raised by both mother and father, three by mother alone, one by a great grandmother, one by her mother and grandmother, and one by a grand aunt. Interestingly, most of these parents (5) report that the fathers have very good relationships with their own children who subsequently attended LABCEC. Two are said to have reasonably good relationships and only two have little or no relationships at all. This fact represents a significant change in the lives of their own children as compared to their lives. At least two mothers reported of a deep longing for their own absent fathers. One of them said that she deeply wanted to know her father. She used to picture him. She craved for him.

All parents agreed that the impact of LABCEC on their children was a positive one. Significantly enough even the mother of the only one of these nine children who did not succeed later on at the common entrance examination said the same. She felt that her son was a late developer. One parent called the impact 'tremendous'. As for me, the principal impact was that it developed a peer support for my children among children who were educated to be encouraged

to choose and to be independent by the only institutional structure which supported actively what many of these parents desired for their children's education.

After the first meeting at my home with these parents, follow up meetings were then held. One of these meetings included the presence of Mrs. Martina Mathurin, then Coordinator of Pre-Schools at the Ministry of Community Development. At this meeting there were nine persons present. The Coordinator of Pre-Schools stressed on objectives which were proving difficult to implement because many parents and teachers had habits which were contrary to quality early childhood education. She dealt particularly with the activity and participatory approach. During this meeting it was also decided unanimously that parents' payment for the centre would be made on a sliding scale.

Search was then made for a house to rent. A small house with two bedrooms was leased from Mrs. Elizabeth Barras at $120.00 E.C. dollars per month (26 English pounds). This house needed painting and fencing. Parents chipped in. However, the bulk of monies needed for fencing were through the donations of two wealthier parents. The Coordinator of Pre-Schools donated a fridge and stove through the Ministry of Community Development.

Finally, on October 1st, 1983, the new centre was inaugurated. Present at the ceremony was the then Minister of Education, Ms. Margareta Alexander.

After one year, the Partners of the Americas through CARCAE (The Council for Adult Education) provided the first grant of $5,000.00 U.S. This went to build a small wooden one-roomed house capable of holding an increase of children from 20 to 32. A food programme was also started that year.

In the meantime, the owner of the little house on Bay Street, Laborie decided to increase her rent considerably. The Board decided that it would not be possible to pay this new rent which would have meant a cut in teachers' already low salaries. I set up a feverish hunt for alternative accommodation. Land was leased from the National Development Corporation - the only suitable area in all Laborie - and two pre-fabricated buildings donated by the Ministry of Education and Culture were erected. Funding was also received from UNICEF through the Ministry of Community Development and from the Canadian High Commission in Barbados. Finally in November, 1986, LABCEC moved into premises of its own.

This period was very significant. LABCEC was indeed lucky to have found the only suitable land in the village of Laborie for the construction of an early childhood education centre. Had this land not been available, there would have been a very different story to tell. Two people were involved in the initial discussions of the land. One was the local Laborian and legendary Miss Neeza (who died in 1998) to whose relative the property had formerly belonged. The other was Mr. Allan Louisy, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia from 1979 to 1981.

To complete the building, I resigned from my teaching post since it required regular

supervision. There was also acute need for regular contact with parents and attention to staffing and curriculum matters.

Initially, staffing proved somewhat difficult. One teacher chosen was rejected because she publicly denigrated the spirit of the Laborie community. Two teachers were eventually chosen by the first Board members who were Ms. Geraldine Oscar, Leota Maxwell and Angeline Emmanuel. I was elected as 'supervisor'.

At first there were two teachers, one 17 years of age and one 18. They both had secondary education, although one only had junior secondary education. By the end of the first year both were gone. This rapid turnover has been the pattern of LABCEC as it has been for most of the pre-schools on the island. The main reason for this is the poor working conditions with special reference to the low wages. In the summer of 1998, I was the only person who had been with LABCEC since its inception with the housekeeper being next in line, being there for 14 years. Only two members of staff had been there for between four and seven years. One had been at LABCEC for three years and the rest, five of them, had been there for one to two years only.

The LABCEC Board stabilized itself after the departure of its first three parent members after two years. In 2000, I have been on the Board since its inception for 17 years. Three other members have been on the Board since 1986 and are still serving. One is a District Education Officer working with the Ministry of Education while two others are the Principals of the Infant and the Primary Schools. Two members served for 10 years and have now resigned, one because of age and the other because of pressing matters related to involvement in other community and political activities. The Principal of the Laborie Boys Primary has been on the Board for three years and is still serving. The other Board members are parents who are replaced when their children graduate from the centre. More will be said on both the staff and the Board in the chapter on early childhood education development.

The initial curriculum was based on a combination of various pedagogical books I had read, been impressed with and tested through the children. It included the practical life exercises and the sensorial matters which are part of the Montessori curriculum. It also included an American school math programme (Kramer, 1974) as well as the organic vocabulary as proposed by Sylvia Ashton Warner (1963), where children were taught words of their own choice which were organic to them. Free talk where words from the children's own conversations were selected, led to such choices as the 'bam bam' from the teacher's own nice 'bam bam' (backside) and her nice hair. This curriculum would eventually expand to become one of LABCEC's successes.

Programmes at LABCEC

The above section in this chapter has concentrated up to now on a chronological discussion of LABCEC. I will now switch from such type of discussion and begin to discuss the programmes - both successful and failing - of LABCEC. The following section will, thus, investigate all of the programmes initiated at LABCEC beginning with the early childhood education programme. The

early childhood education programme will only be discussed in its initial stages with follow up in chapters 7 and 8 on early childhood education development.

The programmes of LABCEC include and have included:

1. A Parents as Teachers Programme
2. An Early Childhood Education Programme
3. A Continuing Education Programme in the form of Secondary School leaving certificates in C.X.C English and Math
4. A Common Entrance Programme
4. A Computer Education Programme
5. An Outreach Programme to the Infant School
6. A Youth Programme
7. An incipient Men's Programme.

The Parents as Teachers or PAT programme originated because both the parents and I expressed a need for it. Economically it continues to function because parent educators are paid honoraria to do their jobs. However, it also continues to function because of the body of content it has spread among its clientele - the parents. Remarks made by over 1,200 parents who have been visited by parent educators show that they value the Parents as Teachers programme highly. Some say they wish it was in existence when they were a child. Others not in the programme request to be included in the programme. One parent asked for a repeat of a lesson on Reading Readiness. Another parent commented 'It is very educational. It makes me think back of the future, see what was left out in life by our parents and what we can fit into it for our children' (Visit by Parent Educator, Mora Auguste, January 1995). Another parent said of the programme 'I have learned to do things differently now. As my child is growing I now see the meaning of not beating and yelling at her' (Visit by Parent Educator, Virginia Edward, December 1994).

Of these programmes, only three have proved steady and sustained parts of the centre. These three are the early childhood education programme, the parents as teachers programme referred to above, and the continuing education programme.

The Parents as Teachers programme

From the table below, it can be concluded that parents appeared to place higher priority on registering their 3 - 5 years old in early childhood education centres than registering their under 3's.

No. Of children at LABCEC 1995

Two years plus	Three years plus	Four years plus	Total
10	17	43	70 (31 male and 39 female)

The fact that parents place much greater emphasis on sending their three to five years old to centres than their birth to three years old to centres suggested the need for the Parents as Teachers programme which concentrates on the birth to three years old. The Parents as Teachers programme is yet another programme which has been run over a number of years. LABCEC's Parenting programme commenced in September 1987 funded by NRDF (The National Research and Development Foundation). The primary objectives were outlined at a meeting held on 1. 10.87 including the Director of NRDF, Patricia Charles, the Education Officer - Pre-Schools of the Ministry of Education and LABCEC's Board members. The principal objective was to help the parents to become better educators of their children.

In the first phase, from October 1987 to March 1988, 31 home visits were paid. In Phase two, from September 1988 to June 1989, 104 home visits were paid. From September 1992 - August 1993, 1,000 home visits were paid. And from September 1994 - August 1995, over 1,200 home visits were made.

In 1992, I learnt of a Parenting programme as done by Parents As Teachers (PAT) in St. Louis, Missouri. This programme was visited twice and their manual found particularly useful. In 1994, the PAT manual was adapted for use by the birth - 3's while, for the 3 - 5's a manual has been adapted incorporating the work of The University of the West Indies Early Childhood Education Division's (UWIDITE).

An evaluation of the PAT, St. Louis, Missouri's programme found out that:

'Regardless of which measure of intelligence, achievement auditory comprehension, verbal ability, or language ability was used, NPAT children consistently scored significantly higher than both the nationally normed group and the comparison group on these scales.' (Judy Pfannestiel, Dianne A. Selter, 1989, p. 7)

The evaluation went on to state that parent participation in the NPAT project 'significantly increased a child's intellectual achievement and language ability above and beyond what can be explained by differences between groups on the socio economic advantage factor'(Ibid, p. 7). NPAT parents were more knowledgeable 'about the importance of physical stimuli in their child's development, about appropriate discipline and about knowledge of child development for 3 year olds and for children younger than 3 years' (Ibid. p. 7). Importantly, it was noted that the home visit

quality was the most important predictor of the child's ability. 'Twenty percent of the variation on achievement and 30% of the variation on language ability was explained by the high quality parental involvement in home visits' (Ibid, p. 12).

The PAT programme provides age-appropriate information on child development. It helps parents increase their skills as observers of their child and provides parents with guidance in promoting the child's intellectual, language, social and motor skills development. Of the family information forms perused for the 1993 - 1994 period for LABCEC, St. Lucia, it was discovered that of 61 parents only 7 mothers had attended secondary school and only 3 fathers had done so. Two of 61 fathers had attended no school at all. 12 fathers and 42 mothers were unemployed. Of the remaining fathers 21 fathers worked at low-income jobs. Clearly, this programme caters for low-income families. In Saint Lucia, the percentage of single parent families is 34%. Six of the 11 parent educators associated with LABCEC visited 59 parents. Of these 59 parents, 35 or almost 60% are single parent families.

Since the same programme is being followed at LABCEC for the birth - 3's as at PAT, St. Louis, one would assume that an evaluation would produce similar results. However, this depends partly on the conduct of a local evaluation conducted. Nevertheless, in 1991 an evaluation of the Parents as Teachers was conducted by Chris Henry, a consultant for OXFAM/UK, which has its Caribbean regional office in the Dominican Republic. In terms of the Home Visitors/School leavers, Henry noted that 'this was an interesting and bold step which would serve to distribute community responsibility for the programme' (Henry, 1991, p. 1). The school leavers who were then being trained as early childhood education professionals, were, she said, pleasant and keen but had a lot of growing up to do. It is interesting to note that this school leavers programme has been replaced with training by SERVOL and on-the-job training by SERVOL trainees.

Education level of mothers

Total no. of primary caregivers visited	No schooling at all	Primary Schooling only	Secondary Schooling
61	0	54	7

Unemployed caregivers

Total no. of primary caregivers visited	Unemployed	Employed
61	42	19

Chris Henry made a number of suggestions. One was that LABCEC should invite a special

education teacher - possibly from the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College - to examine the pre-school and home visitors programme. She felt that the data should be computerized. This is ongoing to some extent in that the comments on the Parent Educators minutes are written on computer. The minutes of home visits are kept still in filing boxes. She noted:

> There is need for training in personal development and communication skills. There should be formation of a parent/home visitors association. The Board should guide and monitor the programme in areas such as content, methodology and philosophy. (Henry, 1991, p. 3)

Chris Henry's recommendations were taken on Board. In terms of the formation of a parent/home visitors association, this was enacted in the monthly parent meetings conducted by the Administrators. As far as the content and methodology were concerned, it was felt that the professionals involved in Parenting Education could do a better job and, thus, was the manual conceived with PAT, Missouri's and UWIDITE's help. However, the LABCEC's Board started to play a greater role both in the philosophy of the programme and follow up.

The Early Childhood Education programme

The Early Childhood Education Centre was started with the initiation of the programme in 1983. I first paid a visit to three centres in Castries, including a Montessori centre then run by Elizabeth Leighton. A letter to friends including a Montessori teacher resulted in the purchase and donation of some books. These formed the basis of an amateurish curriculum. In the first eight years the only training conducted for teachers were those conducted by me from my readings of books on early childhood education. Also, there were holiday sessions conducted both by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community Development. However, this training was not adequate although, since then, it has developed considerably. Fortunately, in September 1992, SERVOL, located in Trinidad, agreed to train one Headteacher of LABCEC. SERVOL's diploma is accredited by the University of Oxford. SERVOL was founded in 1970. It grew from a street-corner organization to a national movement. In 1995 Father Gerard Pantin, SERVOL's founder, was awarded a prize called 'The Right Livelihood Award' also referred to as 'The Alternative Nobel Prize' in relation to the founding and development of SERVOL. This organization's curriculum became largely used by LABCEC and is based on the mnemonic SPICES (social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional and spiritual development). This was a significant step forward for LABCEC. Since then SERVOL has trained four people in all sent by LABCEC.

In the meantime, through the initiation of SERVOL, the Ministry of Education started its own three year training course in Early Childhood Education - one year internship followed by two years in-service training. LABCEC with its related institutions profited from this training for the first time in September 1995.

It is clear that the presence of SERVOL trained teachers has made a significant difference to LABCEC and related institutions. In 1992, Marcel de Govia of SERVOL conducted an evaluation of LABCEC's early childhood education centre. Although she was positive, there were certain areas

she noted which needed improvement. These included such factors as:

- circle time was too long
- lunch time was too short
- the teachers should sit with children during lunch
- teachers should always do their activity plans
- toddlers should not be in the pre-school
- more space was needed
- teachers should attend Saturday sessions at the Black Bay pre-school
- teachers at the Black Bay Pre-School should also do internships at LABCEC
- there should be a partition for the kitchen
- there should be a lower teacher/pupil ratio.

All these concerns were addressed and it is worthy of note that when Ms. de Govia assessed Headteacher Elsa Joyeux in 1995 under the auspices of SERVOL, she gave her an overall percentage of 99.

This evaluation was corroborated by a CUSO (Canadian equivalent to the VSO) officer who was engaged in on-the-job training at LABCEC. She evidently related to the SERVOL trainees as equals and had no major improvements to suggest to their work per se. This CUSO officer had an Early Childhood Education Diploma which she received from Algonquin College. She had eight years experience with children between five and thirteen years in the roles of teacher, head-teacher and supervisor (Letter, July 22, 1994 from Cadieux to CUSO).

It is useful to note that LABCEC in 1999, under the National Association, devised its own training modules written by me. Level three of these is being considered for possible accreditation by various institutions. In the meantime, each teacher and volunteer undergoes systematic and regular training as outlined in these modules.

The Continuing Education programme

The Continuing Education Programme started in 1995 at the initiative of Cecilia Renee, a Primary School Teacher. The Continuing Education programme has its highest registration in 1994 - 1995. 47 young women and 37 young men. This programme concentrates on the preparation of these students for C.X.C. English or Mathematics (C.X.C. is the Caribbean equivalent of G.C.E. O - levels). The programme is staffed by two highly committed teachers. There needs, however, to be records kept of students' success at examinations and comparisons made with the general success rate. This was done for them in 1997 for Math. Three males and twenty-three females sat the math exam and two males and eight females passed it. This represented a 38% pass rate. The general pass rate for the entire country for the out-of-school math students in 1994 was 31%. For C.X.C. General English 305 persons sat in the entire country for out-of-school students and 30 persons

passed (Ministry of Education). Evidently, however, this programme responds to a need within the community as witnessed by the avid response of the youth and their willingness to pay modest fees of $100.00 per year for registration per subject. From 1997, only Math was done since English at LABCEC did not procure enough registrants.

Discontinued programmes

I will now turn to the programmes which failed to continue. The Common Entrance programme began in September 1988 and continued until July 1991. In 1992, for instance, LABCEC had 65% of its entrants assigned to a Secondary School as compared to 47% to Laborie Girls Primary and 38% to Laborie Boys Primary. The Common Entrance examination serves as a means of testing children for placement into secondary school. Children who do not gain the required pass rate remain in their Primary School where they go on to the next two forms after which they graduate. In 1994 for example, 4,870 children took the examination and only 2,135 were assigned to secondary schools (Ministry of Education and Culture). This is a normal pattern. Parents, thus, attach extreme importance to the examination. Often, a mother can be seen crying on television when she receives news that her child has failed this exam. Thus, was the request made by parents to LABCEC to assist the children of Laborie in their preparation for this examination. I, since renamed 'Coordinator', had some misgivings on the possible preparation of students for this examination because of the nature of the examination itself. These misgivings centered around qualms about a selection process for children of such a young age, partly on the emotional strain on families and partly on the fact, that, in the majority of cases, the examination condemned those who did not succeed to become left in the lowest socio-economic strata of the society.

One long time friend of LABCEC, Felix Finisterre, Deputy Director of Tourism in 1997, was appalled at the examination itself. He thought that the examination should be abolished and was angered at the lessons given prolifically by teachers after school in preparation for this examination. His negative opinion on the commencement of these classes was, however, counteracted by parents who were eager to have classes in order to give their children an extra chance at secondary school education.

LABCEC's Board members expressed no objection to the commencement of these classes. Thus were the classes started. Their objectives were:

1. To assist the community in which common entrance classes are held to achieve higher common entrance results

2. To assist the community in which classes are held to achieve greater self-sufficiency and higher skills in teaching and administering common entrance classes

3. To help LABCEC in its goals towards achieving financial sustainability.

All objectives were realised. The fact that objective two was met is testified by the fact that the Laborie Girls Primary soon started giving classes of its own. In 1991, a teacher at the Laborie Boys Primary started Common Entrance classes, dealing the death blow to LABCEC's programme but furthering the realisation of objective two. This teacher has since stopped giving extra lessons but the school has taken up the mantle.

So, this programme cannot be deemed a failure. Within the constraints of questions concerning the advantages of such a programme, LABCEC responded to a need as expressed by the parents. LABCEC, however, did not have the human resources to continue such a programme successfully. In the last year, for instance, LABCEC could not always get a teacher and I taught the classes sometimes. What was more important was that the community - in terms of the two schools which were concerned and the parents - recognised the need also and responded quickly to it. In this respect, LABCEC may be said to have induced community action on a particular need, rendering its own action obsolete.

Computer Education for children was another programme which was considered but never implemented in any full-scale manner. Funding agencies were rightly not convinced that this was a funding priority in the Caribbean. So, apart from some unsuccessful seeking of funding, little was done in this area although some Board members were enthused about this idea. However, this lack of computer education did not appear to impact negatively on LABCEC's students' success in school and life.

If then, the answer does not seem at this stage to be the promotion of quality computation in early childhood education centres, another question still remains. Should early childhood education centres encourage or discourage parents from providing their 3 - 8 year Olds with computers? The answer seems to be encouragement. Early childhood education centres should play an optimistic, utopian role in their view of quality computation for the 3 - 8 year old child. Parents should be encouraged to give their children access to computers and quality software if they can afford it. This can only provide the child not only with an additional learning tool but, far more important, a new and unique way of promoting the development to adult thought processes.

Yet another programme which came to a demise was the outreach of Infant School Liaison programme. The outreach programme to the Kindergarten or Infant School took place in August 1984 and 1985. It concentrated on teaching Infant teachers (Kindergarten teachers of children aged 5 - 8 years) objectives and methods of teaching young children that integrated an active, hands-on and participatory approach. This programme was seen as a need not only by LABCEC but also by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry conducted a course under OCOD including both Pre-School and Infant School teachers for two consecutive years. In 1995 the Ministry held a meeting in Choiseul of Pre-School and Infant School Staff.

This programme was not seen as a luxury but a need and it did prove successful. There were participants in year one from Saltibus, Laborie and Babonneau. One of the three participating teachers in 1984 still opines that the session had immense impact on her teaching methods. She cites the method of reading by the children's choice of words organic to them as being one of the main

ideas which influenced her teaching.

Although this programme stopped after 1985 due mainly to lack of follow up by me, it deserves reconsideration. The work done in Early Childhood Education centres could be seriously undermined if the child undergoes opposite methods of training during the Infant or Kindergarten school.

On June 30th, 1994, the Coordinator of LABCEC approached the Charge d'Affaires of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Mr. David P.M. de Waal, with the proposal of a Parenting programme and book fair. He responded that the Embassy's focus was on youth and income generating activities and he did not think the Parenting/Bookfair fit into this criteria. However, he would be happy to consider a proposal which suited the mandate of the Embassy. Thus, was the idea of a proposal which centered around a toyfair for a parenting and youth programme conceived. This proposal attempted to train unemployed youth under the guidance of a master carpenter to make quality wooden toys. The fact that the consumers of these toys - the early childhood education centres - have little available money to buy these toys on an ongoing basis - meant that its success could not be recurrent.

Efforts employed have up to now yielded slim results although there is hope for the future. The Principal of the Laborie Boys Primary identified 12 youth. Of these, only 5 turned up on day one. Home visits were paid to the others. Some had secured alternative jobs. By the last day of the project only 2 out of the original 12 were still on the job. Nevertheless, pessimism should not be encouraged. 2 out of 12 is still one-sixth.

A men's programme has been discussed since 1994 but has also been discontinued. However, one important element in its success would be the commitment of male leaders in the community to the implementation and follow-up of the project. In the light of the Caribbean male's abandon not only of a sense of responsibility for their children, who are either illegitimate or issue from mothers they choose not to support in many cases, it may be possible that the leaders may either incorporate some of this abandon or not have the heart or time for the superhuman effort required to start the men's group and keep it going. What is certain is that the group will need to be surrounded by an intellectual body which will reason out directions of its future movement along with the male group itself that is. Also, the question needs to be considered as to whether there is need for a men's group specifically or whether the education of the men could be incorporated into the general meetings whether they be Board meetings, local membership meetings, regional Board meetings or national membership meetings. However, since men participate in none of these fora normally, their participation in these arena might be unrealistic. The men's public area are the bars and the roadsides. Might it not be possible to reach them there? The television stations might offer another possibility to reach the men. Note that there are only two documented successful stories of men's groups in the English speaking Caribbean. These are one group led by Dr. Barry Chevannes of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, and another led by Ms. Defoe of the Social Action Centre in Dominica. It is noteworthy that in both instances these are fairly high-powered leaders. It is safe to say that in terms of LABCEC no leader with the commitment and time has yet been found. The suggestion has been made to take the programme for men to the television. This suggestion was explored and has been enacted. Five men have met me and congratulated me on this programme. Yet, there is also need to take the discussion to the roadsides and the bars where small groups of men meet. Perhaps

the Parents as Teachers home visit programme can explore this possibility.

Conclusion

In a snapshot, LABCEC in 2000 - the last full year of research - has an early childhood education programme with 52 children registered including 10 poor children with most of the rest low and middle income. Parents pay on an average 450 E.C. or 100 pounds per year. LABCEC raises around 300 pounds per year per child to ensure the financial cost of developmentally appropriate early childhood education. There are four staff members and five volunteers. Parents meetings are held thrice a term and around 252 home visits are paid per year to parents with children from birth to three years each year.

Very likely, had LABCEC stopped its work in the village of LABORIE that would have been the end of this story. However, the positive effects of LABCEC on the children, the parents and the wider community meant that individuals in other communities turned to LABCEC for support and members associated with LABCEC, including myself, sought to spread the good work. This meant that LABCEC began to spread its wings to other communities close by and some like Soufriere, further away. It is to this story that I will now turn.

Chapter Four

LABCEC spreads its wings

Margaret McMillan was one of the most practical educational innovators of her time, once termed
by J.B.Priestley as 'the nuisance who worked miracles'.
(Audrey Curtis, <u>A curriculum of the pre-school child</u>, 1998, p. 8)

This chapter is a follow up of the previous one on the history of LABCEC. It looks at
LABCEC from 1992 to July 1995. This work focused on the mobilization of influential
community members in communities surrounding Laborie and reaching as far as Soufriere. It
included my struggles to obtain land, buildings and training for the early childhood education
centres in these communities. Eventually these Boards, community institutions, culminated in a
southern network which in turn pointed to the formation of a national association.

<u>Mobilization</u>

Why then did LABCEC spread its wings and decide to mobilize other groups? The primary
response to this was that, hearing of LABCEC's work, other groups requested help. In its turn,
LABCEC then decided to do some mobilization on its own. The communities were selected on a
geographic basis in the first instance. That is, all the communities in the south of Saint Lucia from
Soufriere in the south-west to Desruisseaux in the south-east were selected.

In 1991, it was Nick Troubetzkoy of Soufriere, owner of the Anse Chastanet Hotel, who
along with Hygina Mathurin, pre-school teacher in the neighbouring community of Banse,
conveyed the vision of helping other early childhood education centres. With Nick's
participation, I started some initial work with a Board from Soufriere. Then, however,
LABCEC's Board stepped in and pointed out that work needed to be carried out equally with
Banse which was so much nearer geographically than Soufriere. Armed with the practice of
functioning with a community Board in Laborie, it was natural that I would feel that there was a
need to start with community Boards in these two areas. Initially, the idea of creating a Board
for LABCEC was mine although Government became, after 1983, committed to the notion of
Boards as local management institutions. These Boards were conceived as having membership
composed of influential local persons mingled with other persons in the same communities. So it
was that the Boards of the Soufriere Community Education Centre (SOUCEC) and the Banse
Community Education Centre (BANCEC) came into being in July 1992 and September 1992
respectively.

These Boards comprised Principals of Infant and Primary Schools, pre-school teachers, an
official of the Ministry of Education and influential community members such as Nick
Troubetzkoy and Clem Bobb of Soufriere. For the formation of institutions, the inclusion of pre-
school teachers was essential but parents were included only for some of the meetings. Once a
month I would prepare an Agenda, call the Board members and set off for a meeting in these
communities.

These two Boards were followed by a flurry of other Boards. Between June 1994 and February 1995, I started Boards of the Choiseul Early Childhood Education Centre, the Creative Learning Circle in Vieux-Fort, The Desruisseaux Early Childhood Education Centre, Our Children's Wonderland in Grace and the Madeleine Monchery Centre in Jetrine.

The following table shows the names of the early childhood education centres as well as the dates the Boards were established.

Name of Centre	Date Board Established
1. LABCEC	1983
2. BANCEC	1992
3. SOUCEC	1992
4. DELCER AND REUNION (CHOISEUL)	1994
5. HAPPY HOUSE/AUGIER	1994
6. JAMES PRE-SCHOOL/DESRUISSEAUX	1994
7. CREATIVE LEARNING CIRCLE/VIEUX-FORT	1994
8. OUR CHILDREN'S WONDERLAND/GRACE	1994
9. MADELEINE MONCHERY/JETRINE	1994

Mobilizing these community Boards involved not only convening the Board but sometimes visiting them just before meetings to make sure that they would be in attendance, for these Board members, apart from the pre-school teachers, held no initial commitment to early childhood education. However, when this topic was brought to their attention, they realised by and large its importance.

Of the initial Board members selected, only approximately two-thirds attended the monthly Board meetings regularly at first. This was followed by some decline in attendance bringing the attendance in 1995 to about one-half of the original members selected. This half, however, met regularly on most occasions.

Training

This mobilization took place over a short space of time - not much more than three years. In such a short period not much could be done in terms of training the pre-school teachers. However, some significant work was realised when SERVOL in Trinidad proposed training teachers who LABCEC nominated. So it was that four teachers from LABCEC, SOUCEC,

BANCEC and HAPPY HOUSE were trained by SERVOL. This training was the result of detailed negotiations with SERVOL which began with my visit to Trinidad in 1991 and meeting with the executive director of SERVOL. This training started in this year of mobilization and extended over a period of three years from 1992 to 1995. Each teacher was trained for one year in Trinidad and returned to help in the institutionalisation of their centres. In 2000, three of the four teachers still remained in the profession.

Land and Building

In Banse, to begin with, identification of a suitable spot took a few months while approaches were made to the Catholic vestry for lease or sale of land. Eventually, however, land belonging to a family called Alcee was identified. It belonged to four owners, three of whom were willing to sell. These three owners lived in Saint Lucia. Unfortunately, the other owner was resident in Guyana, South America. It took a one hour plane trip from Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, to Madhia by my father to find this owner who was about to leave for a one day walking trip to the Kaiteur mountain where he spent most of his time. After much persuasion, he signed a document which had been prepared by lawyers in Saint Lucia giving power of attorney to his son. So it was that BANCEC inaugurated its building capable of housing 60 children on September 4th, 1994 with funding from Canada Fund, the German Embassy, the Kellogg Foundation and the Caribbean Conference of Churches, just two years after its Board has been set up.

Soufriere was another story. It was only in January 1997 that we were finally able to locate what we felt was suitable land. The major reason for this was the difficulty of finding land in Soufriere, an area of large, undivided estates. Land available for human settlements in Soufriere is very scarce. Before 1995, when the land referred to above and situated in Fond Bernier was identified, the Soufriere Board accepted none of the suggestions of one Pre-School Administrator including the Fond Bernier site. They suggested that I start negotiations on land belonging to the Duboulay holdings. Unfortunately, although 22,980 square feet had been reserved for the construction of a Day Care Centre (letter Development Control Authority - DCA - 20th July, 1994), Duboulay Holdings were willing only that a section of the open space, contiguous to the land reserved for a Day Care, be made available for the development of a Day Care (Letter Duboulay Holdings, February 10th, 1994). Both leading members of SOUCEC's Board and the DCA insisted that the open space should not be used. The question dragged on despite letters and meetings until a 1994 storm, just below hurricane level and named Debbie, revealed the inadequacy of the Duboulay land, according to one Board member who also headed the Disaster Preparedness Committee. He posited that the land might become waterlogged by a neighbouring river during a storm (as it did during Debbie) posing extreme danger to trapped children.

Despite the above, SOUCEC opened its pre-school on January 4th, 1994 in a house belonging to Mr. Jn Baptiste on Boulevard Street, Soufriere, after Giovanni Moses, the administrator of the largest pre-school in Soufriere who had worked with me in the very initial stages of formation of Soufriere's Board, closed down his pre-school after misunderstandings with the Catholic vestry over rent due.

There were only two other existing possibilities for land in Soufriere. Both were worked on by SOUCEC's Board and me. Yet it was only in January 1997, after I had stopped regular meetings with the community Boards, that a letter was written to the Government Parliamentary Secretary in Soufriere by the Ministry of Planning giving approval-in-principle for the construction of an early education centre at Fond Bernier, on the same land the Board had rejected in its initial discussions saying it was an unsuitable neighbourhood. This approval-in-principle was given pending the submission of architectural plans. One Board member had suggested that land belonging to her family be used. However, the land, it was felt, was not large enough, only a temporary location and too expensive. In the meantime, some of the money donated for the construction of SOUCEC's building had to be returned.

However, a change in Government in 1997 meant that the previous approval-in-principle for the Fond Bernier's land was no longer in operation. The process had to begin again from scratch. And this was five years after the Board had been established. Despairing, I sent the administrator of SOUCEC (the school had since moved to larger premises and was due to move once again) along with a British Volunteer Services Officer working with LABCEC to Soufriere to see if they could find house and/or land for sale. So it was that in 1998 SOUCEC acquired a property in a main street of Soufriere.

Unfortunately, the previous owner of the property refused to move out and I suffered sleepless nights. In 1999, after a lawyer's letter written by a family friend, he finally did so and SOUCEC moved into its own property on Church Street.

For Happy House, the tale was just as intense although different. This centre opened its doors in the Augier Parish Hall in February 1994. Its Board met after the opening. An incipient Board had been formed before the opening but had only met on two occasions. These meetings gave rise to the knowledge that the only administrator in Augier, where Happy House was located, was exhausted with the financial commitments involved and wanted to close down her own centre. The Board considered finding land of its own but debated considerably over whether securing its own land and building would be advisable in light of the cost and time required as the Soufriere experience had shown.

However, Government made available land for the construction of a pre-school to the former pre-school owner who had closed down in 1994. Negotiations were conducted with the group formed around this issue of the new land available. So it was that in 1996, Happy House's own premises were made available through the initiative of its chairperson, Ignatius Evans, who built the centre and I, who obtained support from the Canada Fund.

The Choiseul Board was never able to secure any land despite the identification of three possible sites. It received money for a small building in 1995 which had to be returned to the German Embassy. Independently, however, one of the pre-school administrators of this Board was able to get land after collaboration with these Boards stopped in 1995. The James Pre-School secured a building with two successive sets of funding. Nor were there any problems with building a new centre on the James Pre-school since the land belonged to Mrs. James. No

attempts were made to get land in Vieux-Fort during the 1992-1995 period. In Grace land was obtained by the administrator from the National Development Corporation. Like in Choiseul, this land was obtained after the cessation of the work with the Boards in 1995.

Work with the Boards ceased because, with the formation of the national association in this same year, attention had to be devoted to its consolidation and other priorities emerged. I could not work both on the Boards and the consolidation and development of the national association at the same time. There was also the question of what emphasis the national group gave to Board mobilization and the accompanying work. I, however, continued to help in the process of securing land.

In all this struggle for land, the Boards played a vital role. They were important in terms of their own political connections. In addition they gave key information and lent their support. In Choiseul, for example, the Board paid three site visits. However, by 1995, there was the beginnings of the recognition that work in early childhood education had to move on to a national arena if it were to take root.

Conclusion

So it was that on July 8th, 1995 a meeting was convened of all these ten Boards. There was an approximate attendance of 50%. This meeting which also focused on a mission statement and objectives for developmentally appropriate early childhood education had an additional important outcome. It was instrumental in the formation of the national association which the Desruisseaux committee had insisted was necessary for the groundings of the work being done.

The mobilization of Boards, training and the acquisition of land and buildings had all helped to turn the limelight on LABCEC's example and encouraged the belief that there was a capacity for more action in the field of community based early childhood education.

This chapter followed up on the history of LABCEC and paid special attention to the mobilization of community Boards and the work done with them. The chapter has also discussed the issue of land, buildings and training for which finance had to been found. It was impossible for these pre-schools to function without taking into consideration the issue of funding. In order to understand how these pre-schools managed to survive, and, possibly, to develop, there is need to turn to LABCEC. One important item is the question of how has the financing of LABCEC managed to keep up this particular institution? Also, what are the financial implications of LABCEC's administration with respect to the other centres on the island?

Community based early childhood education and financing

'The later it is given, the more difficult and lengthy, and hence the more costly, the treatment and the less hopeful the prognosis. So in the event we may well be paying the most for the least effective intervention simply because prevention is not only better but cheaper than cure.'
(Mia Kellmer Pringle, The Needs of Children, 1996, p. 155)

This chapter reflects on the financial bases of early childhood education centres in Saint Lucia. It builds on the fact that the financing of non-statutory early childhood education centres is precarious and inadequate. Further, the chapter reconsiders the role of parents as the main, yet problematic, contributors. It notes that parental contributions are unlikely to furnish the standards of provision hoped for in the 21st century. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how this shortfall might be met: through community fund-raising, through the work of the national association and through the efforts of Government. Overall, this chapter reflects on the role of the community and the nation - rather than just the parents - in support of community based early childhood education.

LABCEC's changing financial base

LABCEC has always been able to meet its financial commitments since its inception in 1983.
From around 1986 LABCEC raised the balance of its income from funding agencies as well as from private individuals and photocopying. There was only a small percentage of individual donations in the first instance. In 1992, for example, LABCEC had only three sources of income - local fund-raising which included in that year private donors from Laborie (12%), parents fees (30%) and grants from funding agencies (58%). By 1998, however, LABCEC received funding from the Pitons Foundation (19%), other funding agencies (35%), parents fees (16%), private donors (11%), a local bank (3%), and other miscellaneous fund-raising such as raffles and photocopying services (16%).

The gradual decrease in the percentage of parents' fees was due principally to the rise of the ratio of adults per children and the resulting increase in salaries. In 2000, as noted above, LABCEC is working hard on increasing the percentage of individual donations from individuals from Guadeloupe and Martinique in the French West Indies. Donations from Martinique and Guadeloupe are going up while funding from the Pitons Foundation has been reduced in 2000 to five percent. These donations from the French West Indies have the advantage of being recurrent unlike that of the funding agencies which are short term.

The precarious nature of fund-raising at a general level

To understand the nature of the financial bases of childhood education centres in general, it is useful to examine the annual budgets of three centres, namely:

- Madeleine Monchery, a centre in a rural area in Jetrine, Saltibus
- Sure Start, a privately owned, urban school with a community Board in the north of the island
- The Laborie community education centre (LABCEC).

ANNUAL BUDGETS OF THREE CENTRES IN 2000 (E.C. dollars)

(One pound sterling = 4.431 East Caribbean (E.C.) dollars)

INCOME

Item	M. Monchery (30 children)	SURE START (55 children)	LABCEC (50 children)
1. Parent fees	$8,100.00 (65%)	$95,100.00 (92%)	$20,500.00 (24%)
2. Other Fund-raising	$4,350.00 (35%)	$8,240.00 (8%)	$64,031.00 (78%)
TOTAL	$12,450.00	$103, 340.00	$84, 531.00

EXPENDITURE

Item	M. Monchery	SURE START	LABCEC
1. Personnel	$9,900.00	$70,800.00	$55,230.00
2. Food Programme	-	$13,200.00	$10,000.00
3. Rent	$2,400.00	$30,000.00	-
4. Telephone	-	$1,440.00	$1,200.00
5. Electricity	$300.00	$2,640.00	$2,500.00
6. Toys	$500.00	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
7. Stamps	-	$300.00	-
8. Premises	$500.00	$600.00	$2,000.00
9. Office Supplies	-	$1,000.00	-
10. Water	$400.00	$1,560.00	$1,500.00
11. Insurance	$495.00	$3,900.00	$2,511.00

12. Audit	-	-	$2,000.00
13. Travel	-	-	$3,500.00
14. Contingencies	$500.00	$1,000.00	$3,090.00
TOTAL	$14,995.00	$127,440.00	$84,531.00
Mean per child per year	$499.83	$2,317.09	$1,690.62

The Madeleine Monchery is a small rural centre where the parents can afford to pay only thirty dollars E.C. per month and where they are unwilling and unable to pay for a food programme. The Sure Start Centre is an urban centre where parents pay $575.00 per term including a food programme. The LABCEC Centre is a rural centre where parents pay approximately fifty dollars E.C. per month and where there is also a food programme. In the first centre, expenditure exceeds income by $2,545.00 or 20%. At Sure Start, expenditure exceeds income by 24,100 (19%) while income and expenditure at LABCEC are balanced.

These centres serve as examples or models, to use this word carefully, of the type of centres existing in Saint Lucia. For most of the centres, like at Madeleine Monchery, parents can meet the cost of food at their own homes. The few high cost urban centres, like at Sure Start, would have no shortfall if adequate buildings could be furnished and maintained by Government. LABCEC is also important as a model. It serves as a model for centres in which there are poor children who presently do not attend any centre and for whom high-quality centres are needed.

Balancing the books at LABCEC involves much juggling and a fear that the juggled balls can fall at any moment. This funding is even more diverse since there are different funding agencies involved. The benefit of diversity, however, is that a wide cross section of the local and related foreign community is given information about quality early childhood education and is mobilized around the communities' children. Links are also built among communities and people.

However, with such a diverse range of funding, there are disadvantages. One such disadvantage is that, in the past, raising such funds has depended at LABCEC on one person, me. My skills in fund-raising and my knowledge of French have been indispensable to balancing the books. However, few communities have such resources - human or technical. LABCEC has partly confronted this issue by seeking to regularise donations - in the form of annual pledges. Nevertheless, the difficulties of fund-raising for LABCEC are so extensive that financing for centres for the poor and low-income such as at LABCEC is a high risk endeavour. It requires, for instance, consideration of Government as the funder of the last resort.

The precarious nature of fund-raising for each centre becomes even more so on a national level when the actual amount of children who attend pre-schools, or who do not attend pre-schools and may need to do so, is taken into consideration. Figures from the Saint Lucian

Government suggest that the provision of three to five years old child care was in 1999:

Non-Statutory centres	4,379 children registered (61%)
Statutory centres	720 (10%)
Children who do not attend pre-school	2,031 (29%)
Total	7,130

(Figures obtained from Government Statistical Department, the Day Care Coordinator of the Ministry of Community Development and the Draft National Policy, Saint Lucia, May 2000).

Parents as the main contributors

With the one exception of LABCEC, the largest part of fund-raising for non-statutory centres comes from parents fees. From the above tables it should be clear the income needed by centres in order to operate within the parameters of quality. Taking the mean of the three centres used as examples above, it would emerge that the cost of education per child in Saint Lucia is approximately E.C. 1,689.00 per year. The Governmental statistical department estimated that in 1999, there were 7,130 children between three to five (Statistical Department, 2000). Quality care using the evidence from the three centres above requires an annual investment of approximately 12 million E.C. dollars.

Of this amount, how much can parents afford to pay? Together with Ramona David, chairperson of NAECE, I visited 30 of the 106 centres on the island of Saint Lucia in 1997. We established their fees, combined them, extrapolated these figures to the national population and estimated that at that time, $5,000,000.00 was being paid by the parents of Saint Lucia for early childhood education and care principally between the ages of three to five years old. Since the 1999 estimate by the Government Ministry of Education notes that there are 4,379 children registered in non-statutory, fee paying, pre-schools, this means that parents pay on average $1,141.00 per year per child.   The balance of funding for quality is, thus, approximately seven million per year as parents are paying approximately five million of the total of twelve million. So, how can the financial shortfall be met?

Community Fund-Raising

In the consideration of the issue of this financing at a general level, there are three possible areas for exploration of funding from the community. One is management of the larger long term funding agencies. Another is funding from local public institutions. Still another is management of donations from private individuals.

As an example, I will use a community based education centre in which I have no longer any systematic involvement but which I have helped to develop. I introduced the administrator of

BANCEC, Alicise Alexander, to the founders of the Pitons Foundation in 1997 which promised and gave long term funding. After two years of helping, I left Alicise to her own devices. Without my help, she has been able to upkeep the funding promised and to double it. BANCEC was thus able to manage one larger long term funding agency.

Also, I encouraged Alicise to write to the local Credit Union, Laborie's local bank and assisted her with drafting a letter. She was able to secure a long term annual subvention from this institution. So funding from a local public institution was secured by BANCEC. Madeleine Monchery in the community of Jetrine has made similar strides in terms of private donor funding from the Pitons Foundation and from the local credit union. The other question of management of donations from private individuals, though reduced, still remains to be realised by these two centres.

Centres also solicit and receive funds from private donors. LABCEC, BANCEC and SOUCEC have proven this can be done. In 1996, BANCEC raised 21% of its budget through funding from private donors while SOUCEC raised 35%. In that same year, LABCEC with a population of 1,300 people was able to realize $7,616. 65 E.C. (or 10% of its budget) in this fashion. It has now been proven that an administrator can handle this programme. In 1996, I was responsible for the LABCEC private donor programme. By November of 1996 I had raised 1,600.00. In 1997 Justina Ernest from SOUCEC was responsible for the programme. By November of 1997 she had raised 3,200.00 for LABCEC and 3,600.00 for SOUCEC. This is double what I was able to raise in the same period and reflected positively on Justina. However, it should be noted that when it came to the more difficult donors Justina was not able to collect. At this point, I had to start my efforts again and was able to collect most of the balance. Thus, administrators could reduce the number of donors targeted and only work with those who are most open to donating and becoming active stakeholders in the centre. The question in 2000 is now convincing administrators that such fund-raising is possible and training them in the minimum requirements for its successful conduct.

It would seem then that coordinating the diversity of LABCEC sources may be dependent on one individual. In terms of the other community based centres, a centre director can increase income by reducing the diverse sources and concentrating on building up the relationship and accounting systems with targetted sources. As has been demonstrated above, some of this shortfall can come from community fund-raising. LABCEC cannot yet be used as a model for this because of the level of the expertise needed. Yet, some ideas for replication can be made available through publications and workshops for example. This started in January 2000. Examples from other pre-schools, such as BANCEC and Madeleine Monchery can be used. As can be seen, if we take the mean from other fund-raising from the centres at Madeleine Monchery and Sure Start, and multiply this by the non-statutory 106 centres in operation in 2000, community fund-raising may be able to raise approximately $667,270.00 recurrent income. This represents five percent of the total amount of twelve million needed for developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Yet, there are some drawbacks to the sustained funding of community based institutions.

Community administrators have not been responsive to fundraising from individual private donors from their community or neighbouring communities. To be fair, they have tried it and experienced extreme difficulties in getting the cash from these individuals. In 2000, they do not have the option of getting donations from Martinique and Guadeloupe, like LABCEC. Their lack of knowledge of the French language proves a barrier. These centres are, consequently, more heavily dependent on other interventions, such as Government or non-Governmental assistance, to fill up the shortfall.

The contribution of a national association

A national non-Governmental association can make up a little of this shortfall. Such an association can, for instance, contribute in the area of toys and books as well as through building construction and building repairs. Yet, this contribution, as demonstrated through the financial contribution of the national association of early childhood educators, is unlikely to exceed more than four or five percent of the cost of the sector in financial terms.

The extent to which a national non-Governmental organisation can help can partly be deduced really from the annual incomes and expenditures of NAECE. In the year ending 1998, Price Waterhouse Coopers firm reported in its audit that NAECE's revenue had been 173, 564.00 E.C. while its expenditures had been 195,044.00 E.C. In addition, during this year NAECE was able to secure direct grants from funding agencies to the centres of a total of 154,885.18 E.C. for this same year. Thus, in its highest income between 1996 and 2000, NAECE secured a total of 328, 449. 18 E.C. This represents just around 2.7 percent of the total cost of developmentally appropriate early childhood education in Saint Lucia. It is possible that through collaboration with other non-Governmental organisations, such as the National Youth Council and the Crisis Centre, for example, this amount could reach four or five percent. However, it is highly unlikely to exceed this amount.

On the other hand, through advocacy and mobilization, the contribution of a non-Governmental association may be vital in helping to raise more of this shortfall that it can actually raise by itself and, thus, ensuring the practice of developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Government's contribution

As noted above, community fund-raising is likely to realise five percent of the cost of developmentally appropriate early childhood education. A non-Governmental organisation can secure at most five percent of the total cost of the sector. Parents' fees can realise about forty percent of the cost depending on support given to the sector by other sources. The contribution of Government to the achievement of developmentally appropriate early childhood education in Saint Lucia, thus, becomes crucial up to the level of 50 percent.

In terms of getting Government to increase its financial commitment, it may be difficult but not impossible in the short term. In fact, from the inception of this sector in 1985 to 2000,

Government has given increases. Even allowing for inflation, this represents a net increase.

Ministry of Education's financial support to Early Childhood Education

Year	Amount given per year	Percentage Increase
1985-1986	$64,797.00 E.C.	
1992-1993	$168,204.00 E.C.	159%
1999	$357,689.00 E.C.	112%

Ministry of Community Development's financial support to Early Childhood Education

Year	Amount given per year	Percentage Increase
1992-1993	$489.257.00 E.C.	
1999	$1,157,280.00 E.C.	136%

Estimates of Saint Lucia and Draft National Policy, May 2000, pp. 29 and 33.

In fact, in 1999, the Ministry of Education gave approximately 30 percent of the parents' contribution of five million E.C. dollars per year to the non-statutory centres. However, the Ministry of Community Development's contribution goes only to its 18 centres which are Government owned or statutory with a total enrolment of 1,325 children. This contribution represents approximately $873.00 per year per child when by our estimate the need of the non-statutory centres is, as noted above, 1,689 per year per child. However parents' contributions to the Government Day Cares bring the total estimated amount spent by them per year per child close to $1,143.00.

The 106 private centres with a total enrolment of 4,379 children receive only the funding of the Ministry of Education which amounts to approximately three percent of the total required by the early childhood education sector (Draft National Policy, May 2000, p. 27) . When the amount spent on the 720 children between the ages of three and five at the statutory centres is added to the amount spent on the children at the non-statutory centres, it will be seen that Government is contributing eight percent of the cost of the twelve million needed for developmentally appropriate early childhood education. Yet, Government's practical considerations should be borne in mind. In a developing country where Government's contribution to education is already 25% of the total budget, where is it going to get more to support an inadequately supported early childhood education system?

In 2000, a minimum of half of the needs of the sector can be met by parents and other sources.

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It is only with Government intervention that parents' contribution can be raised. The estimate is that Government has to contribute a minimum of 50% of the total costs of the private part of this sector. As noted above, it is only contributing approximately eight percent. Thus, bearing the above figures in mind, it is evident that the financial intervention of Government is a necessity, not a luxury, if the financial needs of the early childhood education sector are to be met.

Conclusion

Expenditure on early childhood education and care which is at the roots of the education system is far more financially cost effective to the nation than not doing so. As Mia Kellmer Pringle said 'prevention is not only better but cheaper than cure' (Pringle, 1986, p. 155). And by early childhood education and care is meant also the parents as teachers programme for children from birth to three years as well as small daycare programmes for working mothers who have no facilities for child care for their children.

For the developmentally appropriate care and education of these children, it is estimated that, taking account of the experiences of LABCEC and NAECE, a national system of quality CBCECs for Saint Lucia requires twelve million per year. 40% of this is already raised by the parents, five percent can be raised by the centres themselves through donations and other fund-raising efforts and another five percent by the national association of early childhood educators. This leaves a shortfall of 50%.

The burden of quality education and care is that the financial provision of ECE is insufficient in Saint Lucia. Thus, this chapter is about aspirations and shortfall. How the shortfall is to be made up in the future could be seen as the responsibility of Government as in all countries in the world where there is widespread and developmentally appropriate provision of early childhood education. Yet, an improvement in the Saint Lucian economy, which can be partly realised through investment in education from the start, is one other possibility. In the meantime, the work of LABCEC and NAECE offers part of the solutions to the general problem.

Thus, ends the discussion of the financial sustainability of community based early childhood education centres. I will now focus on the main investors in early childhood education in Saint Lucia - the parents and their children.

Chapter Six

Saint Lucia in context: part one: parents and children

'No woman no cry!' (Bob Marley)

In order to understand the limits to which community based early childhood education can extend, an understanding of the Saint Lucian kinship or in its wider form the Caribbean family is essential. A comprehension of the historical and present changes in family life in Saint Lucia serves as the linking motif in this chapter. This chapter focuses on family life in the Caribbean in general and Saint Lucia in particular. It will focus on the families at LABCEC and their participation in the centre. It will address the changing patterns of family life in Saint Lucia. The data for this chapter were taken from library sources, from minutes after discussions with women in the south of Saint Lucia, interviews from men in Laborie and essays from 7 to 10 year old girls and boys.

Historical Patterns

A grasp of the history in the Caribbean is essential in coming to terms with Saint Lucian family life. According to Beckford, the plantation system was not based on family units. This plantation system was based on sugar and slavery. There is some reference to it in the following chapter. On the contrary the plantation system had the tendency to be 'family-less', the authority of the planter being the only unifying element (Beckford, 1972, p. 76). Beckford goes on to define the family organization as being 'loose' (Beckford, 1972, p. 216). The slave family was loose in the opinion of Kenneth Stamp because the slave woman was firstly a full-time worker and only incidentally a wife, homemaker and mother (Bush, 1990, p. 19). It was, Bush noted, more economically viable to buy slaves fresh from Africa than to promote marriage and healthy patterns of reproduction (in Bush, 1990, p. 33). In Saint Lucia, like most of the English speaking Caribbean, slave families were actively discouraged. In fact, Schoelcher notes that article 10 of a law passed in 1685 authorised slave marriages without the consent of the father and mother of the slave but not without the consent of the slave master (Schoelcher, 1842, p. 171). It was only after the abolition of the slave trade that reproduction began to be promoted. The abolition of the slave trade, thus, implied the promotion of male/female relationships not hitherto encouraged. However, the promotion of male/female cohabitation did not mean necessarily the promotion of strong family relationships. Male/female cohabitation within a slave society often meant encouraging the male slave to be a breeding partner. In the light of this attack on parenting, the black slaves responded by creative versions of their family. In fact, they undid the 'family-less' through their own indigenous Caribbean creations.

Yet, how did the Caribbean man fit into this historical pattern? Historically, the Saint Lucian male was stripped of all responsibility for his women and children. Expressing and holding emotion for them represented in fact an acute danger to the Saint Lucian man physically and psychologically. He could be beaten more than once for leaving his plantation to see his children on another plantation or he could go to another plantation to find them sold. He could be forced

to stand up while his naked wife was beaten by an overseer. Married slave women who were not producing children were locked up in chains at night so that their husbands could go out and seek other women (Schoelcher, 1842, p. 31). In light of these circumstances, the Saint Lucian man's feelings for his women and children went underground during slavery. The Saint Lucian or slave male was deprived of his position of what I would prefer to call negotiation (rather than use the word authority over) with the black female slave. As Blassingname said (1972, pp.154-155):

> Henry Bibb's master forced a slave girl to be his son's concubine. M.F. Jameson's overseer raped a pretty slave girl; and Soloman Northup's owner forced one slave, 'Patsey' to be his sexual partner.

What this meant was that the black man could not occupy his position of male of the family. The white man had control. The result was that the black man was forced to abandon any overt thought of responsibility for the black child and the black woman. It is possible that a part of this abandon of responsibility led to resentment not only of the white man but, unconsciously and inadvertently, of the black woman herself.

Nor was the black man encouraged to marry. According to the French slave law - Le Code Noir - which was in operation in Saint Lucia and issued in 1685, priests could not marry slaves without the consent of the master. The slave laws of the other 'mother countries' held similar provisions, until the end of the slave trade was imminent, when the black slaves were encouraged to breed (Augier, 1960, p. 161).

Yet, black men also refused to marry even when their masters permitted it. When asked why they responded according to Schoelcher using his own words:

> Because we don't want to see our women for some small fault or because of some manager's capricious feelings or because of some smug clerk, delivered to the hands of the driver to be beaten - naked - before everyone on the plantation. (Schoelcher, 1842, p. 76)

Everything, thus, made the black man not crave for long lasting unions. What kind of life was it when mother and father did not have motherly and fatherly rights, when man and wife had no wifely or husbandly duties, where the child could be detached from the family at any age 'like a chicken or a foal which has no need of maternal milk' (Schoelcher, 1842, p. 76)?

Of course, there is the contrary view. Craton notes that Higman asserts that 'family life ...was the norm for the British West Indian slaves...and....the nuclear, two-headed household was extremely common among the African born as well as creole slaves' (Craton, 1991, p. 229). However, this is a new view and not one propounded by eye-witnesses to slave family life. Nor, as a matter of fact, is this view borne out by present data on Saint Lucian family life and Caribbean family life by Haniff and Edith Clarke where nuclear families, although significant, remain in the minority. It is worth noting that Craton based his evidence using material chiefly from the Bahamas a non-sugar, largely non plantation colony (Hall, 1971, pp. 92-96).

Marriage was also a problem to the black slave man historically because he could not marry a slave from another plantation. When a slave man married a slave woman of a different plantation the only time he could visit her was on Saturday evening and on Sunday. He had to return to his plantation at dawn on Monday or else he was whipped. According to Moses Grandy, a slave from North Carolina:

> It happens that after finding all the little presents for his wife and children, after walking for miles to see them he discovers that they are sold. (in Benoist, 1977, p. 39)

Also, Grandy went on to say, the slave who tried to see his wife on another plantation and did not have his masters pass letter could be beaten and chased. If he met a patrol group on his return, he could be beaten again and then maybe beaten a third time (Benoist, 1977, p. 39).

The black man's relation with his children was also severely undermined. Hall notes that small children were sold freely in Cuba. It was even normal to sell pregnant and nursing slaves. Estaban Montejo, a slave born in Cuba, wrote that he never knew his parents. He had never seen them. According to Montejo 'Blacks were sold like pigs, and they sold me at once, which is why I remember nothing about the place' (Hall, 1971, p. 95). Slave Moses Grandy said in 1844 that he knew nothing about four of his children. He did not know where they were nor did he know if they were alive or dead (Benoist, 1977, p. 32). While it is true that Saint Lucia is geographically infinitesimally smaller than the U.S.A, the same pattern prevailed. In Saint Lucia, like in the U.S.A., the slave man did not have access to his children nor could he prevent them from being sold like Montejo describes.

Yet, this is not to deny that for the black man 'the family was one of the most important survival mechanisms. In his family he found love, sexual gratification, sympathetic understanding of his sufferings' (Blassingame, 1972, p. 51). However, undeniably, from the above, it is evident that the family was also for the black man a source of deep felt pain.

Black men, thus, opted for casual liaisons. In Saint Lucia, for example, even today 31% of Saint Lucian men have only one partner compared to 24% with two partners, 27% with between 3 and 5 partners and 17% with 6 or more partners (Haniff, 1989, p. 40). These men chose this option for they were not able to fulfill their male roles in their family. As Blassingame notes:

> Masters, not the black men, determined how much care and attention slave women received when they were pregnant and the treatment that infants received. (Blassingame, 1972, p. 154)

Bolstered then by a system which actively encouraged him to abdicate his responsibility to the black child and the black woman, some black men accepted it passively (Genevoese, 1969, p. 5). However, others fought the system and used all its weaknesses. Marginalized in this role as a father and a partner, they denounced the system (Price, 1979). However, undeniably, the black man was also a victim of this system.

Views of ethnographers and historians

Yet, it should be clearly understood that ethnographers and historians have conflictual views of the importance of history of slavery on the formation and growth of Caribbean family patterns. For Herskovits, the origins of the Negro family were to be found in the African cultural heritage. On the other hand Frazier dismissed this argument by claiming that the disruptive effects of slavery and the plantation system were responsible. Frazier's main point then, was that family patterns could be explained not by the loss or retention of the African heritage but with reference to the changing social and economic conditions of life within America. Echoing Frazier's views from the Caribbean were sociologists Fernando Henriques, Michael G. Smith and Dom Basil Matthews. Matthews claimed that the plantation system produced a 'low grade mentality'. This was reinforced by poor economic conditions and the moral and social ills of the free plantation era and demonstrated in the persistence of 'random' and 'irresponsible' concubinage (cited in Barrow, 1996, pp. 3-7).

Herskovits and those supporting his position stated that although the African beliefs and practices had taken a battering during slavery and the hard years that followed, sufficient had been retained to make a valuable contribution to contemporary New World Negro culture. He said that contemporary family patterns were 'not pathological at all', but reflected 'custom resilience and malleability' in the context of Caribbean circumstances (in Barrow, 1996, p. 8).

One writer with pronounced views on the importance of slavery to Caribbean family life was Patterson. He identified the concept of 'natal alienation' to describe the symbolic estrangement of slaves from their birth ties by slavery conditions. Through natal alienation, slaves become 'genealogical isolates' with no rights and obligations to blood relatives, ancestors or living family members. The slave became, according to Patterson, socially dead (in Barrow 1996, p. 243). However, although Patterson did not discuss the point, he did admit that a large amount of the slaves' activities was 'economically and socially irrelevant to the masters' (Patterson 1967, p. 93). Thus, one had slaves who were symbolically alienated from their native lands and had no social status in their new lands. However, these slaves did control spaces in their lives which their masters had no economic or social interests in controlling.

The general conclusion on the importance of slavery to Caribbean family life can be drawn from Mintz and Price, however. They concluded that although the slave family might have drawn on fundamental cultural principles of African kinship, the particular conditions to which slaves were forced to adapt would have been more influential (Mintz and Price, 1976, pp.34-35). Craton further stressed the way slavery allowed the slaves to shape their family lives rather than how the system controlled them (Craton, 1991, p. 247). Yet it would seem that while Craton and Patterson are in conflict with each other both views need to be accommodated. Slavery had debilitating effects on Caribbean family life, producing socially dead persons. On the other hand, there was a large space in slave life over which the masters either exercised no control or sought to exercise none. It was within this space that the resilience and malleability of slave family life could be expressed.

Contemporary patterns

So, after slavery ended what were the conditions that shaped Caribbean family life? The evangelical missionaries in the pre-emancipation stage and the post-emancipation stage encouraged the growth of the nuclear, married family. Lady Huggins, then Governor of Jamaica, launched an island wide campaign in 1944-5 to marry off consensually cohabiting couples. This had little success (Barrow, 1996, p.10). Clarke was adamant about the fact that the conditions which made it impossible for men to form the roles of father and husband persist in present day Jamaica. She stated that the conditions of contemporary life in the Caribbean provided explanations for the 'unstable' features of family life (Barrow, 1996, p. 13).

In the contemporary Caribbean (as in Saint Lucia), parenting is considered a woman's responsibility. The man is satisfied by the proof of his virility and does not necessarily accept any of the obligations and the duties of parenthood, Clarke stated. Parenthood is generally accepted as the woman's responsibility and there is no public censure if the man does not acknowledge or fulfil this responsibility (Clarke, 1970, p. 96).

However, while men are perceived as being marginal in their roles of husbands and fathers, their role as sons in particular and also as brothers, uncles and others in the extended family are not included into discussion of male marginality. In other words, while men were marginal husbands and fathers they also tended to be very involved brothers, uncles and relevant others in the extended family.

It has been found that within the Caribbean (as in Saint Lucia) a man's most intensive and enduring relationship is the one he has with his mother. It is a relationship of close emotional and material interdependency, first he on her, then she on him. The mother-son relationship constitutes the pivot of Caribbean family structure around which the other family relationships revolve (Barrow, 1996, p.172). Brown added to this when she noted that women 'bring up their sons to remain sons' and neither prepare nor encourage them to enter conjugal relationships (Brown et al., 1993, p.81).

Edith Clarke identified a wide variety of households which could be categorized as follows:

- Nuclear family (married), with husband, wife and children
- Nuclear family (concubinage) households, with mother, father and children
- Extended family (married) with three or more generations
- Extended family (concubinage) with three or more generations
- Nuclear or extended families (married or concubinage) in which the children were of that union or different unions of mother or father
- Single-parent family, mostly single women and their children
- Grandmother households, with grandparents or grandparent and grandchildren of one or more siblings, with the grandmother as head of household even if she had a husband or concubine
- Great-grandmother households, similar in structure to the grandmother household

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- Grandmother extended family, with grandmother, daughter and her children
- Sibling households, comprising adult brothers and sisters
- Single person households, mostly single men
- Single woman households, with children not by blood or by legal adoption.

(cited in Miller, 1991, pp. 67-68)

Besides Edith Clarke, the other classic ethnography of the recent period was produced by Raymond Smith. He identified matrifocality as a 'property of internal relations' in accordance with which 'it is women in their role as mothers who come to the focus of relationships, rather than the head of the household as such' (Smith 1973, p.125). Smith described how during the period of early co-habitation (which may or may not be based on legal marriage) the woman is fully occupied with child-rearing and maximally dependent upon her spouse. However while men contribute to the support of the household they do not participate very much in child-care or spend much time at home. As the children grow older, they gradually begin to drop out of school to help with household tasks or with jobs on the farm and running errands. The woman is gradually freed from the constant work of child-care, and when the children begin to earn, they contribute to the daily expenses of the household. Whereas the woman had previously been the focus of affective ties she now becomes the centre of an economic and decision-making coalition with her children.

Thus, unlike the East Indian households which are culturally and historically constructed with male authority and headship, the black and coloured Caribbean has a tradition of female-headed households, stretching back to the days of slavery. Female-headed households in the Caribbean also predominated during those periods when male migration had a dramatic effect on sex ratios in the Caribbean. Women who head households in the region are, according to Massiah (1983, p. 34) ' the poorest of the poor', the most vulnerable and 'firmly placed among the disadvantaged sections of Caribbean populations.'

One other characteristic of contemporary Caribbean family patterns is that of 'child-shifting'. This is defined as fosterage involving the 'reallocation of dependent or minor children to a household, not including a natural parent' (Barrow, 1996, p. 71 citing Gordon 1987, p. 427). The reasons that the children are moved from one household to another are varied and include the children's desire to live with another person, a person's desire to have a particular child as well as events such as, in particular, the migration of a natural parent or caretaker. Child-shifting, Gordon added, is also perceived as a strategy in response to economic circumstances whereby the costs and benefits of child rearing are relocated among households by shifting children from those less economically secure and less able to support them to those which are better off (Gordon 1987, p. 442). In addition to child shifting, there is also marital shifting with men having multiple partners and women tending to have serial partners.

In addition, kinship practices cross class barriers. Yet there are particularities of each class. Alexander noted that for middle class Jamaicans, conjugal love is the main prerequisite to marriage as an essential ingredient. Yet while the middle class decried lower-class male

irresponsibility, there was a private acknowledgment of its own middle-class male irresponsibility. For all classes, illegitimacy is a fact of life and fundamental to Caribbean family structure (Barrow, 1996, p. 177). For the lower class, however, love is less central to marriage and other criteria, such as social status and colour, not altogether absent from the middle class, begin to carry more weight. Among the lower classes, the value placed on visiting relationships are quite positive. These unions are seen to be free, independent and safe from the dangers of domestic violence (Barrow, 1996, p. 166). Less intensive contact between the partners is conducive to greater harmony and since the relationship is viewed as a prelude to marriage, it does not attract the moral and religious condemnation of common-law living in sin.

Barrow states that the relationship between a mother and child constitutes the core of Caribbean family structure. The bond is close, combining intense love and affection with some fairly harsh punishment. Evidence given by the children in Laborie confirms this statement. With reference to the harsh punishment, it should not be ignored that children in Saint Lucia were brought up to be slaves by profession - if it could so be called a profession - as adults. It was the duty of the female drivers of the child slave gang to 'instruct them to obey orders without question' (Shephard et. al, 1995, p. 159). Children who neglected their task or 'shattered the planters confidence are guilty' (Ibid). They could be subject as adults to the most extreme forms of punishment. A loving mother in Saint Lucia had, thus, forcibly, to be a harsh mother.

There has been condemnation of Caribbean family patterns by many writers as being chaotic, irresponsible and disorganized. Other writers have seen it as a systematic adaptation to historical, and contemporary cultural and economic patterns. According to Barrow, sufficient evidence does not exist to permit characterization (1996, p. 12). Yet, it is evident that Caribbean family patterns are not without pain nor are they inalterably fixed. The information which follows will reveal both the changing patterns in family life in Saint Lucia as well as some of the pain involved in these transformations.

Families of LABCEC

Yet, what do the men, women and children in Saint Lucia have to say with reference to the claims and suggestions of the above writers? Before this can be delved into it is important to consider the characteristics of the Laborian families and those families who attend LABCEC in particular. The mothers whose children attended LABCEC in 1997 were predominantly between the ages of 20 and 30 (51%). 42% were between 30 to 40 years of age. Only 4% were under 20 years of age while 3% were between 40 to 50 years of age. More than 68% of the mothers worked as housewives at their homes. 78% of these mothers had only primary education. 8 out of 29 mothers had 2 children only, 5 had 3 children, 7 had 4 children and 6 mothers had 6 children. These tended to live with other members of their extended family in particular their sisters and their brothers and, next in line, their children's grandmothers. About 57% or more of these women were single mothers. They were discreet about revealing their monthly incomes. In both 1996 and 1997 the average attendance of these mothers at group meetings at LABCEC was 37%. Approximately another 30% of the mothers are reached each year through home visits. To sum up, most families attending LABCEC are single working class families who live in many of

various types of households referred to above.

In terms of the men in Laborie, 33 men, representing a 1 in 20 sample of the men in Laborie, were interviewed. With respect to the ages of the men interviewed, an attempt was made to make the ages of the interviewed men correspond to the ages of men in Laborie. The men in Laborie in general were interviewed as opposed to only the fathers from LABCEC, since men rarely if ever attend group meetings or assist during home visits. Their views however reflect by and large the views of the LABCEC fathers.

4% of the men had more than 8 different mothers for their children. To be clear, each of these eight mothers bore these men one or more children. 4% had between 4 to 8 mothers. The majority of the men - 54% had between 2 and 4 different mothers for their children while 36% had only one child mother. 5% of the men earned less than 200 E.C. dollars or 50 pounds per month. 10% earned between 200 and 500 E.C. dollars per month. 61% - the majority - earned between 500 - 1,000 E.C. dollars or between 110 - 220 English pounds per month. 8% earned between 1,000 and 2,000 E.C. dollars per month while 16% earned between 2,000 - 4,000 E.C. dollars per month.

36% of the men were married. 31% were not married but lived with only one partner while 33% were not married and did not live with one partner. There was an 86% return to the question on the amount of money the men gave to the mothers of their children monthly to support them. 32% gave less than 200 E.C. dollars per month. 14% gave between 200 - 400 dollars per month. Another 32% gave between 400 - 800 dollars per month while 14% gave more than 800 dollars per month. In relation to the question as to whether the men supported all the children from the different child mothers equally or spent more on one child mother there was a 77% response rate. The majority supported all equally. This was 52%. 48% spent more on one child mother while no man spent more on 2 or more mothers who had given birth to his children.

Children's feeling about their parents in Laborie

How do the children feel about their parents? I asked the Principals of the Laborie Girls Primary School and the Laborie Boys Primary School to request the children to write compositions entitled 'How I feel about my mother or my father'. 46 girls between the ages of 9 and 10 and 42 boys between the ages of 7 and 8 wrote compositions on how they perceived their mothers and fathers. Of the girls 24 choose to write about their mother and 22 about their father. Of the boys only 8 wrote anything at all about their father. There were certain ethical questions concerning the children writing these essays. These have been discussed in Chapter one on the research methodology.

Generally the girls were positive about both parents with 110 positive responses about their mothers compared to 33 negative responses. Although the girls were positive about their father there were more negative responses with 114 positive responses compared to 52 negative responses. Mothers received the highest ratings for being jovial and cheerful (18 responses), gentle, kind and loving (17 responses), busy and hardworking (16 responses). Lowest ratings

were received by mothers for being rough (10 responses), likes to beat (4 responses) and being rude to my father (4 responses). One girl said that she wished that her mother would love and adore her father like she did.

Girls gave their fathers the highest ratings for being hardworking (13 responses) and being loving and kind (11 responses). In terms of negative responses, fathers were perceived in failing in the areas of being lazy and drunkards (both 5 responses each).

The boys, being younger, wrote shorter compositions. However they were even more positive about their mothers who received 122 positive responses with only 4 negative responses. It is worthy of note that few boys chose to write about their fathers. One reason for this was probably related to their ambivalent nay negative feelings about their fathers. These boys gave 7 positive replies about their fathers compared to 8 negative replies. Their mothers received the highest ratings for being kind, gentle and loving (37 responses) and being hardworking (25 responses). In the words of the 7 year old boys she makes food, washes dishes, cleans the kitchen and stove, makes the bed, cooks, brings food and cleans the house. The few negative ratings these boys gave their mothers concerned the fact that she likes to beat (only 1 response), she was fat (2 responses), she had no money (1 response) and she lived in an old house (1 response).

As noted, these boys did not have much to say about their fathers. There were 5 responses that the father was kind and 1 responded that the father liked to play with him. Another said that his father liked to bathe him. However the boys complained that their fathers liked to beat (4 responses), they were drunkards (3 responses) and liked a lot of women (1 response).

Other significant replies that the girls used to describe their parents were:

Mother	Father

POSITIVE

Mother	Father
Corrects us when we make errors	Corrects me
Attentive	Cheerful (9)
Caring, comforting	Peaceful
Polite	Caring
Intelligent	Worships God
Attractive (8)	Handsome (9)
Helpful (11)	Helps me with homework
Independent	Honest (5)
Shares	Helpful (6)
Honest (8)	Does not like to beat
Hates beating	Rich
Peaceful (7)	
Reads Bible (8)	

Likes to sing
Happy
Hates the Devil
Tells me Stories
Buys Books

NEGATIVE

Cruel (3)	Lazy (5)
Inquisitive	Thinks he knows everything
Uses obscenities	Uses obscenities
Quarrelsome (5)	Bad attitude
Lazy (3)	Tells lies to my mother
Careless	Careless
Boastful	Smoker
	Greedy
	Careless
	Rough

The number beside the responses indicates when the response was made more than 3 times. All the other responses were made only once or twice.

Mothers

To understand the general concerns of the mothers I will turn to a survey done of 2,000 home visits between the period November 1993 and July 1995. Most of the home visits for Laborie (400 out of the 2000) were paid to the mothers of LABCEC only. The 2,000 home visits were done in the communities of Laborie, Banse, Soufriere, Augier, Vieux-Fort and Choiseul. These are all areas where the concept of community based early childhood education is being developed. The context of the 2,000 home visits was a parents as teachers programme where the mother's role as parent was reinforced, the mother was taught to observe the child and information on child development was shared about social, motor, intellectual and language development. Activities were also done with the child. The Parent Educator then went home and wrote minutes of these visits. It is from these minutes that information has been gleaned. The minutes represent neither a structured nor a clinical interview but represent rather a study where the parent educators managed to understand some of the unique values and social processes of the mothers by taking field notes based on their parents as teachers home visits over one year. From the 2,000 odd home visits with the mothers various themes emerged.

The following table indicates more precisely all the concerns mentioned.

Theme	No. of times mentioned
1. Enthusiasm for program	41
2. Fathers' irresponsibility	39
3. Poverty	30
4. Enthusiasm of children	25
5. Physical punishment	18
6. Emotional abuse	12
7. Parent Educators help	12
8. Drug abuse	11
9. English as a second language	7
10. Children's disabilities	3
11. Misconceptions	3
12. Obscene language	3
13. Reading	3
14. Need for counselling	2
15. Parents unwilling to cooperate	2
16. Impact of religious beliefs On children	1
17. Sexual abuse	1
18. Miscellaneous	5

Following are abridged reports from the mothers through the minutes of the parents as teachers programme.

Fathers assuming responsibility

The parents as teachers programme showed that many mothers are displeased with what they termed as a present lack of responsibility on the part of the fathers.

The fact that fathers were not maintaining their children was a principal concern. Many mothers noted that fathers were not accepting responsibility and leaving the burden of maintenance on women. Quite a few had different fathers for their children. One mother had three different fathers for her three different children. She asked 'Why is it that men cannot accept their responsibilities. They need to be spoken to. Who will talk to them? Will they listen?' A mother noted that her first son's father did not feed him at all. The father, another said, brings something for the child but not much. Another mother noted that she was the only breadwinner. One father, according to the mother, left her to raise the children. One mother said she had five children without a father. She noted she had always been mother and father. She said she wished she could change the lives of her older children because the absence of a father in their lives had changed them for the worse. Another mother bemoaned the lack of support of her child's father. A mother complained that the fathers did not care about the children. She only received money from one of her several fathers. He gave her $30.00 a month. Two mothers said that the children's father was not feeding them and one of them said when she asked the father for the money because she wanted to send the child to school he cursed her. One mother said that the children's father did not feed the children and the only way she earned a little money was through growing a few plants in her garden. Another parent stated she had two children and none of their fathers fed or supported them. One father was not feeding the children but gave them $150.00 for Christmas.

Despite all their complaints, only one of the 120 mothers had taken her children's father to the social welfare court.

Poverty

After fathers, poverty was the next concern of the mothers.

Mothers consistently noted that they had problems feeding their children. One was sick and depressed over financial worry. Another said she did not have a job and could not buy basic things. Two other mothers had to remove their daughters from school because of financial problems. One mother reported that she did not know what food she was going to give her children the next morning.

Housing was a problem for mothers. 5 parents were housed in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions. One parent educator found one family all living together in a small house not fit to accommodate so many people. When the parent educator got there all the children were naked and the mother was sharing food on the floor. A parent educator noted that the house was very small to accommodate such a large family and that the child she visited was always roaming around the home, naked.

Parents asked the parent educators for full scholarships or reductions in school fees. A parent noted she was not able to pay the school fees and had to take the child from school. Another complained of too many bills to pay to send her child to school. One mother noted she had no money to buy books and that her children went to school with exercise books. One four year old

was not able to attend school earlier because of financial problems. A parent was concerned about sending her child to school without food. On at least 20 occasions parents talked to parent educators about a need for reductions in school fees and scholarships.

This poverty led to other problems. A child had a mouth full of rotten teeth. A mother reported that her infirm son's illness was attacking him and that his medicines cost a lot of money and she did not know where she would get this money from. Parents said they wanted jobs. Despite the evident priority given to poverty, only two parents were receiving any help from the social welfare department.

The 1995 Draft Poverty Assessment Report - St. Lucia commissioned by the Ministry of Planning in Saint Lucia confirms that poverty is indeed a concern in Saint Lucia. It notes that 18.7% of households could be classified as poor and that 5.3% were indigent. The level of poverty was deeper in the rural districts including the six communities where the visits were done. Poor families had fewer earners, more children and more persons below working age. They also had higher unemployment and lower labour force participation. This draft report went on to say that many of the services offered by the state to bring relief to the poor were taken up by the most wealthy - such as school meals for which only 37.3 of the poorest quintile benefitted. According to this report.

> The economic difficulties of the early 1990s have created a growing group of new poor, exacerbating the problem posed by chronic poverty, often the result of deficiencies in the social and institutional structure that conspire to keep some households trapped in poverty from one generation to another. Poor housing, limited education, community disorganisation, absence of or indifferent services can reinforce poverty-stricken conditions such that the new poor if unattended will swell the ranks of the chronic poor.
> (Draft Poverty Assessment Report - Saint Lucia, May 1995, Volume 2 of 3, pp. 111-113)

Physical and emotional abuse

The number of times emotional abuse was cited was just under that of physical abuse and it was felt useful to combine the two. Together, the number of times cited make this concern just as important as poverty. It is noteworthy that often this was not cited by the parent educator as a concern of the parents but simply as a fact of their life which was perceived as negative by the parent educators. Again, it is important to situate physical and emotional abuse within its historical context.

Both C.L.R. James and Victor Schoelcher confirm that physical abuse was the foundation on which plantation society reposed. James noted:

> The slaves received the whip with more certainty and regularity than they received their food. It was the incentive to work and the guardian of discipline.
> (James, 1963 p. 12)

Schoelcher concurred by stating that:

The whip is an integral part of the colonial regime. It is its principal agent; the whip is its soul; it is the plantation clock. It announces the moment of waking up and of sleep (Schoelcher, 1842, p. 84).

He goes on to state that the whites were unanimous in affirming that no work was possible without coercion (Ibid). Gordon Lewis clinches this argument when he noted that 'force not persuasion' was the 'midwife'of Caribbean history (Lewis, 1983, p. 15). Not only did slaves interiorize racism but it would be logical to assume that they also interiorized the system of physical abuse. Emotional abuse is the inevitable underface of physical abuse. The slaves were insulted, called names and emotionally abused in multitudinous hellish manners. These abuse combinations are still present in Saint Lucian society.

One parent pelted her children with stones. Another noted that when she was a child she was left without food as a form of punishment. Some parents beat their children severely still, one parent educator noted. One was in the habit of beating her children with wire. A child was beaten because he did not want to go to school. If a two year old picked out the wrong colour on request by the parent educator, a grandmother would hit his hand. A parent recalled that when she was punished her mother would beat her and have her kneel down an hour or two after which she would have to say she was sorry. In one of the six communities, at least one teacher has children kneel for 20 minutes to 30 minutes with their hands outstretched as a form of punishment. Whenever a mother got upset she would beat the older child. The 'man' of one parent beat her up very often. Twice he threw out some of her clothes and asked her to leave, threatening to kill her. One mother stated her child was troublesome and beat him. Another beat her child every time 'something goes wrong with the child'. A parent used a belt on her 3 year old. Another parent's boyfriend beat her. Whenever a child cried, one mother beat him. Another mother lashed her children regularly with a stick.

In terms of emotional abuse, parents shouted at their children a lot. Interestingly enough, because of the programme some parents came to regard this shouting as abuse. One said she sees herself as abusive, especially because she criticized her children's mistakes, called them names and beat them.

Parents reported that they had been emotionally abused as children. One felt her parents did not like her, especially her mother. Another also felt she was not loved by her parents and that this was why she did not do well in life. She felt she had failed by having children for different men and by not being able to support and care for her children. One mother's saddest memories are of her parents shouting and beating. Another mother stated that her own mother made a habit of shouting and beating. One parent felt that her own parents failed her through overprotectiveness and by using the whip too often. Another mother called her child stupid regularly.

The self-esteem of one parent was low and she feels that was because she was abused as a

child. She grew up not liking herself. Even today, she feels she has failed in life. Another parent felt her children's self esteem was low because she criticized them constantly, shouted at them, called them names and never praised them when something was done. She said the programme was helping her to change her behavioral patterns. One parent said her mother had done her something so bad when she was a child she could never tell it to anybody. However, it should not be forgotten that along with this harsh punishment went extreme warmth.

Drug abuse

While the other concerns were prevalent in all six areas under study here, drug abuse seemed to predominate in Vieux-Fort, Augier and Soufriere. One parent educator felt that a parent was so sick she would soon die. The same parent delivered a baby weighing only 2 pounds. The doctor said that she and her baby would die if she had another. This parent became pregnant again. Another child father was a drug addict. Still another father was facing a 1.5 year jail sentence for drugs plus a fine of $2,500.00, or an extra year. Both mother and father of one child spent most of their time in the rumshop, according to the parent educator while the children stayed at home alone. Two other mothers were alcoholics. Another father was on drugs. Still, another mother was on drugs. One mother smoked and when she could not get the money to buy cocaine she raged and shouted at her children. Unfortunately no statistics are available to give an understanding of the wide extent of achoholism and other forms of drug abuse in Saint Lucia.

English as a second language

This was the final concern that repeated itself regularly. 7 children out of approximately 240 spoke only Creole. 3 parents were reported as unable to read and write although the actual incidence is probably higher.

Sexual Abuse

From the inception of the parents as teachers programme in 1991 to 1995 there has only been one reported case of sexual abuse. This case took place in Laborie. In this case the abuse was committed by a stranger although research points to quite the contrary in that the majority of cases of sexual abuse of children is committed by relatives and close family friends. Most of the cases of abuse are, in fact, committed by family members. In this case, the sexual abuse was also linked to poverty. The other parents do not even hint of sexual abuse although one can be sure that the problem does exist. While there is evidence that sexual abuse is present in Saint Lucia, there are no statistics to confirm its actual extent.

Other concerns

The other concerns, appearing relatively few times in the minutes of the parent educators will be dealt with together. In terms of disabled children, one had an eye problem and one was infirm. Some parents held certain misconceptions. One felt that playing in the sand gave children worms. The parent educator explained that clean sand did not do so. Another took her sick child to a

bush doctor only to have her not cured. The child lost half of her weight. She stopped smiling or laughing and her eyes could not even remain open. She could not even stand well. Through the parent educator's advice, the parent took the child to the doctor and the child was hospitalised for 7 days.

There were 3 cases of parents using obscene language to and around children regularly. The parent educators found one of the fathers quarreling and cursing. The parent educator in Vieux-Fort reported that 99% of the parents did not read to their children at all. In fact, in all the communities parents did not have a regular habit of reading to their children. One parent reported she hated reading. The parent educators served as friends, counselors and local psychiatrists. One parent noted she could only express herself freely during the programme. Also, some parents wanted counselling for older children on sex education. One parent never talked to any of her children about sex. The daughter was ashamed of the discussion on sex held by the parent educator and covered her face while the mother put her head down.

Only 2 parents demonstrated negative reactions or criticized the programme. One parent, the parent educator reported, did not have time to follow up and was always playing basket ball. Another parent said that more attention should be spent on the child during home visits and discussions with the parents should be left for group meetings. On one occasion, a parent educator felt that a parent's religious beliefs were so extreme that they prevented the development of good self esteem in her children. Again, on one occasion, a parent educator expressed concern that the TV was distracting one of the children from participating in the programme.

Fathers

Introduction

The 33 men interviewed represented a 1 in 20 sample of the men from the Laborie community between the ages of 25 to 78 years. The interview was a mixture of a structured interview where each subject was questioned in the same way and a clinical interview in which the parent educators probed the subjects through open ended questions for their point of view.

To give a context to the interview, it should be noted that the Parent Educators first discussed the objectives of the Parents as Teachers programme briefly with the men. Next, they read the section on the women's feelings of the men's irresponsibility as fathers. Finally, they read one paragraph of the Jamaican study which suggested that men spent a lot of time in domino bars and rumshops. Then, they began the interview. It is important to note that age seemed to be a factor in the responses of the men. Although there was one incidence of fanatic negative beliefs about women among one young man, most of the men between 25 to 35 years of age tended to be more balanced in their view of the women insisting that despite some inappropriate behaviours of women, they 'loved' them.

Fathers/ General beliefs

By and large men felt that they should be head of the house. There were 12 such responses. One said that the man's role was to provide for and meet all the needs of the family. Another said that the man should be the head because the woman needed a man's help in the house more than the man needed her help. Incidentally, his wife, hearing him, opposed him heatedly. One man used an example from his life to prove that the man should be the head of the house. According to him, his Rastafarian son would have thrown his mother from the house had he not stepped in. In addition, children had more respect for the woman when there was a tough and concerned father in the house.

About 5 men, most of them younger men between 25 - 35 years, thought that the man was not the head of the house. In one's words, 'whichever party is around plays their part as mother, father, counselor, nurse, doctor, teacher and so on.' The other one said that leading the house should be done in partnership between men and women.

Generally there were 11 responses which condemned women who had more than one partner. According to one man a woman who had more than one partner could not think of herself as a respectable woman in the community. Another man posited that a woman who had more than one partner was leading 'a dirty life style'. When she was due to give birth, all the men would withdraw to wait to see who the child looked like when the child may resemble none of them and an ancestor instead. One man went as far as calling a woman who changed men or had more than one man at a time 'a whore'. This behaviour on the part of the woman was considered unhygienic by one man.

Only 3 responses indicated that a minority of men thought that a woman could have more than 1 partner if she wanted. On the contrary there were at least 4 responses from men which noted that it was not wrong for a man to have more than one partner. According to one: 'You might want to taste another meat'. Another said that both might want to 'experiment'. Only one man expressed the view that both partners should have only one partner each .

Men quoted from the Bible to back up their attitudes towards women. Miller views these religious dogmas propounded by the men as a retreat in order to emphasize patriarchal norms. This retreat is, he says, either evident through emphasis on religious traditions or through violence (Miller, 1991, p. 178). According to one man the bible said that a woman was caught in adultery. Did she, he asked, commit adultery on her own or with someone? Another noted that man was supposed to be the head of the house since creation. The Bible was used to support the fact that men could have multiple partners while women should have only one. One man pointed to King Solomon who had many wives and to Jesus who told the women who had many men that he met at the well to go and sin no more.

The Bible was used as a cover up for hatred of women and to justify this hatred. Older men in particular made some statements which could be considered gobbets of fanaticism. As one man said:

Women were made to see misery because since the beginning of creation they looked for it. The serpent tempted Eve. Delilah destroyed Sampson. Job's wife asked him to curse God and die. You have seldom heard of a woman creating something or inventing something. Men do this all. All women can create is trouble.

Again, the Bible was used to defend the position that men were supposed to be the head of the house. According to one man, men would die as the head of the house because not one woman crossed the red sea.

Gideon defeated the 'Midian' with three hundred men and there was not one woman. If Daniel was a woman he would not make it in the lion's den. And after a storm in any community the strong hands of men are needed and not women. So man is and will remain head of the house.

At least 3 responses indicated that men felt that the law was on the woman's side. One of these responses claimed that the law was too hard on the men. Reasons for behaviour formed part of the beliefs of men. One man believed that the three reasons why men did not take care of their children were: 'It cost too much to spend so much for so many years on one human being' or 'Men were not brought up with love' or 'Men do not look at society and see how those who do not have children and do not maintain their children sit by the street corners looking dirty and begging.'

Another reason which one man put forward for the lack of child support was that salaries were small. Still another man claimed that men were not always to be blamed for not supporting children because the fathers do not live with their children.

Still one man gave three reasons why men spent so much time in rumshops and at domino playing. These were peer pressure, frustrations and quarrelsome women. There was a belief by one man that getting a child for a woman was a sign of love. According to him it was not right for a man who had other women not to have a child with them. Another man felt that a woman's 'dirty life style' was responsible for cancer of the cervix. Two men expressed concern for the younger generation. One noted that they were modeling the patterns of their elders. And yet,

'The girls have to learn how to love their bodies and the boys have to learn not to plant seeds when they are not ready to sow them.'

The other man expressed the view that young parents should be educated on family life so that they would take up their task as parents more seriously.

Feelings towards children

Evidently the love for the children was of great importance in the tussle between the women over one man. One man noted that he made sure that he saw his six month old baby once a day at least and he ignored what the mother of his six year old child said.

At least 4 responses indicated that fathers felt they had a responsibility to take care of their offspring. One father noted that children needed to be maintained. He noted that he had children who already had their own children and that he would never refuse them money, once he had it, if they asked him for it. One father stated that men should space their family so that they would be able to support their children properly. 'A living child is worth maintaining'. One father noted that there should be a march especially against men who did not support their children. A father noted that he made it his responsibility to give his children not only food and shelter but love.

A father valued his children's opinions highly. As far as he was concerned he would listen to his children's opinions as to how he should marry. In his words: 'As a man I will stand up for my kids. My own father did not take care of me but I want to be there for my children.'

Haniff made mention that it was her opinion that the men whose fathers had been absent from their lives felt anger towards their fathers (Haniff, 1989, p. 11). Some of those men, such as the man above, evidently try to reverse the situation in terms of their relations with their children and spend much time with their children. Others, on the contrary, repeated their own lived pattern of absenteeism of their own fathers. This absenteeism of fathers is even more important when it is recognised only 40 percent of Saint Lucian men were raised by both parents (Haniff, 1989, p. 10).

One man's conscience was completely free. He said. 'As for me, I will get (from my children) because I made my bed well. Sleep will take me fast.'

Negative feelings towards men

Two men were angry about the behaviour of some men. One noted that these men did not think of themselves as a child who needed food and fertilizer and clothes as the skin of a tree to grow properly, plus water and sunshine free of charge. As far as he was concerned, these men just thought of having sex with women as animals did with animals and then leaving the children behind for the women to maintain. He posited:

Those same men have more love for animals than human beings. If the children were their sheep they would change them to different spots where the grass is greener. If they were cows they would cut grass from them and take water to them. If their woman was a dog with litters they would feed her and buy milk for her. But their own children - they neglect them.

Two men felt that men had other women to build up their masculine reputation. In one's words:

'Men also have lots of women for fame.'

Another man went as far as calling men who did not support their own children 'murderers'. He said he would never have a child outside marriage and not maintain the child. The law, one father said, should force men to maintain their children since 'human life does not survive by air'.

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As for their treatment of women, one man stated that he hated to hear men swearing, using obscene language or beating women. One father felt that men failed when they isolated themselves from the women during pregnancy. The mother took out the rage on the child.

Positive feelings towards women

This chapter has yet to make a brief review of the Saint Lucian woman in her historical context and it is perhaps fitting to put it under the heading of positive feelings. Lucille Mair asserts that the slave society has a leveling power in terms of women and men. The women could do physically and spiritually all that the men could. According to her the woman shared 'every inch of the man's physical and spiritual odyssey' (cited in Bush, 1990, p. 3). During slavery, the common image of the slave woman according to both abolitionists and planters was a 'compound of the scarlet woman, the domineering matriarch and the passive workhorse' (Bush, 1990, p. 5). Slave women were seen as prostitutes who 'submitted to white men for money or clothes and likewise sold their own daughters' (Bush, 1990, p. 17). Many of Saint Lucian men, it will soon be seen, still hold similar views of the Saint Lucian women. And yet, as had been noted, the children love and revere their mothers. Also, some men have clearly positive feelings towards women. It is possible that the resentment of their marginalisation and powerlessness of the men foisted itself on the women as one of the principal backlashes of the slave system. It is also possible that the slave woman was able to retain some power through her child bearing status and her status as the lover of the master, none of which were available to the male. It is equally possible that the physical and emotional abuse to which mothers subjected their children, including their boys, resulted in hate-filled and ambivalent reactions. Nevertheless, it is clear that in spite of all the turmoil and abuse of her life, the black woman emerged with dignity and strength. Bush's book on the black slave women was written to:

> show how, in both her work and her domestic life, she exhibited a
> strength and independence with which she has not previously been accredited.
> Above all, it will record how she struggled, alongside her menfolk, to live, to
> maintain her dignity, to survive and to retain her essential integrity and her culture,
> despite enormous odds against her. (Bush, 1990, p. 8)

Even the title of Edith Clarke's My Mother who Fathered me, 1957, is telling testimony to the retention of the strength and power of the black woman.

There were at least 12 responses showing that men loved and respected women. Again, it is important to note that the younger men figured highly in these positive responses. One man noted that he loved and respected women because he loved and respected his deceased mother. Another said that he would never blame women because he had met one woman who had proved extremely kind to him. She would maintain his children and himself while he worked hard to maintain another partner he had. He insisted that should this woman be in need one day he would always lend her a helping hand. One talked about having a good and close relationship with his present partner. He called his partner kind and loving and said that he planned to marry her soon. This man stated clearly that he loved women. Men, he said, should choose the best women in

society.

Fathers/ Negative feelings towards women

Women's rapacity topped the list in terms of men's negativity of feelings towards them. Women, one man said, were never satisfied with the money you gave them. They did not want to work, another said, but depended on men. One man witnessed women's rapacity through a woman who told him that she preferred to have children with different fathers since when she collected money from each of them she had more than if she had all her children with one father.

Another man confirmed that this rapacity was responsible for women leaving their partners. They never felt they had enough money. 'They say they can't stay too long with a man. They feel better when they move out with another man.'

This rapacity was, one father said, the result of women's lack of understanding. As far as he was concerned women wanted all for themselves. They were selfish since they knew that the man had to maintain all his kids and yet were still not satisfied with the distribution of the financial help. This man said that he was supporting his partner and giving her all he had. He had extended on her house twice in eight years. He had bought all the furniture he could. And yet, his partner still complained about money. This was, he claimed, all because she knew that he had another woman and that he would be spending money on the other woman. Women needed to put themselves in the other woman's shoe so that they would give whatever small financial support to the other woman's child (ie the man's child) if something unfortunate happened to the man one day.

Men's complaints about women's rapacity continued. One man said that his partner went to Social Welfare Department for him because she claimed he was not giving her enough money. However, according to him, his salary was small and he was paying a loan so he really could not give her any more. He said 'all she wants is money from me' since he had begged her to come back and have a reconciliation with him but she had refused. As far as one man was concerned:
'Women do not care about men's commitments. It is money they want. They demand you give it to them. So they make things hard for their men.'

Another man noted that women should understand and remember that half a loaf was better than no bread. This rapacity translated itself into complaints about their houses. According to one man: 'The house is always too small, not furnished enough especially if the neighbours have a bigger and more furnished house.' As far as one man was concerned women had no love for men. They liked you 'for what they can get from you'.

One man claimed that his first partner disappointed him by cheating. He was very hurt because he had loved and adored her like a princess. The lady who he was now seeing had sex with him while he was sharing living quarters with her partner and this same lady. She left the partner and came to live with him. However, he could not trust her since she had cheated on her partner. This lack of trust was reinforced by one woman who denied her children necessities to give her lover money. As far as another man was concerned, his partner knew the child she gave birth to was not

his. However, because she felt that he could maintain the child better, she said he was the child's father.

That this lack of trust by the men of the women resulted in their disbelief in their paternity was mentioned by more than one man. One man said it bluntly when he noted that if the woman was pregnant you had to wait until the child was born to know if it was your child. Sometimes the man could not even say, according to him, because the child did not resemble him. Sometimes the man was lucky and the child looked like him or a close relative. However, sometimes the child looked like other men mentioned in association with the woman. According to one man: 'Women are not something to adore.'

So disturbed was one man by the 'cheapness' and 'slackness' of women's behaviour that he stoned one. According to him, she was one of those women who put their backs down under trees after less than three hours chatting with a man. This was irresponsible, he said. Suppose the man was a thief or had AIDS or other sexual diseases. According to him: 'We go to domino bars or the rum shops when problems become too difficult such as when we get cheated on. So we drink, get drunk and look out for trouble'.

As far as one man was concerned women were too cheap. The more you treated them roughly, the more they cared for you. These same women, according to the man, could be had easily without paying one cent. Women had such low esteem and were so cheap that they would reveal to other people after they separated from their partners that their partners gave them no money. According to this man, this was a secret that they should be ashamed of and not reveal. Women, one father said, had no high self-esteem. They had no pride and dignity. 'The more they see the men with more than three or four girlfriends, the more they give their bodies to them. The lazier they see the men the more they get friendly to them'.

That women were too quarrelsome was not an insignificant feeling among the men. At least 5 responses testified to this. According to one man: 'They always quarrel. They find your jaw too long or they find you are getting too old. All you do upsets them'. Because of this nagging, one man said, women drove men to the rumshops and the domino bars. Women, one man said, were too jealous. They asked you back for the things they gave you if they knew you were going with another woman. In at least 2 responses it emerged that men felt that women wanted to take over. One man said: 'Look at society now. Women are lawyers, doctors and ministers of Government. They even want to become priests.' He cited his own partner as an example. They had built a home together and had three children. However the partner joined the mothers and fathers association and started going out with a father from the association. 'Today she has taken over'.

Glorification of the past could also be seen among at least one of the 22 men. ' Long Ago', he said 'the women would starch, put the clothes in blue and take a day to iron. They would sprinkle the clothes even though it was harder to iron than now as the iron had to be placed on fire. You should have seen the husbands' clothes of long ago. The seams would be cutting'. The women of today, this man went on to say, were lazy. They did not know how to patch a pants (pair of trousers). His own wife took no time to iron for him. Another man chided his partner who did not

take time to prepare his bag when he went to work or to prepare a meal when he came back from work.

In addition, women were too manipulative, according to one man. They used the money or the love the men had for the children as a weapon against the man. In his opinion, sometimes it was, thus, better not to maintain the children so as to have no contact with the woman.

In a fit of anger against his wife who argued heatedly with him in the presence of the parent educator, hatred of women emerged as the man said: 'Women are just a wicked and envious piece of flesh God put on earth.' This hatred of women was to emerge in another man who exclaimed: 'Women are all f...d up!'

Haniff in Male Attitudes, studying Saint Lucian men in general, confirms these attitudes. In her study she noted that 48% of the men she sampled felt that men were superior to women and another 32% felt that men had an edge. While men and women were generally equal it was men who should have the final word. Only 28% of the men surveyed felt that men and women were equal (Haniff, 1989, p. 25). Again she noted that 52% of the men felt that a man should have more than one woman but that a woman should only have one man (Haniff, 1989, p. 17).

Conclusion

The above chapter was relevant to the situation of the children with which LABCEC works in the context of their family environment. In terms of family relationships in the Caribbean it shows a variety of households. Generally, it indicates that almost two-thirds of men and women in Saint Lucia are unhappy about the present state of their relationships for the most part. They are groping to restructure acceptable relationships to both. As for children, they seem confused as to the role of their fathers, some of whom still have to take the leap from the slavery era and redefine their role in the family. On the contrary, children revere their mothers. It is now important to look at another context - that of Saint Lucia itself and to try to situate it within its geographical, economic, social, cultural and political realities.

Chapter Seven

Saint Lucia in context: part two: profile of Saint Lucia

'The West on Trial' and 'The Groundings of my Brothers' (Titles of books by Cheddi Jagan,1975, and Walter Rodney,1990, of Guyana)

The titles of the books in the epigraph contain the story of Saint Lucia within the Caribbean. They relate to the questions of how the West underdeveloped the Caribbean Countries and the attempts of these countries, like Saint Lucia, to ground themselves in their social and cultural specificities.

Saint Lucia is situated 145 kilometres to the north-west of Barbados, about 4,183 kilometres from New York and 6,759 kilometres from London. Located in the Windward islands in the English and Creole-speaking Caribbean, it is a mountainous island, one of a chain of volcanic islands in the Eastern Caribbean in the Windward Islands. Saint Lucia is situated between Martinique in the north and Saint Vincent in the south. It is approximately 616 square kilometres, one and half times the size of Barbados and only smaller than Dominica in the chain of Windward Islands. From north to south, Saint Lucia is 42 kilometres while from east to west it is 22 kilometres at its widest point. As all the other Caribbean islands, Saint Lucia is subject to hurricanes. Each year, the hurricane period starts in June and ends in October.

The precise date of the discovery of Saint Lucia is still under debate. However, the very notion of discovery is being questioned. Can the Europeans have discovered an island already inhabited by the Amerindians? The Amerindians were either killed through war, disease or suicide, for example, or were integrated into the general population. There are at present no full blood Amerindian communities existing in Saint Lucia.

Saint Lucia was first colonized by the French. It changed hands between the English and the French fourteen times. It has been nicknamed 'The Helen of the West' because of this. Soufriere was the first town established in Saint Lucia by the French in 1746. In 1787, Saint Lucia had 140 plantations of different production types which had been abandoned by their planters compared with 459 cotton plantations, 313 coffee plantations, 150 cocoa plantations and 73 sugar plantations. There followed a tendency towards reduction in land use. By 1897, only four and a half percent of the arable land was cultivated. Most of this was under sugar cultivation (West India Royal Commission report, C8655, 1898, p. 206).

From 1763 to 1874, the plantations were autonomous, each representing a little state in the tiny state of Saint Lucia. However, they depended on the outside for food, clothes, equipment and other commodities including labour. Without their exterior links the so-called 'autonomous' plantations would have crumbled.

The social relations that developed under the plantation system were peculiar. As noted,

C.L.R. James stated that the whip was the soul of the plantation (1963 p.12); and Gordon Lewis remarked that force and not persuasion was dominant in Saint Lucia (1983, p.15). The result could be seen in the relations between men, women and children in the Caribbean. They were victims of the slave and sugar system in terms of social and emotional abuse. However, they also shaped their debilitating environment as much as the system permitted them to do so. Slavery was abolished in Saint Lucia in 1834.

The eagerness of the ex-slaves to leave the plantations and to establish themselves independently led to the introduction of Indian immigrants. However, the unavailability of land in this small mountainous island curtailed the number of Indian immigrants introduced. In 1891, it was estimated that 2,523 Indians had been imported in Saint Lucia. This immigration ceased at the end of the 19th century, the last group of Indians arriving in December 1897 (West Indian Royal Commission, 1897, p. 354).

In the 1870s it became evident that the plantation system could no longer survive because of such factors as competition from larger, more fertile sugar producing countries as well as the need for technological modernisation of the sugar industry in Saint Lucia. Central factories were established. Plantations producing their own sugar disappeared to become simple suppliers of raw cane to the central factories.

The central factory system could not survive competition from larger cane sugar producing countries or from beet sugar producers. Nor could it survive inadequate technological progress or the second world war which heralded the establishment of an American air base which became a rival with the Vieux-Fort central factory for wood and labour, for example. In 1942, the central factory which had replaced the individual plantations was shut down in Vieux-Fort. The central factory system was terminated during the 1950s in the rest of Saint Lucia. The ex-cane planters decided to experiment with other crops including lime until the sugar monoculture was replaced by the banana monoculture in the 1950's.

The population of Saint Lucia grew by 20 percent to 135,685 in 1991, from 115,252 persons in 1980. Since 1970, the population has increased at a rate of approximately 1,500 persons per year. This population is composed mainly of people of African descent but there are important minorities of Indians and a significant number of persons of mixed ancestry. The majority of the population is made up of persons less than 50 years of age. From 1911 to 1986 the population change has been positive. Despite an infant mortality rate of 20.1, the birth rate was 26.1 in 1990. Life expectancy is 69 years for males and 74 years for females (Adrien, 1996, p. 6).

The city of Castries and its environs are home to 39% of the population. Castries, as the capital, exercises a certain dominance over the commercial, economic and political life of the country. The main port, and the most heavily trafficked airport are in Castries, and so also are the seat of Government and the central administrative structure. A number of satellite communities have developed around Castries, like much of the tourism infrastructure and the supporting residential population. Other conurbations of some importance are Vieux-Fort and Soufriere in the south and south west of the country, respectively.

The establishment of industrial complexes in the Castries environs and in Vieux Fort has influenced recent geographical distribution of the population and has modified the settlement pattern. There is a good network of roads which link most communities and villages to important population centres. However, a minority of villages are difficult to access and may be inacessible during the rainy season from July to December.

In 1979 the island was granted full independence. A two party system, in a bicameral legislature, guarantees the right of all citizens to be represented in the affairs of the country. One party was in power from the post-independence politics except for a period of opposition in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, the ruling party was replaced in 1997 by the formerly opposition Saint Lucia Labour Party led by Dr. Kenny Anthony. There still does not exist a system of representational politics at the local level, and the existing councils are comprised of a nominated system, nominated by the Ministry of Community Development. The Local Authorities Ordinance 1947, which provided for the establishment of local authorities for towns and villages has been so modified in effect, that very few of the original functions still reside with the local authority.

Saint Lucia is a highly open society that is exposed to the influence very directly of the North Atlantic. Its mass media and air waves are dominated by those of the United States. Since the last century, it has contributed to migratory flows from the Caribbean to Central America, to Britain after the second world war and to North America since the 1960s. The society is exposed to the spread of the drug culture. Saint Lucia, like so many other Caribbean island States, is seen as an easy trans-shipment point in the international drug trade and, more particularly, in the conduct of the trade between South American supply sources and demand in the North American sub-continent. Saint Lucia is not only a trans-shipment point but is now a market, as a substantial number of young people fall prey to the drug culture. There are also signs of increase of violent crimes which always accompanies the expansion of the drug trade, as agents engage in turf wars.

As an open dependent economy, exports and imports make up a high percentage of the GDP of Saint Lucia. Between 1985 and 1988 the economy grew at an average rate of 5.5 percent. In 1987 GDP at constant prices amounted to EC$237.7 million of which agriculture and tourism contributed 37.4 percent and 18.10 percent respectively. The trade deficit was at a high of EC$283 million, but the inflation rate was at a low of 0.82% (Adrien, 1996, p.8). Exports are comprised of a limited range of output of goods and services, in this case, of bananas, light manufactures and tourism services. The Government is a dominant actor in the economy and derives most of its revenues from indirect taxes on trade and commerce. The agricultural sector is the largest single employer of labour in the country. Much of this employment is attributable to the banana industry. There has however been a steady declining output of the banana industry due mainly to competition from larger South American producers. Although the unemployment rate is estimated at 20% to 35% of the labour force, it is probably nearer to 35% or 40% if the large number of people who are underemployed is included.

Now I will look at the village of Laborie where this project was initiated. In the last census taken in 1991 the village of Laborie had a population of 1,304 persons in the entire island of Saint

Lucia which had 133,308 persons. Thus, Laborie has a percentage of .9 percent of the total population. 1152 out of a total of the 1,304 persons were Roman Catholic and 1,210 were of African origin with only 80 persons of mixed race. 536 adults had never been married while 202 persons were married. 230 of the total family units of 321 owned their own homes. 116 of the total of 321 homes used septic tanks with flush toilets while 136 homes still used outdoor pit latrines. 209 homes had electricity while 97 homes still used kerosene for lighting. 202 out of 321 homes utilised gas as their main form of cooking fuel and 101 homes used coal mainly. There were 234 indoor kitchens compared with 87 outdoor kitchens. Counting the children between birth to nine years of age, the average number of children from three to five who could attend pre-school was 78 (Saint Lucian Government Statistical Department). More than half of these children were registered at the Laborie Community Education Centre (LABCEC). At LABCEC, these children engaged in developmentally appropriate early childhood education which was applied progressively. I will now focus on this early childhood education at LABCEC.

Chapter Eight

Bricolage: The development of early childhood education at LABCEC

High quality pre-schools create dispositions, habits and skills in children which help them to succeed in school and life. In other words good pre-schools help children develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, creatively and spiritually. These dispositions include those of curiosity, friendliness, cooperation, trust, independence, initiative, responsibility and divergent thinking. They also include honesty, perseverance, respect, compassion and giving. (SPICES curriculum, SERVOL and LABCEC with the matrix being L. Schweinhart, H. Barnes and D. Weikart, Significant Benefits, 1993, pp. 18 and 227)

This chapter posits that my struggle to keep LABCEC on the road was the genesis of LABCEC's pioneering work in community based early childhood education. Major breakthroughs which followed included the decision to do my doctorate, ironically enabled through colonialism within the facilitating British culture. One important breakthrough was the fact that, in 1996, I started to work at LABCEC and NAECE full time after 16 years of sharing my time between LABCEC and secondary school teaching. Another was the transcendance of the work of ancient and modern early childhood education pioneers and theorists who I studied and with whom I interfaced. Early childhood education at LABCEC developed from intuitive and hurried perspectives through observation, interviews and clinical testing with all community stakeholders, especially the children. LABCEC in 2000 is in the process of becoming an early childhood centre of excellence which forms a bridge between the developed and developing world and within the third world.

A set of eight educational ideas which LABCEC has come to admire to will be discussed in the next two chapters. These ideas are the product of a bricolage which I undertook for LABCEC. As such, it has produced what Denzin and Lincoln state as, 'a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation' (1998, p. 3). LABCEC is proud of this bricolage especially within the context of its pioneering in the area of community based early childhood examples for which it can offer both practical experience and theoretical explanations. When new tools have to be invented, as a researcher-bricoleur I carry out my role. LABCEC is always reformulating its thinking and practices in the light of its experiences with ideas from outside Saint Lucia.

It is important to note at this point the major pioneers and theorists in the field of early childhood education.

Major pioneers and theorists for the field of early childhood education have been:

Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827)
Wilhelm Froebel (1782-1852)
Rudolph Steiner (1861-1925)
Maria Montessori (1869-1952)

Margaret McMillan (1860-1931)
Susan Isaacs (1885-1948)
Jean Piaget (1896-1980)
Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)
Mia Kellmer Pringle (1920-1983)
Erik Erikson (1902-1994)
Jerome Bruner (1915-)
David Weikart, High/Scope (1931-)

It should be noted that, in terms of the impact of contemporary pioneers, work done by High/Scope has particularly attracted LABCEC. The High/Scope approach was originally developed to serve 'at-risk' children. In 1962, David P. Weikart, founder of High/Scope, initiated the Perry Pre-School Project. This was a longitudinal study which studied the lives of 123 Afro-American children in Ypsilanti, Michigan, U.S.A. from age three to age twenty-seven. In fact High/Scope is one of the few - if not only - modern institutions in the English speaking world which is of both a deep-rooted pioneering and theoretical interest.

Practice at LABCEC, together with interface with the above pioneers and theorists led to revisions in implementation. In turn, this lent itself to the the eight ideas to which LABCEC now adheres. These eight ideas are the culmination not the origin of LABCEC thinking. They are however used as devices to structure this argument since the originating ideas had few structures that held them together.

It is important to note that none of the pioneers and theorists above support and/or have developed detailed rationales in support of all of the ideas to which LABCEC now presently adheres. High/Scope has developed six of the eight ideas cited in these two chapters, for example, while Piaget has focused on only three. Many of the other pioneers and theorists have only supported one of the ideas in these eight themes. In fact, there are only two ideas for which broad based consensus among pioneers and theorists could be reported. These relate to self-discipline and community based management. For the latter idea, however, the pioneers and theorists have tended to focus on parents instead of the wider community. Yet, while High/Scope, for example, did not highlight self-discipline as one of the characteristics of good practice, all of their work leads to this conclusion. In fact, High/Scope's own characteristics for good practice are, in fact, appropriate within its cultural context but would need some extension within the context of developing nations. These two chapters offer, among other explanations, such extensions.

The ideas below should then be seen as the result of LABCEC's own bricolage. These eight ideas or themes may not only become relevant to Saint Lucia and the wider English speaking Caribbean but to all developing nations which would then need to elaborate their own perspectives. Equally important, these eight ideas may also be applicable to at-risk communities in developed nations with particular reference to those such as England and the U.S.A. where early childhood education is not a universal and Government-financed institution.

The second set of four ideas will be discussed in the following chapter. The first four ideas

discussed in this chapter are:

1. A knowledge of children's growth and development is vital for the schooling of the child
2. Children learn through their own action and interaction with capable peers, adolescents and adults
3. Affectivity and cognition are inseparable
4. An integral characteristic of early childhood education is that it should be community based.

A knowledge of children's growth and development is vital for the schooling of the child

Initially, LABCEC did not acknowledge fully the importance that a knowledge of how the child grows and develops both within his or her culture and on a universal basis is vital for schooling of the child. The fact that the study of the ancient and modern pioneers and theorists had not yet taken place rendered this particular idea a shaky one in the beginning stages. The knowledge of how the child grows and develops was taken from the combined experiences of the Board of LABCEC in particular. My own unique cultural beliefs also formed a basis of the knowledge of how the child grew and developed along with intermittent readings of practitioners in the field. These beliefs then interfaced with those of the staff and sometimes clashed. The Board with its composition of some influential power brokers in the local society, had a distinct idea of how children at LABCEC could best develop within their own culture. However, a study of how the children grew and developed on a universal basis was never fully done until my doctoral studies commenced.

And yet, there developed at LABCEC, a recognition of the importance of this idea. This development was not due to the pioneers and theorists. Rather, it was based on instinct, experience and readings from the educators who had been influenced by them. As time went on new ideas, some of them transient, started to add themselves on to the initial ideas that shaped LABCEC on its formation in 1983. The first new idea which appeared did so in around 1986 when I first visited SERVOL in Trinidad. SERVOL which means Service Volunteered for all was founded by a revolutionary Catholic priest and a cricketer in the West Indian team. They initiated their work by listening to people in the slums or Trinidadian ghettos or 'yard'. I came away suffused with meeting Father Gerard Pantin, founder of SERVOL and armed with this organization's curriculum - SPICES - which supported the child's total development in the order the letters appeared - socially, physically, intellectually, creatively, emotionally and spiritually. I liaised with Father Pantin who sent Marcel de Govia to evaluate the programme at LABCEC. It was the beginning of a highly creative friendship. One of Marcel's suggestions was that the then teacher-in-charge of LABCEC should be trained by SERVOL which kindly paid the full cost of this training. SERVOL would train for us three other such teachers between 1992 and 1993, two of whom still work or are involved in early childhood education in 2000. One main idea which came from this association with SERVOL was the one that early childhood education should cater for the development of the whole child.

Before going to SERVOL in 1986, I had already believed that (1) early childhood education should cater for the development of the whole child and that (2) this total development should be based on the needs of the children. Armed with these two beliefs, LABCEC had already integrated into its curriculum such topics as:

- Physical development (Gross motor and fine motor development)
- Intellectual Development (Reading Key vocabulary, Reading Free talk, Preparatory Phonics, Phonics, Pre-writing to Writing)
- Pre-Math to Math
- Concept Formation (Classificational and Relational)
- Practical Life Exercises
- Art
- Choice Activities.

Activities for physical development were culled from a workbook devised in Haiti. These activities were accompanied by expressive, simple drawings which Joanne Joyeux, one of the earliest teachers of LABCEC and a good artist, gracefully copied in Saint Lucian fashion. Fine motor development like the Practical Life Exercises was based on two books inspired by Maria Montessori's work. Concept Formation was based on work done by Nimnicht (1969 and 1987) while the Pre-Math to Math was based on a book devised by North American teachers from the U.S.A. and now irretrievable. Reading Key vocabulary, now called key talk, was inspired by the work done by Sylvia Ashton Warner (1963) in New Zealand. References for the free talk topic were borrowed from the Central Library in Castries. This book is also irretrievable. Work on phonics was inspired from Hughes (1972).

These topics were extended during the period from 1983 - 1986. They all became integral part of the curriculum of LABCEC since experience with the children proved that they were worthwhile topics for inclusion. Choice activities also became an integral part. Choice activities is also called work time or free activities and involve the children's initiated activities which they choose to do from the activity corners provided. The decision to do choice activities came both from experience with the children as well as from reading various professional educators internationally and locally.

After my visit to SERVOL in 1986, these topics were expanded considerably. Added were:

- Social Development (social training and social studies)
- Science
- Emotional Development
- Spiritual Development.

In addition to this a LABCEC curriculum was actually written up in 1991. It did not include choice activities or free play although this continued to be an integral part of LABCEC's work during the day. The low level of attention to choice activities and the concentration on the implementation of activities through themes have been the only two areas of SERVOL's work

which have disturbed me somewhat (Note that in 1999 through interface with High/Scope, SERVOL has pulled choice activities 'three-quarters up the ladder' in the words of its principal child development trainer - Carol Hislop Moore). So much so that I stated to the LABCEC's teacher leaving for training at SERVOL that the theme based approach should be discarded at the end of her training. Likewise choice activities should be kept. Choice activities is the provision of a choice of activities available for the children. Choice activities has been termed free play by some, individual activity by others, work time by High/scope and can even be known as action time. Children have been known not to choose any of the choice activities available and to invent their own schemas of imaginative play. I did manage to insist that this teacher should keep doing choice activities. Unfortunately, theme based teaching made her comfortable and she would not abandon it. Nor was I yet armed with the information which might convince her to do otherwise.

Interface with modern pioneers and theorists would confirm my reticence over themes. I have read at least three references which caution against their use. In a letter to me, dated 3rd November, 1977, Professor Weikart validated this caution by noting that themes tended to be too teacher oriented rather than child oriented. In her comments on this chapter in 1998, Margy Whalley of the Pen Green Centre of Excellence in Corby, England, noted that this Centre stopped using themes around 1991. In her opinion, teachers liked themes but that themes were fairly irrelevant to two to five years old. Margy Whalley noted that it worked much better to start from the children's deep interests. Tina Bruce, early childhood education writer and university lecturer in the U.K. would, in her comments on this chapter in 1998, express total agreement with Margy Whalley. She noted that it was better if adults could know about children's needs by knowing about children's development and match it to curriculum activities.

LABCEC has handled this problem by confining themes to one term of six terms of work between the ages of three to five. It has gone further than this by confining the themes chosen to key themes. By this I mean that the themes should come from the organic or key words (from their deep interests) which the children choose regularly. In fact, in 2000, there is no time left on the timetable to accommodate the teaching of key themes. The continuation of the use of key themes for one term out of six will depend on the results of experience and research.

In terms of the idea that a knowledge of children's growth and development is vital for the full development of the child, what reading Piaget in particular did was to help validate and extend considerably what LABCEC had already been doing for children at the so-called sensori-motor stage. As noted, it is equally possible that the knowledge of the stages defined by Piaget was gleaned from studying the books of practitioners themselves from whom the curriculum topics were developed - practitioners who had themselves been influenced by Piaget.

In terms of the subsequent pre-operational stage of child development, reading Piaget served not only as validation but has also served to make me question whether adequate time on the timetable is given to Language Arts especially within the local Creole language culture environment which also surrounds the children. However, again as it turns out, Piaget's research in language development again validated and extended a process already begun at LABCEC.

It was, thus, from a study of the early pioneers and theorists and from the interface with the modern ones that LABCEC would emerge from its creative gropings. In terms of knowledge of child development in general, Piaget stands out compared with pioneers and other theorists. This may mainly be because of the fact that whereas the pioneers based their work on observation and experience which are important in their own right, Piaget, like Vygotsky, used all three parts of scientific testing - observation, interviews and clinical testing - to explain and illustrate his beliefs. Through his interviews and clinical testing Piaget was different from other pioneers athough he was often inappropriately judged. As Bruner noted:

> Piaget, however, is often interpreted in the wrong way by those who think his principal mission is psychological. It is not. It is epistemological. He is deeply concerned with the nature of knowledge per se, knowledge as it exists at different points in the development of the child. (Bruner, 1966, p. 7)

From his research, Piaget concluded that mental growth was inseparable from physical growth or from emotional and social growth. In order to understand mental growth, he stated, it was not enough to start with birth. The preperceptive behaviour of the fetus was of vital importance (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969, vii). In fact, they stated that 'orientations or comparisons of a global nature make their appearance in the very first weeks of life' (Ibid, p. 43).

It was Piaget's conclusion that sensori-motor intelligence lay at the source of thought and continued to affect the human being throughout life through perceptions and practical sets (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969, p. 110). Sensori-motor intelligence was only concerned, he noted, with responses 'actually carried out on real objects' (Ibid, p. 121). Although the child lacks the symbolic function during the sensori-motor period, that is the child cannot evoke persons or objects in their absence, the child's mental development for the first eighteen months of life was of particular importance for it was the point of departure of his later perceptive and intellectual development. It was also the point of departure for a number of elementary reactions which determined his following affectivity (Ibid). At the end of this period, the child developed a function fundamental to later behaviour patterns. This was, Piaget stated, the ability of representation such as 'a signified something: object, event, conceptual scheme etc' (Ibid, p. 51).

There were, Piaget stated, four principal periods following the sensori-motor period. After the appearance of language or the symbolic function which made its acquisition possible, there was a period lasting to almost four years which encaptured the development of symbolic and preconceptual thought. This period just following the sensori-motor one is extremely important to LABCEC since it encapsulates the pre-school stage involving the majority of children at the centre.

The behaviour expressed in this stage Piaget called verbal. Unlike the sensori-motor patterns which are obliged to 'follow events without being able to exceed the speed of action, verbal patterns, by means of narration and evocation can represent a long chain of actions very rapidly' (Piaget, 1969, p. 84). Whereas immediate space and time limit sensori-motor adaptations, language allows thought 'to range over vast stretches of time and space, liberating it from the immediate' (Ibid). While the sensori-motor intelligence proceeds through the means of successive

acts, thought, especially through language, can simultaneously represent all the 'elements of organized structure' (Ibid).

As noted, the period just following the sensori-motor one, called the pre-operational stage, is crucial at LABCEC since more than 90% of its children are in this stage. Thus, I have devoted some attention to it. From four to seven or eight there was the development of an intuitive thought leading to the threshold of operations.

In fact, Pringle suggested some children never reach the level of formal operations. This inability to reach this level resulted, she said, in the breakdown between the link among language, thought and behaviour habitual in working class homes. Since in many such homes there is use of simpler, less individualised language

> small or subtle differences between objects, people and situations are ignored; also, the nuances of wishes and feeling will be more difficult to convey with more restricted speech. In consequence, children will grow up less sensitive to their own emotions and those of others; less able to distinguish the finer shades of meanings; and in their thinking they may well remain at the 'concrete' level..... (Pringle, 1996, p.49).

The idea that children who grow up in homes where simpler, less individualised language is used may never be able to develop to the level of formal operations offers great food for thought and exciting possibilities for research. Margaret Donaldson lent further weight to Pringle's research based work when she noted that the main symbolic system that the pre-school child had access to was oral language. The pre-school child's first step was to conceptualize language 'becoming aware of it as a separate structure, freeing it from its embeddedness in events' (Donaldson, 1987, p. 88). This would confirm Pringle's statements that where the language was too simple and not individualized enough, the child could very well not reach the level of formal operations.

While acknowledging great debt to Piaget, Donaldson would also challenge other of his concepts. I would, however, prefer to use the word extension rather than challenge since the foundation blocks of Piaget's work become altered but emerge substantially intact from both Vygotsky and Donaldson's extensions. In Donaldson's view young children were capable of higher thinking skills if the context is appropriate. Research done by Piaget, she stated, included contexts and ideas that the children were incapable of relating to and thus could not answer. She stated that one conclusion drawn by Piaget was that the child lacked the ability to see his 'own momentary viewpoint as one of a set of possible viewpoints, and to co-ordinate these possibilities into a single coherent system, so that he understands the ways in which the different perspectives relate to another' (Donaldson, 1987, p.20). Donaldson then concludes that children who made egocentric responses to the specific 'mountain' questions posed by Piaget did not fully understand what they were supposed to do. When they were presented with a task that they did understand and which was rendered more simple in the question asked of the child - 'he must decide *what* can be seen but not exactly *how* it will appear' (Ibid, p. 23) - the child and the adult were less different in this respect than Piaget indicated. Donaldson's work, like other recent work, drawing on

Vygotsky, challenges the notions of stages but not of development.

Before interfacing with early and modern pioneers LABCEC could find no complete theoretical validation for its emphasis on choice activities. Yet, the children continued to have choice activities or free play. Lack of experience, theoretical knowledge and ideas sharing with centres of excellence meant that bedlam would sometimes be the result. However, with the explanations offered by High/Scope on the importance of choice activities - they called it work time - itself based on Piaget's work and along with my own interface with Piaget with his epistemological explanations of knowledge as it exists as different parts of the development of the child - the cycle finally became fairly complete for LABCEC in terms of its curriculum. Yet, even in 1999 important changes were made with reference to the small group time or structured activities to accomodate revised versions of literacy and numeracy. These changes were made due to interface with early and modern pioneers and through LABCEC's own experience, research and reasoning.

Language already given importance was refined. Language Arts has key talk and individual storytime every day. Language Arts or Emergent Literacy takes up five (5) of the 14 structured 20 minute activities (including four story times) of the two and a half to four years old while it occupies 19 of the 30 structured activities of the four to five years old. It can hardly be more. It may be too much. This needs to be determined by experience and research.

An integral component of the concept that a knowledge of children's growth and development is vital for the schooling of the child is the need to use and foster this development through a developmentally appropriate - thus also culturally appropriate - curriculum which is based on this knowledge. Key words as researched by Sylvia Ashton Warner and extended by LABCEC is an essential part of the curriculum for Language and Literacy. I have heard doubt expressed in conversation with an early childhood education worker in Great Britain about whether two to five year old children can identify words. LABCEC's research has proven that they can identify words - if encouraged - but more so when these words are indeed key words or their own words or their organic words or words which correspond to their deepest interests. As Freire suggested it was important that the participants in a process read their words and world (1987). In this case, the participants are children from Laborie. For instance over a total of approximately 670 words were collected during the space of one term. These words were collected at LABCEC by the teachers for some preliminary research on the children's choice of words in Laborie. It was found that eleven of them were words which recurred more than six times. Such words were fish, car, cow, goat, mummy, daddy. These words were made into pictures. A group of three children - two girls and a boy - were then asked to say something about the words - Give me a sentence. These key words are done under the small group time activity of Language and Literacy.

As part of Language and Literacy, LABCEC has not reflected and acted on the role of Creole in its education system adequately. This lack of reflection was largely due to the fact that few if any children in Laborie speak Creole as a primary language. Yet, what was done at LABCEC was that great emphasis on language arts was placed in the structured part of its

activities. This seems to have solved its childrens' problem of coping with two languages as part of their culture for most of them pass the 11 plus examinations or common entrance examinations where proficiency in English is necessary for success. LABCEC now has to address itself to the minority of students who do not pass the 11 plus. We are doing this by emphasizing language and literacy and numeracy within an action oriented setting. These two activities play an important part in the academic oriented Primary School in which the children will also prepare their 11 pluses. Involvement of parents through home visits in activities such as storytelling and numeracy is another avenue.

Yet, perhaps, LABCEC could do more in terms of the integration of the Creole language in its curriculum. There are two staff members at LABCEC who are primary Creole speakers. Yet, they are reluctant to speak Creole to the children. They do this within the confines of a culture which abhors Creole speaking to children with the opinion it would prevent these children from speaking, reading and writing English in a standard fashion. Yet, my first child was born in this culture and speaks English, Creole and French, all well. It would take a combination of education of parents, commitment of Board members to get these two staff members to change their mind and speak Creole to the children. While it would not be appropriate to teach Creole to the Laborian children attending LABCEC since they are not primary Creole speakers, the simple fact that the two primary Creole speakers in the school speak Creole all the time would serve to give Creole an increased value in the children's opinions. It would also help to negate the negative attitudes to the speaking of Creole implanted in the children's minds much more than the spontaneous and little Creole speaking of the staff, including myself, which takes place on ad hoc occasions. Another way of addressing this stigma attached to Creole would be giving a stipend to a volunteer to tell Creole stories to the children once per week per group during their daily storytime. Also, there is need to take the culture of the Creole language to a national dimension.

While all the studies participated in LABCEC's present position in terms of the idea in bold at the beginning of this section, I would like to pay special homage to Piaget through Bruner. The latter stated that Piaget is brilliant in his formal description of the nature of knowledge children show at each stage of development. Piaget has written the 'implicit, logical theory on which the child proceeds in dealing with intellectual task' (Bruner, 1966, p. 7).

There cannot be a theorist who has not been affected by this intellectual giant, Piaget. He is part of our glorious past. Nevertheless, the current focus has now expanded. While inclusive of Piaget's epistemology, it also encompasses pediatric neurobiology or brain development as well as the importance of the social context to learning.

Children learn through their own action and through interaction with capable peers, adolescents and adults

That children learn through play - although not exclusively so - was a central tenet of LABCEC's beliefs from the beginning. In fact so much was this so that one negative rumour which surrounded LABCEC was that the children attending this centre only played all the time. It took some time to change this attitude. Both the home visits and the group meetings as well as the

informal discussions by Board members and staff contributed into changing this attitude. However, it is still necessary to discuss the importance of play with every new group of parents who register their children at LABCEC. These parents are now also being told that LABCEC recognises that play with no supervision and no adult extension can be just 'messing about'. In effect, LABCEC started with a 'play' view but moved via Piaget to a cognitive Brunerian and Vygotskyean view of activity.

The fact that children at LABCEC started by playing a lot in 1983 was influenced by:

1. Possibly, my subconscious memories of the play I did at the Froebel centre I attended in Guyana from 1955
2. My own experience with my own children
3. Supporting remarks by parents of children attending LABCEC in 1983 who understood that children also learnt through play
4. The centres which I had visited and had positively impacted on me before LABCEC was commenced
5. My original readings on the importance of play in a child's early childhood education.

In terms of my subsconcious memories of the play I did, it would help if I note two of my earliest memories. The first was going to my Froebel pre-school riding my own bicycle accompanied by my mother. The other was my birthday party with Caucasian children running down the steps of my home. The fact that children of all races and religions attended the pre-school I went to probably results in my lack of racism. I remember talking to my ex-pre-school principal from Guyana from Antigua in 1997 about her pre-school which I started attending in 1956. She was 84 years at that time. She said to me 'children learn through play'. She informed me that there were a variety of play activities available to the children of the pre-school I went - clay, blocks, wet and dry sand play and so on. She told me 'When I first started everyone thought early childhood education was just about chalk and talk. Only three expatriates understood what I was doing and helped me. It took a while to convince parents and staff.' I found this information thrilling.

Like a few of the initial parents who attended LABCEC, I was, thus, convinced by my own pre-school experience and by the relations with my own first child - Djamal - that children also learnt through play. Yet, like these parents and other parents of LABCEC, I found it important to note that small group time activities facilitated by a lead teacher or an assistant under the direction of a lead teacher were equally important if low-income children - children whose parents had little time and education to educate them as appropriately as possible - were to develop.

I knew that children sitting in rows of benches in front of an old, sleeping teacher was one of the wrong ways to educate children despite the fact that such an old, sleeping teacher was often a caring individual with the warm support of parents. As my ex- pre-school principal, I knew that teaching by 'chalk and talk' as she said was another wrong method of educating children. I was also convinced that isolating children from their communities in groups of high socio-economic

income - even in a play situation - did not augur well for my child coming from the Laborie community. The two schools which I visited in Castries, where children were learning happily were both Montessori schools. There was a lot of structured play using devised materials.

The early founders of LABCEC - both convinced Board members and parents - had a lot to do to convince other parents. In fact, these parents were only finally convinced when LABCEC was able to show that its own common entrance examination results were 30 - 40 % better than those of another pre-school which did not engage in active play.

Again, it was Piaget who gave support to the view that children from birth to two learn mainly from their senses, including action, and from two to seven learn mainly from action. Piaget said:

'Intelligence proceeds from action as a whole, in that it transforms objects and reality, and that knowledge, whose formation can be traced in the child, is essentially an active and operatory assimilation.' (Piaget, 1969, p. 28)

Within the field of action, all the other pioneers and theorists thought play was important, that is, with some exception by Maria Montessori. I will venture to make the following comment that it may be because Maria Montessori was so negative on the essential aspect of play that she has been rejected by some modern pioneers and theorists lock, stock and barrel.

Maria Montessori scorned fantasy which she called "so called imaginative play" and an 'atrophy of organs' (Montessori, 1964, p. 261). It was only, she felt, through work with real objects from real life that the child could make intellectual strides. Yet Montessori had no research basis for this belief. As such, her scorn of what she termed fantasy could be called a pioneer's pet peeve. Vygotsky would present an intermediate view. In his opinion, play while important, was not the predominant type of activity in pre-school. Nevertheless, he describes play as 'the supreme law of egocentric thought' (Vygotsky, 1996, p. 17). Evidently, he felt that play served a purpose. Vygotsky asserted that play in children helped to resolve the tension between the children's desires that could not be immediately met and the wish to fulfill their wishes right away as when, for example, children play at cooking on a play stove. Play, he implied, was 'a serious game' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 104). However, Vygotsky continued 'only theories which maintain that a child does not have to satisfy the basic requirements of life but can live in search of pleasure could possibly suggest that a child's world is a play world' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102).

On the other hand, Piaget felt that play was not only a form of relaxation or a drain for superfluous energy. Play, he stated, fell within the laws of psycho-physiological maturation (Piaget, 1962, p. 151). Piaget went on to note the importance of play by calling it 'serious training' (1962, p. 150). Play, Piaget said was 'accompanied by a feeling of freedom and is the herald of art, which is the full flowering of this spontaneous creation' (Piaget, 1962, p. 152).

A challenge came to Piaget's notion that children learnt through action, including play. This challenge to the idea that children learn through action, however, could not be called a pioneer's pet peeve but was argued with logic and research . True, said Vygotsky but such action could be

brought to greater levels with teacher interaction. It is important to note again that Vygotsky defined a theory of teaching whereas Piaget's was more a theory of learning. Bruner agreed with Vygotsky's extension to Piaget's idea (Bruner, 1966, pp. 38 and 53). Vygotsky defined this young theory through the zone of proximal development. He defined this as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The zone of proximal development, it should be noted, operates at all ages.

It is important to re-state that Piaget had obviously influenced the work of the educators whose work helped determine the initial directions which I took. There is also interface between the work of Piaget and Vygotsky to the extent that some are unclear if Piaget influenced Vygotsky or vice versa. The Piaget/Vygotsky debate influenced LABCEC to the extent that (1) through Piaget action time became a refined, integrated part of LABCEC's curriculum and (2) through Vygotsky teacher intervention became important during action time. Previous to the interface through reading Vygotsky LABCEC's stated goal was one of non-intrusive teacher interaction bearing in mind the marked tendency towards authorianism which the teachers expressed. Through interface with Vygotsky, this leaning changed to committed and trained teacher interaction helping thus to raise the level of development of the children.

Vygotsky seemed to transform Piaget's foundations into scaffolding, Bruner's term, through the dance of child action and teacher interaction. However, Vygotsky's transformation may be but appearance since one can hardly imagine Piaget not espousing the idea of teacher interaction.

Vygotsky's argument was one which informed LABCEC's practices by 1998. LABCEC held much room for improvement for teachers interfered sometimes and intervened rarely except when they were doing teacher directed activities. Further on-the-spot training, involving specific practical demonstrations, however, helped to improve this negative tendency of non-intervention during work time and playground time. In fact, as a result of reading Vygotsky I started in May 1998 asking teachers to intervene more. Yet I can only be Vygotskyean to the extent that he builds on Piaget's theories. Before this time many teachers at LABCEC tended to tell the children what not to do rather than play on a one to one basis or small group basis with them, asking them open ended questions also and making the type of suggestions which would lead these children through their zone of proximal development. It is important to note that all learners, all humans, have a zone of proximal development at any age. High/Scope was also invaluable in my conceptualizations about the importance of teacher interventions as partners in the learning process. An important result of this new teacher interface with the children is the partnership which has developed between children and teachers.

LABCEC had felt that children learnt from action all along. New interfaces would result in a refining of the period referred to initially as free play or choice activities and which nomenclature I would like to change from work time of High/Scope to action time. Also small group time which contained specific teacher intervention is now becoming as much action based as possible.

I still had to think carefully, however, of how to make this work time creative and progressive rather than bedlam or chaos. LABCEC, like most of the early childhood education centres in the Caribbean, suffers from a lack of materials with which children enjoy playing. For financial viability as well as for national pride, materials had to be collected from Saint Lucia itself although it was recognised that such irreplaceable international materials like leggoes, blocks and books (including multicultural ones) had to be acquired. There are now eight main work corners during free play or work time at LABCEC. These are:

- Playdough
- Water
- Sand
- Leggoes
- Wooden Blocks
- Books
- Writing
- Dressing up/home corner.

So, for the parents of LABCEC, initially children were just playing. The Laborian parents did not realise, like Pringle, that play was even 'more important to the child than work is to an adult' and that it fulfilled a number of related though different functions and took many forms (Pringle, 1986, p. 43). In the eyes of the Laborian parents the children did no work, perceiving especially as they did that children should be sitting in rows chanting the alphabet or writing their abcs or numbers. It took years to convince them that children also learn through play. But convince them we did. However, in convincing them we also, as noted earlier, took on board their need (like Maria Montessori did for her parents) for their children to learn to write. Their desires were adhered to without damaging the child's developing personality and intelligence.

Piaget argues that play is part of symbolic development. Play has an ascendency or powerful influence with reference to assimilation over accomodation. Through play, the child tends to assimilate rather than accomodate to the world outside of them. Yet, all assimilation and no accomodation would lead to a total lack of equilibration. Piaget argues, implicitly, that cultural and social transmission are crucial. Children need to play it is true. Their parents have understood that they need to play to develop fully. However, many hard working parents - often single mothers - do not have the time or education to integrate such informal learning in their lives together with the children. It thus becomes of crucial importance that within play there is careful planning for the child's learning.

So, LABCEC's central tenet about the importance of play has evolved into a tenet about the importance of action. LABCEC's initial beliefs about the importance of action have been validated. Its action time has been refined and extended and it is now, in the process of spreading the word in Saint Lucia about the importance of action and interaction.

Affectivity and cognition are inseparable

Initially, I recognized instinctively the value of this idea. However, its importance was not fully realized. Besides, LABCEC was functioning in a culture which among its strengths loved children passionately . Family members are very loving to babies. There is a lot of rough and tumble play with children from one to eight years of age and beyond. Yet there were inherent concerns in the culture. Children were often the victims of adult agression among each other. Among adults, they were to be seen not heard. They were never supposed to challenge the opinions of their elders. There were few exceptions to these concerns.

Perhaps Piaget's definition of affectivity could serve us here. He said:

> The term affectivity includes feelings, properly so-called, as well as the various drives
> or tendencies (tendances) including 'higher tendencies' such as the will. (1981, p.2)

The parallel between affectivity and cognition was epitomized in a problem we had at LABCEC. It is a problem which still remained a touchy issue with some of the staff members and myself in 1998. One teacher of 10 years standing who encapsulated community care perfectly (according to the most active and vocal parents) resigned partly because she had problems with adjusting to more collective and participatory patterns of management in a growing staff. It is fair to say that some community members still had not in 1998 accepted her resignation so caring was she. It needs to be noted, however, that while she encapsulated the notion of affectivity, her understanding of the cognitive development of children needs revision which would incorporate the developing notions of LABCEC as a result of the work of the main pioneers and theorists in the field of early childhood education. Yet, in a drive for developmentally appropriate early childhood education, staff should really not be changed too often. High/Scope also cites stable staff as one of the characteristics of quality. I have, thus, come to internalize this idea in particular as a result of this very personal and hurtful identification with it.

Piaget and Erik Erikson would be the main proponents of this theory. However, all the pioneers and theorists espoused it in their practices being all profoundly caring. Piaget would state clearly that the 'decentering of cognitive constructions necessary for the development of the operations is inseparable from the decentering of affective and social constructions' and that the term social covered an interpersonal process of socialization which was at once cognitive, affective, and moral (Piaget, 1969, p. 95). Later on in the same work he would state even more categorically that 'cognitive and affective or social development are inseparable and parallel' (Ibid, p. 117).

Put simply, if children are to learn they have to also be treated well, as emotional as well as rational beings. Yet in the interplay, if they are to learn, their cognition also has to based on appropriate learning realities to children's cognition. Nowhere have I found this inseparability between cognition and affectivity so aptly put as in the French book entitled 'Programme, Projets, Activités'. Translated, it reads:

But the trainers, educators, parents, trainees, administrators....forget too often
that this same brain which, seated on school benches, must learn to read, recite
a poem, count, write ... is also the one who loves, hates, suffers, hungers
thirsts, speaks, shouts, cries, dreams, etc. It is the same brain who knows
- or knows not - to look at a flower or to listen to a bird's song. (Terrieux et. al
1996, p. 117)

In Erikson's work the importance of affectivity was well enunciated as when he noted that '*a sense of basic trust* is the first component of mental health to develop in life.' He went on to say that a *a sense of autonomous will* was the second and *a sense of initiative* was the third (Erikson, 1980, p. 54). In all three components, and more particularly in the first building block, affectivity is essential. Erikson's work is being used as important theoretical foundations in the parenting programme.

LABCEC suffered from the loss of an epitome of community care. However, some staff members have shifted positions leading to a diminution of the negative aspects of care. Other staff members are in the process of becoming teachers encapsulating both care and cognition, combined with a great sense of humour. LABCEC is on the road to the development of the vision of the inseparability of affectivity and cognition.

An integral characteristic of early childhood education is that it should be community based.

The fact that LABCEC debuted with the above idea was due in large part to my own readings and involvement with the ideas surrounding participatory research. As a secondary school history teacher, I had written two articles related to what I called environmental research and community participation. With some parents, students, teachers of a prominent local school and my own secondary school and influential national figures, we had reclaimed the land belonging to an old plantation owner as part of the national heritage. Parents and other community and national figures cut bushes and cooked food for the children. One of these parents was the first to build a house in a new unauthorized housing area. Imbued with such success in involvement, it was natural that LABCEC started with the idea that parents and the community had a vital role to play in the early childhood education of young children.

So it was that it was from a meeting of parents at my home that the initial idea of setting up such a pre-school was established. It followed that the property of LABCEC - estimated at 200,000 English pounds, land and building - is owned by the community. However, although the involvement of the parents and the community was there from the beginning, the actual weaving together of the processes of the implementation of such involvement remained to be conceptualized.

It is important to identify the different stakeholders in the community based concept. One of these stakeholders is the parents. Parental involvement was assumed from the outset to be vital.

Parents could, and did, make significant positive impact on the education of their young children. Such an attitude was supported:

Most women are capable of doing a fine job with their one to three year old children. Our study has convinced us that a mother need not necessarily have even a high school diploma, let alone a college education. Nor does she need to have very substantial economic assets.... the informal education that families provide for their children *makes more of an impact on a child's total educational development than the formal education system.* (Morrison, 1978, p. 7)

LABCEC, thus, focused on the education of families and the community through three methods mainly:

- Parent group meetings and informal discussions
- Home visits
- Meetings and discussions of the governing community Board.

One main function these parent meetings serve is to make an amalgam of parents' ideas with theories of early childhood education which LABCEC has shown can work in Laborie. For example, parents still want their children to write. However, they accept that learning to write is a slow and steady process which should not be forced upon the child. This acceptance needs never to be taken for granted as with each new set of parents it may need to be re-explained to one or two of these parents. LABCEC has gone through 17 years of such meetings. LABCEC and these meetings are now an integral feature of the Laborie community. Although, it is unlikely that more than 60% of the parents (90% and over being mothers) will ever attend these meetings, they are of vital importance in maintaining harmonious relations between the two groups of adults - parents and staff - who often have the most impact on the lives of the children.

Home visits serve the same functions as the parent meetings on an individualized basis. However, these home visits should also serve the population which does not attend parent meetings. The home visits now concentrate on all the parents of children from birth to five at LABCEC. Priority is, however, given to parents of children before birth up to age three. Even more particularly, priority is given to children from birth to age one, within a wider community than that of the centre only. Priority is also extended to children needing extra guidance in their cognition and affectivity. This priority was determined given the scarcity of financial and trained human resources but also, moreso, given the question of at what stage it was timely to pay such home visits.

To add to this impact of parental and community involvement, parents are also invited to spend a minimum of one day per year at the centre and participate in all activities for the morning session. In addition, through one home visit a month, teachers and volunteers are now being encouraged to further tap into the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the parents as well as educate parents in their turn. Parents are also used as volunteers and trained according both to the foundation and then to the induction training as part of level one. Five of the nine persons who

work with the children at LABCEC are or were parents of children attending LABCEC.

Doreen Grant in her passionate book <u>Learning Relations</u> explored the importance of working in partnership with parents in detail. She noted that Urie Bronfenbrenner showed clearly the close relationship between the child's educational competence and maternal involvement (Grant, 1989, p. 19). Grant stated clearly that the fact that parents were educators was one of the three values which guided her work. Sylva reinforced the importance of parents and the community when she noted that nursery teachers should work alongside parents She said:

Often, but not always, the nursery teacher works alongside the parents in encouraging (rewarding) *and* modelling the same behaviour and discouraging (punishing) other; clearly where this happens it will result in more efficient learning; problems may occur where the child experiences one set of reinforcements and kind of modelling at home and quite another in the nursery school. (Sylva, 1995, p. 177)

High/Scope would state clearly that partnership with parents was a key characteristic of quality. They stated:

In effective programs, staff treat parents as partners and engage in extensive outreach to parents, such as home visits at least monthly, to learn from parents and to help them understand the curriculum and their children's development. (Schweinhart, 1993, p. 17)

However, outside of signaling the importance of parents as partners and as one key stakeholder in the community based process, LABCEC has identified other stakeholders. These include persons involved in education of young children in the community. For this reason LABCEC's Board has been composed since 1985 of the Principals of the Laborie Infant (5 -8 years), the Laborie Girls Primary, the Laborie Boys Primary and the District Education Officer attached to the Government Ministry of Education. This Board holds final responsibility for all decisions taken and oversees negotiation with the community and now also staff/staff interaction. They have met twice per term over fifteen years along with parents and staff. The staff is yet another stakeholder. The entire staff also meets once per month. The lead teachers and the elected volunteer are also represented on the Board of management.

Patrons are also stakeholders. These patrons are Laborians from Laborie, in Castries and abroad. They are solicited for annual subventions. Through informal discussions on the telephone, I respond to their questions and concerns. Also, they are given an annual report of LABCEC and sent thank you cards with relevant quotations about early childhood education.

Adolescents are still another stakeholder. However, the involvement of adolescents was only considered in depth in 1999. The plan is to involve them through the induction training which will include an adolescent parent programme. There is also a plan to involve them in small income generation activities linked to the literacy and numeracy of the pre-school children. Mia Kellmer Pringle made a case for some preparation for parenthood whose core course would be an understanding of human psychology. This course, she stated, should be given to adolescents who

were normally preoccupied with human psychology at this stage in their lives (Pringle, 1996, p. 105). In her words, the school, should bridge the world between the home of the child and the community.

The teacher, by involving himself, as well as his pupils, in outward-looking activities, which include both the parents and the neighbourhood, will discover unsuspected resources of ingenuity and initiative. (Ibid, p. 51)

The final stakeholders are friends who meet at an annual general meeting. These also comprise leaders of other community based organisations in Laborie.

Yet, how does this idea of LABCEC of the importance of parents and the community in quality early childhood education fit into the work done by the early pioneers and theorists? It is important to note that in relation to the above idea of parental and community involvement as in the other assembled ideas, these pioneers did not express the same sentiments or retain the same epistemologies.

For instance, the importance of parents and the community in early childhood education was signaled out by three in particular - Pestalozzi, Isaacs and Pringle. The importance of community based practices is reflected throughout Paulo Freire's work. And so likewise is it imbued in the work practised in Reggio Emilia. Doreen Grant would also note the importance of this idea. So important was this idea to Doreen Grant that she noted:

The three values which originally guided *Learning Relations* were as follows; that *parents are educators*, the most important educators of their own children; that there is a positive association between *language and intellectual power*; and that genuinely liberating education is *education as dialogue.* (Doreen Grant, 1989, p. 126)

As far as Pestalozzi was concerned, school instruction that ignored the circumstances in the home was nothing more than a method for 'shriveling up our generation' (Pestalozzi, 1951, p. 35). He saw mothers as primordial in the development of the infant mind. He said:

'The mother is qualified, and qualified by her Creator himself, to become the principal agent in the development of her child......what power can be more influential, more stimulative, than maternal love.' (1827, p.4)

Doreen Grant stands out with a detailed story of her own work with the parents. However, even Doreen Grant did not report the extension of her own work to that of the other stakeholders in the community based process. The pioneers and theorists stress on the importance of parents in showing love and as educators of their children.

And so it is on the note to the admirable new theory, which receives validation in the work of Freire, Doreen Grant and at Reggio Emilia and LABCEC that this chapter concludes. There are three other ideas discussed in this chapter. They may in fact sum up only one idea - with the other

two ideas being mere corollaries of the first. The idea is that children change or grow. This notion can be developed a little further insofar as children not only grow into adolescents and adults but, more importantly, into a cultural, linguistic and moral framework or milieu. This growth or induction into a cultural, linguistic and moral milieu is best fostered through action and interaction which pay no heed to the separation of cognition and affectivity. It is to the idea related to the cultural, linguistic and moral framework that this story turns its attention.

Chapter Nine

The framework for early childhood education at LABCEC

'For Caribbean History has been a violent history. Its midwife has been force, not persuasion'
(Gordon Lewis, Main currents on Caribbean thought, 1983, p. 15)

Children grow into a cultural, linguistic and moral framework. LABCEC is organised around that task. Chapter seven has indicated the foundational ideas that shape the LABCEC task. The four areas that are given particular attention in this chapter are: staff development, monitoring of the centre or school's environment, cultivation of self-discipline, and early attention to literacy and numeracy practices. In practice, these four ideas are realised in a range of school activities.

Staff development

LABCEC began systematic staff development around 1997. Beforehand, staff development or training of staff was done only intermittently or by institutions outside of LABCEC such as SERVOL or the Ministry of Education, Saint Lucia.

Most staff members of LABCEC began teaching at the centre having only completed secondary education. The more aged of the staff members in particular held some of the negative views of their communities on children. Children needed to be beaten and shouted at. Children who defecated on themselves should be made to feel ashamed. The first interview helped clarify these areas. This interview which lasted no more than three to five minutes encouraged staff and volunteers to desist from these practices and to be warm and loving to the children, getting down to their physical level. The teachers needed to understand the principles of child growth and development along with other professional development so that they could help the children participate in the process allowing them to navigate within their zone of proximal development.

In 1997, I prepared such a training package which allowed for on-site training of teachers. The first section of the package focuses on level one training for teachers and assistants; all early childhood education personnel. Level one training is for all teachers who had not yet completed a one year diploma at the Pre-School Unit of the Ministry of Education or another relevant diploma. It includes such topics as child growth and development from birth to five years, teaching Math and teaching reading. This training can and is being done by correspondence with twenty other centres. All ten personnel associated with LABCEC have completed this level one training.

Another level one training programme is a two week Induction training package, completed in 1999. This Induction training is also a level one training package. This hands on, participatory training focuses on observation of the LABCEC teachers, practice by the trainees, and oral tests with me based on a 180 page document which I have compiled (see appendix two). It also focuses on the writing of activity plans, other miscellaneous tasks such as writing key rhymed stories, and a written evaluation and final test. All teachers are encouraged to do this level one training. The levels correspond to the complexity and hours required to complete this training.

All teachers, whether they be lead teachers or volunteer assistants, who work fewer hours, are required to complete levels one and two training. In 1998 a Level two programme was devised which focused on the history, theories and applied directions of early childhood education. It comprised eight parts concerning skills for pre-school teachers including maintaining a safe classroom and a healthy classroom. It reviewed the plan-do-review process and the group times, outside times and transition times of High/Scope, and included modules on various classroom work corners such as the house corner or the creative representation corner. This level two programme emphasized the LABCEC's curriculum in terms of the structured activities or small group time activities offered. The programme required that teachers prepare themes of their choice as well as key themes based on compiled key words of the children. Module seven of Level two concerns accreditation, licensing requirements and evaluation. Finally, the last module of level two concentrates on the future of early childhood development in the Caribbean through community based management.

This level two training was revised in 1999. Level two training for lead teachers is, in 2000, also based on High/Scope's curriculum and study guide as well as the training programme of the *Caring for Pre-Schoolers* written by Diane Dodge (1996). *Caring for Pre-Schoolers* comprises volumes one, two and a trainers guide. Two teachers who have begun to participate in this training programme have enjoyed it and recommend it. So, level two training can comprise the elements of the above paragraph, or it can be based on the High/Scope curriculum, or it can be based on the *Caring for Pre-Schoolers,* or all three. It is only after all training programmes have been tested and adapted that a more coordinated or home grown programme will be devised. It is equally possible that all three level two programmes may be kept and used as needed. It is important not to re-invent the wheel. Future Level two training will last from twelve to eighteen months.

In 1999, Level three training was devised. It was thought that this would be a Bachelors of Philosophy done in association with the University of Newcastle and the Riverside Centre. The University of Newcastle examined the package and accompanying material about Saint Lucia. This package focused on the level two training package mentioned above was meant to incorporate the recommendations of the University of Newcastle and the Riverside Centre. However, a major issue was funding of the Bachelors of Philosophy. Since funding for this project seems unlikely given that the priorities are for training in levels one and two, the alternative being considered in 2000 is that of early childhood educators doing their first degrees, at their own expense, by distance education. Caribbean universities do not offer distance and part time Bachelor degrees in early childhood education in 2000. Two Saint Lucian educators have been registered at the Riverside Centre from around 1998.

In addition to these three levels of training, there are some short term 80 hour training packages in preparation. These are:

1. Administration and management (for administrators and NGO personnel)
2. Parents as teachers training
3. Child observation record/High/Scope.

Administration and management comprises training for administrative duties of centres along with training in financial management. The second involves training in doing home visits and conducting group meetings while the third focuses on record keeping and observation of children under the areas of Initiative, Social Relations, Language and Literacy, Logic and Mathematics, Creative Representation and Music and Movement. In addition, trainees finishing level two and not yet going on to the B.Phil follow a continuing education process involving reading and discussion of significant books and documents in early childhood education around its main themes. Following is a table of the training web in 2000. This table excludes the short term training packages since more planning has to be done on the packages and thought given to the levels in which they fit and the time required to do them.

Level	Title of Course	No. of hours
1	What all parents and teachers should know about children	80
1	Induction hands on training at LABCEC	50
2	Alternative Certified one year course/ Caring for pre-school teachers	300 (EITHER)
2	Alternative Certified one year course/High/Scope	300 (OR)
2	LABCEC devised Level two programme	300 (OR)
3	B.Phil	To be determined
3 and 4	Continuing education	50 hours per year

Monitoring

Monitoring at LABCEC is defined as guiding, keeping track or advising, rather than the more authoritarian sense of overseeing or admonishing. Through monitoring at LABCEC, I ensure that the tasks related to teaching and administration required by the staff are carried out. This is called TOT or Time on Task (see Appendix 10). Monitoring is essential in that it helps ensure that policies, practices and tasks are implemented. Monitoring also helps inform classroom practice and exposes useful areas of research. It breaks down the overall and often nebulous concept of quality into tiny areas of time on task activities. This monitoring is particularly important in Saint Lucia and in the rest of the Caribbean where there is a tendency, linked to slavery and post-colonialism, to skirt tasks to be done as much as is humanly possible and to work day and night on a multiplicity of complex issues guided by grounded beliefs and understanding to overcome post-colonial squalor.

Monitoring is also linked to the annual reviews conducted at LABCEC and begun in 1997 (See Appendix one). These studies look at such areas as staff/children interaction, staff/parent

interaction, staff/staff interaction, health, safety and nutrition and administration. This monitoring is done on a year to year basis. In the case of LABCEC these annual studies may be more of a self-evaluation by teachers and could, thus, be termed self-studies.

The organisation of monitoring was, in 1997, too systematic. It comprised certain minute tasks such as daily checking of the availability of drinking water which were best assumed by the teachers' own responsible attitudes. However, the teachers-in-charge have grown to like it and burst into tears of laughter during monthly reviewing sessions - not to mention the informal monitoring sessions. The idea was that they would grow progressively out of the need for such systematic monitoring which is time consuming. However, since monthly monitoring informs classroom practice and, thus, helps to identify important research areas (such as culturally appropriate types of numeracy or discipline), its practice is well worth the time spent. In 2000, monitoring is no longer too systematic. Such monthly monitoring includes not only of teaching but also the administrative aspects of early childhood education. On any month it includes such administrative tasks as financial records and collection of grades for training. It also encompasses tasks related to teaching such as evaluations, availability of work corners and planning for children's learning. Even distribution of invitations to parent meetings on time is part of the monitoring list since these invitations had not always been successfully distributed.

This detailed attention to monitoring results, as noted, partly from our post-slavery and colonial culture. This culture did not contain engrained habits of self-supervision. Rather, it was the slave master or mistress and his lackey, the driver who would impose control. Later on it was the colonial masters and the police force, called by Saint Lucians 'The Queen's dogs', who would do so. In the post independence stage the ruling party of the day and their representatives mostly would do so. Since self-supervision is not ingrained in the culture, such monitoring of the teachers requires a progressive release of the responsibility for control of tasks. For instance, the majority of staff at LABCEC got between 50-60% in their tasks assigned in 1996 when monitoring really began. For months they stood at this percentage. By 2000, not a single member of staff gets less than 85% and most are in their 90s. This monitoring also implies that some of these minute tasks stay on the list when staff do not demonstrate a willingness to carry them out if unsupervised. Systematic follow up is essential.

One objective of monitoring is to inform planning as well as to help identify areas of research. It is shared with parents and teachers. This monitoring also takes the role of daily checking - for instance, are sand, water, clay, paper and pencil available?

As noted, the need for the simpler monitoring such as the daily checking diminished with time as these items become incorporated into daily practice. This, however, opens up new and more complex areas for monitoring which could be linked to planning and research, for example. In 2000, such monitoring has ceased to be done simply monthly and becomes even more day by day as when the children who have begun to write have their work placed in a box for daily checking. Monitoring such as this is essential in developmentally appropriate practice in any early childhood education centre. If it is made systematic, this monitoring could make the centre much more easily available to ready evaluation both within the centre and from outside evaluators such as those from

the Ministry of Education, for example..

There is also monitoring, which involves observation, of the children. Such child observations are crucial to planning and to sharing information among staff and with parents. These observations are combined into one document - the HighScope child observation record. Teachers at LABCEC take between half a day and two days to prepare one such record. The beauty of this child observation record is that simply writing it fine tunes the teachers' own observations. At the same time, it allows the teachers to explain the behaviourial patterns of the children to each other, parents and other community members. This 25 page record is compiled once per year per child.

Cultivation of self discipline

How does the principle that self-discipline is the only kind of discipline worth having fit in a society where the 'whip was the soul'? It is a real dilemma. Yet, discipline is something that can be taught progressively. Children (of any age) are drawn into, or inserted into, the discipline of a school or culture. They acquire its discipline or moral code such that they follow that code. This is why the word discipline (as in a discipline of knowledge) and discipline (as in positioning the body) and disciple share the same Graeco-Latin root. In a very profound sense, then, discipline is always part of a school curriculum.

Parents in Saint Lucia are still for the most part convinced that beating should be the principal form of discipline. The Ministry of Education, a Government Ministry, compounded this problem when it confirmed in 1998 that the strap or cane could be used in primary and secondary schools, giving the amount of lashes and the length and width of strap which could be used. Discipline is still seen as imposed from outside through shouts, beating and verbal abuse. Such abuse is quite widespread although actual figures are only now being recorded. Between 1993 and 1996, 1,972 cases of domestic abuse were reported in Saint Lucia. These cases occurred in a total population of less than 140,000 people. 14.28% of these cases of domestic abuse was for maintenance default and 10.14% for abuse and neglect of children (The Crusader Newspaper, April 11, 1998).

All parents and Board members (except two who were not Christian) felt at the inception of LABCEC in 1983 that going to church regularly once a week was indispensable for discipline. Every single one of them also felt that beating - to varying degrees - was an indispensable arm of discipline. 'The child is troublesome', was a repeated refrain of the parents. That children should be taught discipline through the strong arm of the parent, was the underlying thought.

Contiguous to the above view was another one. Children need to be given responsibility and accountability. They should be respected as autonomous learners. Children and their efforts need to be valued. It is important to start with what children can do and not what they cannot do. Relationships between children and children are important to them.

The above paragraph is a combination of very different ideas. There is the need for children to be given responsibility and to become autonomous learners. Put in other terms, children need to

be encouraged to be risk takers and supported when they make mistakes, but the teacher needs to intervene if the child is overwhelmed. There is the need to value children and their efforts and start from where they are at. Also, there is the fact that relationships among children are important - or even perhaps the most important - to them. I will start with the last first.

For my own first child - Djamal - I recognised intuitively that he would grow up in a peer group which could support or diminish him. Adequate support from his peer group depended on three factors mainly. These were:

–   The peer group's play outside home and school
–   The peer group's play within school
–   The peer group's relationship within the home.

The first, I knew, was largely out of my control and was, in fact, partly dependent on the good relations established in the second two. I knew that I could influence the second through a) establishing a pre-school which adhered at least to the ideas in this chapter b) working in liaison with the Principals of the follow up schools. Through the education component of its home visit and group meeting programme LABCEC has influenced positively relations between adults and children in the home. The peer group my son has grown up with in Laborie has, thus, been a supportive one. More so, has the peer group of my second son - David. LABCEC has, consequently, influenced at school and home the important relationship between children and children in the village of Laborie.

From its inception, LABCEC's philosophy encouraged giving children responsibility. It allowed children to make decisions, errors and choices and respected them as autonomous learners. Both formal and informal training of staff, Board and parents helped to buttress this philosophy, albeit sometimes at odds with the philosophy of other influential members of the community. This allowance of decisions, errors and choices was particularly observed in the free play of the children where they were allowed to choose activities they wanted to initiate.

In terms of valuing children and starting from what they can do it is important to note that the parents who met at my home in 1983 in Laborie considered that children were important. They felt that they should be valued. In such valuing, it was important to start with what children could do and not what they could not do. In valuing children and their efforts, LABCEC has insisted from its inception that the staff should talk to children on a one to one basis. They should comfort crying children first before attending to the children who wounded the crying child. Staff should call children by name and respect the social, economic, racial and cultural diversities of the children. No more should straight hair be referred to as 'good hair' or 'bel chive', for example.

In some instances, such as saying 'please and thank you', 'good morning and good afternoon' and calling children by name, the community was well versed and performed such positive duties admirably. In other instances, there was need to cajole, evaluate, reprimand and remind to get change. For instance, in 1983, the valuing of children's efforts the scribbles of the children were scoffed at by the parents. However, at a meeting of May 1998, only one out of twelve parents

ridiculed the children's writings. Such emergent writing offers one example of how LABCEC starts with what children can do rather than what they cannot do. Previously, in Laborie as elsewhere, children were given a slate and a pencil and asked to write their names right away. I remember looking in horror as a child, as my friend was beaten next door by her stepfather for not being able to say the alphabet. Starting from what the children can do is a vital part of self-discipline.

All the pioneers and theorists agree with the view that self-discipline is the only kind of discipline worth having. Pestalozzi, Steiner, Froebel and Montessori pay particular attention to this idea in their writings. In fact, Susan Isaacs alluded to discipline in a fashion which all the parents in Laborie would agree with when she noted that the little child should be expected to obey. However, Isaacs quickly notes '*in some things and for some purposes*' (Isaacs, 1929, p. 101, emphasis in original) . She continues to note that obedience is not an end in itself. It is important what we ask a child to obey - not to jump off a high fence - and how we ask the child to obey. Finally, she adds that it is not less true that children need freedom and the ability to make choices just as much as they need to obey (Ibid, p.102).

Pestalozzi, the earliest pioneer, amazed 'outsiders' when he abolished flogging (Pestalozzi, 1951, V11). Steiner also abhorred flogging. In his words:

> true education must never be maintained by force, and above all not by the cane. It must arise naturally from what we ourselves are. In body, soul, and spirit we are true teachers if our observation of human nature has brought us a true understanding of man. True observation of man sees the growing human being a work of divine creation......Instead of arming ourselves with the cane...we should arm ourselves with a true knowledge of man, with the faculty of true observation. (Steiner, 1972, p. 131)

Montessori supports these ideas of self-discipline when she noted that the educator should not confuse the child being good with the child being immobile and the child being active with the child being evil. She said: 'our aim is to discipline *for activity; for work, for good;* not for *immobility;* not for *passivity,* not for *obedience*' (Montessori, n.d. p. 93).

This idea of giving children responsibility was, in fact, never theorized much by any of the early pioneers although it pervaded their entire works. It was left to the more recent professionals to do so. Susan Isaacs offered direct theories related to the particular idea of responsible children making autonomous learners. It is the children's own activity, Isaacs points out, that is the key to their development. 'It is the child's doing, the child's active social experience and his own thinking and talking that are the chief means of his education' (1932, p. 151. See also Bruce, 1997). As Jerome Bruner points out learners should help each others learn. The teacher need not be excluded. However, she should not monopolize: ' Learners should scaffold for each other as well' (Bruner, 1996, p. 21). Yet, as Tina Bruce noted, 'keeping a balance between children's and adults' initiatives is difficult' (Bruce, 1997, p. 41).

Parents in Laborie as elsewhere are very responsive to ideas of self-discipline related in

simple fashions. I used to do a weekly TV show on parenting between 1997 and 1999 and feedback I have received on it has been positive. At LABCEC we have seen mothers who have reported lower incidences of shouting and beating their children as a result of home visits and group meetings. In fact, at the end of a series of home visits done by parent educators armed with two questionnaires, the first of which was done at the beginning of a set of ten home visits and the second at the end of the same set of ten home visits, the percentage of parents who believed that beating should be the main form of punishment dropped from 80% to 20%.

The debate on discipline needs much encouragement in Saint Lucia where the 'transmission' model was very much the order of the day and still is in many communities. Parents still see learning as the teacher filling up the empty minds of the pupils. They still give over their children to the schools, much as they gave them over earlier to the priests as altar boys. Thus, it is hardly surprising that parents in Laborie were convinced at first that students attending LABCEC were not learning anything. It was incumbent on us at LABCEC to create a balance between student initiated and teacher initiated activities, between the teacher intervening and the teacher interfering and to call in the parent to see this process at work as well as to explain it during home visits and group meetings. However, in this balance LABCEC supports as much as between 60-80% child-initiated activities including during small group time in 2000.

So, the idea of the importance of self-discipline has been applied at LABCEC from the initial stages in 1983. By 2000, its realisation has been refined in particular with reference to the accreditation documents of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States and High/Scope, Michigan. Studying the work done by ancient pioneers in the field fostered a major breakthrough at LABCEC in the refinement of this idea. Comments by contemporary pioneers such as Margy Whalley and Tina Bruce have added the final touches to these ideas. Yet much of the journey remains to be travelled through LABCEC's own investigations, scaffolded by those of contemporary pioneers and practitioners.

Emergent reading and writing and math can be introduced from an early age within an active learning and child initiated setting.

Emergent reading and writing, in particular, was a matter of conflict at LABCEC from the beginning. Parents wanted the children to write their names. LABCEC felt that writing names was unimportant at this stage, yet emergent writing skills were encouraged. However the parents kept insisting that there should not only be pre-writing but writing of names. This may have been because more than 50% of the parents above 35 years had difficulty writing their own names. Writing names was, thus, an important symbol of success.

Some teachers at LABCEC concurred with this view of the parents and encouraged the children to write their names - if they were ready. I was supportive of this, being sensitive to the views of others. Nevertheless, writing and counting received no special attention at LABCEC. A number of issues caused me to change my attitude considerably. One was that my first son who was always first in his primary school classes had problems with Math around 1987. In the Infant and/or Combined Schools the teaching of reading, writing and Math needed significant alteration.

One way LABCEC has found of resolving such problems has been to share with the parents how children's early cognition is developed through deep involvement in play experiences and how these experiences are essential if they are to be numerate and literate. It is relevant that parents understand that there is no short cut to learning. It is equally important that parents like early childhood educators understand that we cut out play experiences at our peril.

Nevertheless, it seemed that another way to avoid such problems for the children attending LABCEC was to give them a solid foundation in reading, writing and Math until the pedagogy of the Primary schools could be improved when we could revert to less attention on such topics.

It should be stated that from its inception in 1983 LABCEC's reading programme was paralled by work done by Paulo Freire, without our even realising it. Paulo Freire is known best for his contributions to debates about the theory and practice in the promotion of universal literacy. Freire advocated that literacy research and practice should not ignore the social and ideological evidence of literate behaviour visible in the culture. Nor should it be authoritarian. For both Freire and Vygotsky, learning involved both culturally transmitted understanding as well as the tools such as reading and writing (Freire, 1987, p. viii). The student's own language was conceived as the means to develop a positive sense of self worth. Freire started with where his learners were and insisted that they answer from their own reading of their own words and their own world.

In fact, from its inception, children at LABCEC did much reading of their words and their own worlds. They did this through key words when they gave their own words. They also did this through key talk when they talked about what they desired. The teacher then noted down the key words they have named and wrote them down on separate sheets of paper. From their key words and key talk came key nursery rhymes and key talk as well as key talk book (three separate books). All these topics were based on the children's deep interests. This key book one, first devised in 1997, reads like this.

The fish has scales. I cook fish. I like fish. I eat fish.
The car has a driver. It is on the road. I like the car.
I like the hen's eggs.
The bird flies. The bird likes to peck. It sings.
The dog and the cat fight.
The horse is hopping. It likes to butt.
The sheep drinks water. It eats grass. It does 'poo poos'.
The dog and puppy bark. The puppy drinks Mummy dog's milk.
The duck likes to duck under the water. It flies a little.
Mummy and Daddy give me ice-cream. They give me other gifts. Mummy and Daddy love and kiss each other.

The next step was the key talk book one which was based on the compilation of the children's own conversation around their own key theme. This keytalk book one is, however, used only with particularly advanced students of reading. The first key talk book (as noted, a separate book), also devised in 1997, reads as follows:

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The fish is swimming. The fish is flying in the water. The fish eats carrots, I say. The fish drinks water.

The fish is on the wall. The fish is on the ground. You take the fish, Sabie. The fish is white. The fish is green. The fish is eating coconut. I eat the fish when it is hot. My mummy plays with the fish.

The fish is swimming in the water. The fish has died. The fish goes in the water.

The shark is eating the fish. People roast the fish. They roast it with breadfruit too. The fish is going on the shore. It lives in the ocean. My father said so. That is not true. The fish lives in the sea. The fish can swim without any hands. It shakes its tail. Once a whale came close to the shore by our home. I eat red fish with food like breadfruit and figs.

Gerry gave Uncle Boy a fish. My mummy cooked fish for lunch. I ate all. All the fishes are in the sea. The fish swims deep in the sea. The fish has a tail and wings. The fish is eating food. The fish can walk. I have never seen a fish walk. I have never seen a fish. I know crabs stay in a hole. Do fish stay in holes too? A big fish ate our phone. Ah! I do not know what the fish eats but I know that fish do not eat phones. Fish live in the water. People eat fish. Fish jump from the water every time.

In these respects, the children at LABCEC truly practice Freire's philosphophy (1987) and read their words and their world. However, as noted above, the above reading process was not conceived of as Freire's doing. Rather, it was partly constructed from the work done by Sylvia Ashton Warner in her book *Teacher* (1963), a work which pre-dates Freire's writings.

Reading Maria Montessori in early 1998 also expanded LABCEC's reading, writing and math programme. Just as her Italian parents asked her to introduce reading and writing, so did the Laborian parents. Both did so based on the practical difficulties posed to their students in these subjects on entering the primary school. If she could listen, as the Guyanese adage says, what (wax) was blocking my ears?

As far as Montessori's research concluded, children of four years took one month to a month and a half between the first preparatory writing exercises and the first written word. For children of five years, such a period took a month (Montessori, n.d., p. 294). On the other hand, I did not want to put undue emphasis on reading, writing and counting as to render children like Abdel who already complained about the load of the work, unhappy. What was the happy medium?

Montessori's approach was different from the one presently adopted in Denmark and Sweden where formal schooling only begins at age six and seven respectively. And yet, Bruce noted, there are almost no illiterate adults in Denmark where reading begins at age six compared to the UK, Holland and the U.S.A. where reading begins earlier and about 15% of adults are illiterate. In

fact, in Denmark, she noted, formal teaching of reading and writing did not begin until children were age seven (Bruce and Meggitt, 1996, p. 250). However, in both Sweden and Denmark, there is extensive pre-school provision and, with it, literacy practices. In the U.K, and the U.S.A. this universal or extensive pre-school provision is not so much the case. Certainly in the case of Saint Lucia where there was no universal early childhood education, where this education was not monitored and evaluated and where there were few pedagogies for the teaching of Language and Literacy and Numeracy that were working, LABCEC decided that Montessori's method would have to be integrated into pre-school education even though less time was actually given to it than Montessori gave herself. This decision was taken largely based on the fact that Montessori's method integrated the sensori-motor approach through touching sandpaper letters and numerals in our rural Saint Lucian context where children had less opportunities for developing their fine-motor muscles.

It needs to be said also that Montessori was the only early education pioneer who climbed out on a limb in terms of her conceptions on reading and writing. Yet, many of the early pioneers and theorists had much to say about reading and writing, even if only because it occupied the attention of the parents so intensely. Vgyostky concluded that while oral speech was involuntary, nonconsious and spontaneous, written speech was abstract, conscious and voluntary. He said that 'the psychological functions on which written speech is based have not even begun to develop in the proper sense when instruction in writing starts. It must build on barely emerging, immature processes' (1996, p. 183). Yet, he notes that Montessori was in favour of teaching reading and writing at an earlier age than it was begun in England and, I may note, in Denmark for that matter (1978, p. 117). In Montessori kindergartens in Italy, he noted, children begin to write at four and can read by age five as well as first graders (Ibid). Although, he felt Montessori's approach was desirable, reading and writing had to be 'necessary for something' (Ibid, p. 117). They should not only be used for official greetings to staff or for whatever the teacher conceives and suggests. If such was done, reading and writing would be purely 'mechanical and may soon bore the child.....Reading and writing must be something the child needs' (Ibid). In Vygostky's opinion, 'writing should be incorporated in a task that is necessary and relevant for life ..... and should be taught naturally' (Ibid). He felt that Montessori offered 'a well-motivated approach to the development of writing' (Ibid).

As far as Steiner was concerned:

The real point is that it may not be at all beneficial for such a child to learn to read too early. If a child learns to read too early, one leads it into abstractions prematurely. If reading were taught a little later, countless potential sclerotics would be able to lead happier lives. For it is possible to trace back a hardening of the entire human organism.... which manifests itself in the most diverse forms of sclerosis in later life, to a faulty method of introducing reading to a child. (1988, p. 86)

Yet, if we look closely at what Steiner is saying, it would seem that he reproaches less the teaching of reading and writing to a child than the inappropriate method of doing so. As a matter of fact Montessori herself felt for many years that children should not begin formal reading and

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writing until age six (1964, p. 267). It was her actual research within an action based reading and writing programme which changed her reticence.

So, by 2000, LABCEC uses other language and literacy approaches not mentioned above. After constantly touching the sandpaper letters of the Alphabet as researched by Maria Montessori and when children can name all the letters of the alphabet, as 80% of the children at LABCEC in the four to five year old class can do in 2000, they then go on to phonics. However, research done with the 1999-2000 class indicated that eleven of fourteen children were brought to a stage where they had completed all the above - including naming the word and world for two years. These eleven children managed to get only one full month of working with phonics before they were ready to graduate. In addition, at LABCEC in 2000, children also colour within the Montessori shapes. When a child demonstrates that he or she can colour within the shapes without going outside the lines and leave no spaces within the shapes themselves, they then go on to emergent writing which is linked to many of their small group time activities including numeracy. As noted, in cultures like Laborie where poor and low income children do not have sufficient emergent literacy and numeracy practices at home, the sensori-motor touching and the practice of drawing within shapes have a distinct place.

For numeracy practices in 2000, the combined methods employed at LABCEC include:

1. The memorization of 1-10, later on 10-20, and still later on counting in tens and fives
2. The use of toothpicks, metal cars, plastic butterflies and farm animals for subtraction, addition, commutativity and the symbolic function in different formations of initially 1-10 and then 10-20. (The objects used come from the children's naming of their world)
3. The use of all Montessori made material for Math
4. The use of sandpaper numerals for touching
5. The use of puzzles and various other Math games.

Writing is not done in Math until the fine motor muscles are developed through touching and colouring and the children colour without going out of the lines and leaving no spaces within the lines. It is to be noted that up to 1999, the Common Entrance or 11 plus results generally suggest that children do less well in Math than they do in English or the General paper. Follow up research will examine the impact of LABCEC's methods as they operated in 2000.

Thus, through its own experience, research and reasoning, LABCEC formed an opinion on the matter of language and literacy as well as numeracy. For the former, LABCEC has now decided to do its own research with a combination of Freire, Ashton Warner and Montessori's views on language and literacy. As noted, the decision was made for language and literacy partly in light of the fact that in the present primary schools in Saint Lucia, there are many uneven methods of teaching reading and writing to a child even when such teaching begins at age five. However, the decision was made only partly in light of the above sentence. LABCEC's language and literacy and numeracy programmes now form an organised whole to which LABCEC is committed. Only further research done by other centres or LABCEC itself will make significant changes into a literacy and numeracy curriculum which is working. LABCEC is prepared to do this research on

these views in the light of the acute emphasis parents pay on the teaching of writing particularly.

Alignment, however partial and/or temporary with the Montessori view calls, however, for caution. Yet, such caution takes full cognizance of the fact that, after all, Maria Montessori was the only pioneer and theorist to devise such a variety of specially made materials in literacy and numeracy for use with children. In the use of Montessori practices it is vital that Piaget's theory on child action intermingled with that of Vygotsky on teacher interaction should play the more important role. So should Piaget's views on symbolic play as part of that action. In other words, on no account should what some refer to as free play, others refer to as choice activities, others as work time or, in LABCEC, as action time be relegated to minor priority in terms of the amount of time devoted to them. Reading, writing and Math need to incorporate the children's reading of their own words and their own world. If it is to succeed, it must be also, as Montessori practised it, action oriented as well as child initiated. Likewise, the teaching of phonics takes place only after the question of the children's cultural understanding has first been addressed and should emerge at the end not at the beginning of language and literacy approaches used.

LABCEC, consequently, integrates Montessori's methodology as well as phonic approaches within Saint Lucian culture, as well as other appropriate methodologies such as those of Paulo Freire and practices relating to emergent literacy. In other words, starting from the idea that young children learn from action and within a context which is understandable to them - children read their words and their world. The curriculum in terms of reading, writing and math then incorporates Montessori and any new ideas and methodologies that fit and work into this context. Timing is important in this fit as, for example, the teaching of phonics which emerges only at the end of the varied language and literacy approaches. By 2000, LABCEC was using the Montessori materials of templates and sand paper letters only within the context of a curriculum based on action and interaction and within the framework of an emergent literacy programme which focuses on the children's own naming of their world. Similarly, Montessori math materials are being integrated into a numeracy programme in which one class of children are beginning to learn to count with horses, for example, along with toothpicks. Counting with horses is being used for the children seem to adore these creatures, naming their word and their worlds, by mentioning them twice times more than the second most often mentioned word in the period of one term.

To conclude, I find it necessary to repeat the eight ideas to which LABCEC adheres in 2000 solidly with room for improvement through research, theorizing and pioneering and which LABCEC would like to share with developing nations and at-risk communities in the developed world. These are:

1. A knowledge of children's growth and development is vital for the schooling of the child
2. Children learn through their own action and interaction with capable peers, adolescents and adults
3. Affectivity and cognition are inseparable
4. An integral characteristic of early childhood education is that it should be community based
5. Staff development is crucial in early childhood education
6. Monitoring plays an essential role in early childhood education, including staff development
7. The cultivation of self discipline is stressed
8. Emergent reading, writing and Math can be introduced from an early age within an active learning and child initiated setting.

One question which follows is how can such an experience in a rural fishing village in the south of Saint Lucia be replicated, adapted or transformed to meet the needs of other children in the country and to other West Indian countries for that matter. For such an upscaling, I must turn to the National Association of Early Childhood Educators, NAECE.

Chapter Ten

The National Association of Early Childhood Educators (NAECE)

'Everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.'(New Testament: Matthew, V11, 8)

As LABCEC spread its wings, five early childhood educators began to see further and make contact with Early Childhood educators and community workers in the north of Saint Lucia. Ideas about a national association began to form. This chapter reports the realisation of those ideas.

<u>Getting Together</u>

About five of the northern administrators, who eventually became executive members of NAECE's Board, were present at the meeting of the southern network held in Desruisseaux in July 1995 (see Chapter on LABCEC spreads its wings). Among these administrators was Ramona David, whom I had been introduced to by Ruby Yorke, Education Officer of Pre-Schools at the Ministry of Education. I had previously broached the idea of a national association to Ramona and she had been very receptive. In due course, all of the five northern administrators expressed agreement with the idea of the formation of such an association. As such, this idea was owned by all of us.

So, I made it my responsibility to execute the idea of the creation of the national association. Eventually we set up a date of the meeting. Nancy Evelyn, an administrator of the north who had previously been a trainer for the Pre-School Unit of the Ministry of Education, was also prominent in the arrangements for this meeting. Ramona and Nancy proposed that invitations be given to the zonal coordinators selected by the Ministry of Education and we included administrators who had attended the southern network meeting. The written invitations were circulated by Nancy.

So it was that administrators including zonal representatives met at Ramona's centre, the SURE START Pre-School in Sans Souci, on February 8th, 1996. From its initial meeting this group elected an interim Board comprising 12 members. The National Association of Early Childhood Educators was officially launched on Friday June 16th, 1996 at the conference room of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. (O.E.C.S.)

<u>Establishing an Identity</u>

Establishing an identity needs to be placed within the cultural, social, political and economic context of Saint Lucia. When I arrived in Saint Lucia in 1979 and for some years later, people in the rural communities still referred to others as having "good hair" or a "good nose", implying Caucasian characteristics. Politically, up to 1997 and beyond, political democracy was seen as only implemented once every five years. The culture of supervision by overseers or drivers within the slave and colonial structure which disempowered the majority of the people was still needed for the boss's work to be done. Almost half of the population was non-literate. Two of the Board members had only completed primary education, for example, and for the rest all had only

completed secondary education. Economically, the unemployment rate in Saint Lucia was as high as 22 % in 1997. Unemployment can even be considered to be higher when underemployment is taken into consideration. In terms of the context of early childhood education, staff of pre-schools are among the lowest paid workers in Saint Lucia. Many early childhood educators do not receive their salaries during the holiday months. This staff generally functions within buildings with inadequate space for the children who do not have access to sufficient toys and other instructional material. Within such a context, it can be imagined that there were many unexplored issues, potential sources of anger and distress and unanswered questions for NAECE to consider.

Some of these unanswered questions centered on NAECE raison d'etre, its identity, aims and purposes. Board members held differing views and so did the general membership. One important difference which emerged at an early meeting in 1996 was over the question of children learning through action and play as opposed to developing literacy and numeracy skills. All Board members and general members agreed, however, that NAECE was set up to promote developmentally appropriate early childhood education in Saint Lucia. They also held consensus on the fact that NAECE should work with all early childhood educators who wanted to work with it on the island. NAECE's identity was a fluid one since it was started by a minority of the most committed early childhood educators around the island. These early childhood educators at the core of NAECE were initially confused about where to point the fingers of blame for the poor and uneven state of early childhood education in the country. They sometimes blamed the Pre-School Unit. At other times, they pointed accusing fingers at Government. Also, they accused some of the early childhood educators themselves of not standing up for developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Among the first Board members of NAECE, internal tensions arose from differing views. Resignations were offered and accepted - four of them. One member resigned over issues concerning management of the organisation, including financial management. Another complained that the Board members were not united enough. Another attributed her resignation to pressing family matters. Still another gave no reason for her resignation. Conflicts have not entirely abated but are now abandoned to common goals. The important point here is that in establishing its identity, the Board is working through its difficulties.

One important issue related to the question of establishing an identity was the question of the distinction between the NAECE and the Laborie Community Education Centre, LABCEC. As noted in the Chapter on 'LABCEC spreads its wings', LABCEC had received a letter from the Cabinet of Ministers in 1994, asking it to confine its work to the Laborie Community. Politically, LABCEC was seen to be posing a threat to a Government which concentrated on economic issues while continuing certain negative colonial social and cultural patterns. However, NAECE members did not understand the implications of this letter and one result of this letter was some unease among some sections about working with LABCEC. Victims of such negative rumours, Board members felt the need to insist that NAECE did not originate from LABCEC. Moreover, they all wanted ownership of NAECE as their own creation. While Board members agreed that I was one of the principal founding members of NAECE, they definitely opined that NAECE had not been spawned by LABCEC. I agreed to the extent that the Board members of LABCEC had

been open to the idea of the outreach in the south but expressed the view that they did not want to be involved in the nationalisation of early childhood education in Saint Lucia. For all of the Board members this issue of NAECE's separate identity from LABCEC was an emotionally charged issue which may have reflected their desire for proprietorship of the national association but which also involved important practical matters. Nevertheless, these same Board members were capable of rising above their emotional feelings over this issue and deciding that the principal secretariat of NAECE would be situated at LABCEC, Laborie and that I should be appointed Executive Director of NAECE working for three-quarters of a full working month.

Stabilising the administration

Stabilising the administration was vital if NAECE was to operate with any degree of success. The Board was concerned with the issue of communication between the two secretariats, one established at LABCEC in the south in Laborie and the other established at SURE START in the north in Castries. There was also the question of communication with the secretary of NAECE at KIDS CARE in the north in the Castries environs. Fax machines were placed at SURE START and Petra Auguste's centre, KIDS CARE, along with computers. This was only realised in 1997. Thus, NAECE also stabilised its administration partly through its institutional development. It has only two paid staff members including an assistant who went to secondary school but who did not graduate from it. I also concentrated on the institutional development of NAECE at its secretariat of LABCEC. This secretariat, two small offices - with modest equipment - functions as NAECE's office.

Part of the administration's stabilisation was linked to transparency in financial management. This was ensured by employing outside auditors and also providing the services of a professional accountant who was secured from 1998. The process was completed with the presentation at the monthly Board meetings of a monthly financial statement with bank reconciliations and copies of monthly bank statements. This monthly financial statement gave a line by line account of the expenses. The Board was also insistent that an accountant should oversee the monthly financial statements with bank reconciliations.

Forming NAECE's constitution

Much discussion revolved around the early issue of the constitution. Among the most significant inclusions of the final document were that the Board would consist of both nominated and elected members. The nominated members came from the original group of 12 founding members which met at SURE START. However, only four of these original members signed as Directors of the Board. Justina Ernest from the Soufriere Community Education Centre (SOUCEC) also signed as a Director. However, in 1998, she resigned from SOUCEC and, effectively, from NAECE's Board. It was decided that there would be three elected members chosen at the annual general meetings.

Eventually, in 1998, NAECE was legally registered with the understanding that the bye-laws would be registered no later than one year later. This was done. Between 1998 and 1999, the

Board discussed these bye laws line by line.

Establishing the needs of the centres

One of the first issues which the Board addressed was the question of establishing the needs of the centres. Working with these centres and their staff was seen as one of the principal aims of NAECE. It was recognised that a needs assessment survey had to be done. Linked to this needs assessment, was a recognition that early childhood teachers around the island had to be sensitized to the association and its possible functions. It appeared important to compile information about early childhood education in Saint Lucia, the context in which we were operating (see appendix eight for this context).

Between 1996 and 1998, NAECE staff visited 80 out of the 106 private centres. Our discoveries led us to conclude that early childhood education centres in Saint Lucia needed more financial support. For instance, combining all the earnings of 80 centres, we were able to conclude that parents contributed about five million E.C. per year to early childhood education. Yet, the administrators estimated that in order to provide developmentally appropriate early childhood education, they needed at least twice this amount.

Initially, workers in the centres identified the following needs which were incorporated in NAECE's work.

- Land
- Renovations
- Building Extensions
- Recurrent Expenditure
- Office Resource Accoutrements
- Training Resource Accoutrements
- Playground Equipment
- Building Construction
- Training
- Children's Books
- Food Programme Resource Accoutrements.

Raising money

Funding was a major early issue. As noted, parents only paid one-third of the costs in most of the centres. In addition, NAECE had to raise the recurrent costs for its own operations. These were only some of the reasons, albeit some of the most important, why funding was a major early issue. Proposals needed to be submitted to local, regional and international funding agencies. These proposals were discussed by and large during Board meetings. This activity was limited by the fact that there were only two international organisations - The Bernard Van Leer Foundation and UNICEF - which fund children on both an international and adequate basis and one of them did not include Saint Lucia in its geographic focus. From other international funders there was no

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question of funding extending over more than over a three years. Such long term funding would only be possibly available from some regional funders which were only three initially - Canada Fund, The Royal Netherlands Embassy and the German Embassy. Neither Canada Fund or the German Embassy would fund recurrent costs. In addition, all three of these funders only gave funding on a one year basis which was only possibly, and has not proved always, renewable. Local funders were only two - The French Embassy and the British Embassy - and the second one only gave tiny grants.

Between September 1995 and August 1996, four proposals were funded. The Hilden Charitable Foundation donated 4,000 pounds sterling (U.K.) for training, monitoring and evaluation. Canada Fund donated books to be used by teachers. These books were placed at SURE START and LABCEC. A donation of a photocopier was made by the British High Commission. The Pitons Foundation in Switzerland agreed to give between 1,000 and 1,500 U.S. per centre per year for twenty years to be used for recurrent expenses to centres in the south - BANCEC, SOUCEC, MADELEINE MONCHERY and LABCEC, all centres initiated under LABCEC.

In the 1996-1997 year, Price Waterhouse Coopers auditors report cited grants from funding agencies as amounting to 125,176 E.C. dollars and in the following year amounting to 122, 973 E.C. dollars. However an additional amount of approximately 154,000 E.C. dollars was raised for the centres directly through NAECE proposal writing for individual centres. Part of this fund-raising was from private individuals. In 1998-1999, about $26,000 E.C. was raised from private individuals, in the private sector for the most part.

A local and national raffle was also initiated in 1998. The centres themselves sold the raffle books receiving half of the proceeds which raised 16,000 E.C. in 1999, half going to the centres.

Government recognition

The issue of Government recognition followed other early issues such as establishing an identity or raising money. The previous U.W.P. Government which ruled before 1997 for twenty years concentrated on the economic sector - roads, electricity and water supply, for example - and continued the social and cultural patterns of post colonialism to a large extent. As such, they were, as noted, hostile to organisations which embraced empowerment and change within Saint Lucia. Thus, their relation to the National Youth Council was a hostile one; likewise, their relationship with LABCEC. Government public servants could, thus, only be seen to be publicly enacting Government sentiment. Some, however, genuinely reflected Government attitudes to LABCEC. Since I was seen as the principal person at LABCEC and became a founding member and Executive Director of NAECE, it was only natural that NAECE became embroiled in this tension. Nevertheless, under the U.W.P. Government, one meeting was convened between NAECE, officials of the Pre-School Unit and the Chief Education Officer of the Ministry of Education in 1996. Two major decisions were taken. One was that NAECE should also engage in training pre-school educators. The other was that regular meetings should be convened between the Pre-School Unit and NAECE. While the first decision was carried out, the second decision was not

implemented despite attempts to follow it up by NAECE.

With the change of Government in 1997 came changes of decisions and attitudes. The new Government espoused participatory democracy. Nevertheless, it had distinct economic constraints. 25% of its budget was already committed to education although less than one percent was allocated to early childhood education. In addition, incoming Government officials had to cope with acquired or inherited attitudes from remaining public servants. The fact that this new Government was still represented by a tiny elite which had received secondary and university education did not help matters. Also, these Government officials had their own internal contradictions. Some of these contradictions came directly from the lack of their own developmentally appropriate early childhood education which included repressive and authoritarian structures in post-colonial homes and in institutions. NAECE Board members did not help in the process with our own internal problems with one open resignation and two unforeseen management mistakes. Yet, undeniably, the political atmosphere was more favourable to NAECE.

So, NAECE received invitations to participate in consultations on a draft education act. It did so. It was, however, only in August 1997 that the first meeting was held between the Ministry of Education and NAECE. Present at this meeting were the Permanent Secretary of this Ministry, the Education Officer of Pre-Schools at the Pre-School Unit, the curriculum officer of Pre-Schools and one other principal officer at the Pre-School Unit. Five Board members represented NAECE. I was absent from this meeting due to reasons of illness. In this meeting, the Permanent Secretary stated that there were problems between the Pre-School Unit and the national association. He said that one sore point was training since this was also the major activity which the Pre-School Unit of the Ministry engaged in. It was concluded that NAECE could do training which ended with a certificate of participation but that only the Ministry could be responsible for accreditation. The Education Officer of Pre-Schools said that there was still need for a clear 'distinction' to be made between LABCEC and NAECE. She stated that the trust between the two parties had already deteriorated and that time would be needed to restore it. This trust had deteriorated even before the inauguration of NAECE within the context of LABCEC. This trust had deteriorated even further because of some conflicts between Board members of NAECE and the Education Officer of Pre-Schools. The Permanent Secretary explained that in his capacity it was his responsibility to protect his staff members but he would not uphold them in their deficiencies and that he would deal with any negative behaviours from anyone in his department. He promised to send a copy of an 'aide memoire' of the meeting to the members of NAECE and insisted that this memorandum should be adhered to.

Unfortunately, the minutes submitted by NAECE's Secretary made no mention of this 'aide memoire' and since the Permanent Secretary did not submit the same to NAECE, I remained in ignorance of it and was, thus, not able to participate in its compliance. Relations deteriorated even further.

Two letters of complaint were written by the Permanent Secretary to me - one on March 6th, 1998 and the other on February 2nd, 1999. The complaints related to NAECE's proposal writing to international donors who required Government endorsement without first discussing the

proposals with Government. NAECE had done this in the context of repeated unanswered letters to Government. Two responses were drafted and posted to the Permanent Secretary - apologizing, refuting the complaints and explaining where necessary. There was also a letter of complaint to NAECE which was written by the Education Officer of Pre-Schools to me on 29th June, 1998 stating that her name should not have been put on a draft agenda for an Annual General meeting.

Fortunately, a Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education was appointed in May 1998 with direct responsibility for early childhood education. He made it his responsibility to convene another meeting on April 26th, 1999, between the Ministry of Education and NAECE. The meeting was still charged and during this meeting the Permanent Secretary accused NAECE of being ' a runaway organization'.

As a follow up to this meeting, three important events took place which marked the beginning of the termination of hostilities between the Ministry of Education and NAECE. The newly appointed Education Officer of Pre-Schools requested that four documents be presented to the Ministry before NAECE could be regarded as a 'legitimate' organisation. These documents were:

1.   Two audits of NAECE done by Price Waterhouse
2.   Documentation of the legal incorporation of NAECE
3.   NAECE's membership list
4.   The registered bye-laws of NAECE.

All four of these documents were submitted by 2000. And on Monday, 5th June, 2000, the Ministry of Education through its Pre-School Unit sent its first representative to NAECE's third annual general meeting.

This question of Government recognition raises further ones of how divisions and conflicts can be resolved when feelings run high but children's futures are at stake. These divisions and conflicts began to be resolved in 2000, as shown from the above. Yet, Government in its Education Act of 2000 devoted only two pages out of 88 pages to early childhood education centres whose children, it was stated in the Act, were not entitled to the same rights and benefits of children in Government Primary and Secondary Institutions. With 25% of its recurrent budget allocated on education, it is hard to see how Government in Saint Lucia can expand to include early childhood education. So, Government recognition of NAECE does not imply any greatly increased financial commitment to early childhood education. Even within the context of this recognition, it is, however, important to remember that some conflict between NAECE and the Ministry of Education may, perhaps, be inevitable even if only because it is inherent in the power sharing necessary in the field of early childhood education.

Membership Mobilization

Some of the members of NAECE who represent the backbone of the association regard work in partnership with Government as an essential goal of the organisation. Another important

question linked to these members is that of membership mobilization. At the first annual general meeting 43 centres were represented. At the second general meeting, there were 34 represented and at the third 36. The drop out has been small. 43 represents approximately half of the centres on the island. It seems that only through visits to the centres and one to one contact may it be possible to get some of the members to invest in the association.

So, more than a half of the 106 centres had never come to any meetings of the association on a systematic basis. Yet, when careful consideration is made of the number of centres who have taken the initiative to establish contact with NAECE, it is to be seen that all the centres have already done so. Nevertheless, there is a problem related to the work as carried out by these centres. Since 1984, when the Pre-School Unit was initiated and since 1996 when NAECE was initiated, many centres have not involved themselves systematically. It is clear that some of these centres' administrators are only interested in earning a living. Yet there are others who are afraid that they may be unable to be trained. Equally, there are others who ask the question of what practical objects will they receive when they become involved. If these two latter questions are not answered, it may be that some will only involve themselves through the legislative arm of the Government? The Education Act which was voted in 2000, included, as noted, the option of setting clear guidelines for the operations of centres. Yet, it offered no practical benefits to centres. Is it that the Government will be forced to close a significant percentage of the centres which show little effort at compliance to the licensing regulations? Or is it also that the Government and NAECE will need also to understand the reasons why these centres have made little or no effort at involvement in early childhood education at a national scale and try to assist them? Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties related to mobilisation, the centres involved have continued to further their development of informed early childhood practices.

This membership mobilization is even more important in the light of the possible fear of training of some educators referred to above in a land where there is a high percentage of illiteracy. It is also significant in the fact that the educators' need for greater renumeration, toys, books are not being met by the Pre-School Unit and has only been met to a small extent by NAECE from its inception. Our organization has examined all its attendance lists. NAECE has to mobilize those which attended little as a first priority and then, as a second priority, to try to mobilize some of those which have never attended at all. At this point, perhaps in 2003, a definitive list of centres willing to participate will be given to the Pre-School Unit which would need to link this list to that of their own. Integrally involved in membership participation is the fact that NAECE needs even more so to pass to the question of action.

Platforms for Action

Platforms for action include decisions taken for action based on the needs assessment surveys conducted with NAECE's members. These surveys can also be examined from the perspective of the agenda of the Board, our experience over the five years of operation of NAECE and the experience accumulated under LABCEC's operation. As noted, they were conducted between 1996 and 1998. This led to a follow up survey in 2000. A list comprising 22 items was presented to the members of the association during the third annual general meeting of NAECE in June 2000.

57 persons were present representing 36 centres.

From the 35 to 50 centres participating in NAECE, we were able to understand what were their priorities as presented from the list of 22 items. Each centre was asked to identify six items they considered most important from a list of 22. These will be discussed one by one under the heading of new platforms for action. It is noteworthy that the centres, although encouraged to, did not put any new items on the list although requested to. The list and the priorities which the members attached to the items on it giving rise to rationales for action are as follows:

Platforms for action	Votes out of 35	Priority Percentage
1. Salaries	32	91%
2. Training and Workshops	25	71%
3. Toys and Books for children	25	71%
4. Fund-raising	16	46%
5. Group meetings with parents	13	37%
6. Books for teachers	9	26%
7. Building repairs	7	20%
8. New buildings	6	17%
9. Community Playgrounds	6	17%
10. Infant School liaison	6	17%
11. Children's evaluations and/or reports	4	11%
12. Integration of poor into quality centres	4	11%
13. Community mobilization	2	5%
14. Home visits to parents	2	5%
15. Centre/Staff monitoring and evaluation	2	5%
16. Reimbursement of expenses or honoraria for volunteers	2	5%

17. Publications	2	5%
18. Networking	2	5%
19. National mobilization	0	0%
20. Parents evaluation	0	0%
21. Research	0	0%
22. Building extensions	0	0%

Salaries

The item which the members considered most important was salaries. As Director of LABCEC, I was acutely aware of the question of resource compensation. So were the other Board members. However, it was clear that they did not think such a goal was realisable. As a former secondary school teacher, I was also attuned to the benefits of the union. So I made initial contact with the Saint Lucia Teachers Union (S.L.T.U.). However, it was not until Jonathan Pitts of Oxfam in Barbados placed work with the union as a pre-requisite for any funding that I started serious work with the S.L.T.U. Such work helped inspire the S.L.T.U., which previously had no mandate to work with private early childhood education centres, to make a recommendation at its 10th Biennial Convention which modified its constitution to accomodate pre-school teachers. Board members however remained exceedingly cautious. This union was invited and represented at NAECE's third annual general meeting where a union representative of 22 years, made a forty five minute participatory presentation. The Saint Lucia Teachers Union has to be at the forefront for the achievement of the higher salaries which was deemed as their highest priority by the early childhood educators. For the early childhood educators ourselves, a financially weak, although not disempowered group, need the support of a team skilled in negotiations with Government. That the S.L.T.U. is also an organised group able to carry out a major strike, for instance, is crucial.

Training and Workshops

Next in importance, the members considered training and workshops and toys and books for the children. In terms of the provision of toys and books for children, NAECE has already done some work and needs to continue in this direction on a recurrent basis. Such work included the fact that in 1998-1999 some financial members of NAECE received some help in the area of toys only. 15 sandboxes and 16 easels were provided through Canada Fund in 1998-1999. In this same year 10 sets of Montessori templates were distributed and about 30 centres received two large boxes of leggoes each. Along with easels there is a shortage of paint and newsprint which latter will have to be stored at the buyer's warehouse and collected through vouchers by the member centres.

NAECE aims for one three day workshop per term. Eminent early childhood educators from

the U.S.A, the U.K, and Trinidad are slated to give workshops in association with the Board members and nominated members of NAECE. These workshops focus on the underlying principles of developmentally appropriate early childhood education as outlined in the two chapters on early childhood education in this thesis. Training resources are taken in particular from the High/Scope study guide in combination with local resources created for areas which are specific to the developing nations such as the methodologies for numeracy and literacy for example. These resources are also be combined with a course entitled 'Caring for Pre-School Children'. (Dodge, 1996) In addition, all members are encouraged to participate in the two week induction and hands-on training at LABCEC.

Fund-Raising

NAECE continues and expands its efforts in fund-raising. Nevertheless, we need to take into account experiences with two member centres which received direct funding. One of them finished their accounting to the funding agency one year after the report was due. The other still had not accounted to the funding agency two years after the report was due and has only started the project in June 2000. This caused NAECE problems with receiving further funding from this agency. Fund-raising for the centres thus has to go into NAECE directly and NAECE has to be responsible for administration and communication including disbursing of funds and narrative and financial accounting. Since all fund-raising has, between 1996 and 2000, depended principally on me, I have to improve my skills as a fund-raiser including that of my narrative and financial reporting. It may not prove reasonable to rely on me. Board members have requested more involvement in the preparation of proposals. This is being done in 2000. However, it remains to be seen whether this request for involvement will lead to their active involvement in proposal preparation. Their active involvement is also limited, as already noted, by the fact that NAECE's recurrent expenditure in 2000 does not allow it to pay even my salary for the entire year. Also funding agencies as well as individuals, local and regional have to be further mobilized to assist NAECE on long term and recurrent bases.

Parenting

Group meetings with parents rated 13 out of 35 points, although community mobilization, a related item, only rated 2 out of 35. For the centres, it seems that group meetings with parents was a much more tangible issue. Twelve trainers were trained during 1998-1999 in Parenting. We used a programme adapted from the High/Scope study guide. A document for holding group meetings is given to interested administrators who are encouraged to hold regular group meetings with parents. In addition to this, the document on group meetings with parents is circulated to members to be used as a training document. A certificate is also given for successful completion to encourage administrators and senior teachers to read this document and to implement it. This document is based on the direct experience of LABCEC. In terms of community mobilization, discussion needs to centre on Boards (including the participation of Infant School Principals and senior teachers) as well home visits with parents (which got two out of 35) including possibly the benevolent participation of unemployed parents.

NAECE has adopted this parenting programme in part only in the field of HIV/AIDS through visiting families to discuss the issue of AIDS. This project visited 46 families each in seven communities in different parts of the island during 1999. These visits were made by early childhood education teachers who were trained. On the first visit these educators collected information which allowed us to situate the family in its socio-cultural and economic context and asked questions related to HIV/AIDS. On the second visit the educators shared basic information about HIV/AIDS. On the third visit they asked the same questions as on their first visit. These questions were worked through with young people of 15-16 years at six schools and with parents in one community.

Books, playgrounds, buildings and partnership with link schools

Books for teachers rated nine points. NAECE tried to deal with this item in the very first year of its existence when it got a grant from Canada Fund for resource books for administrators. In addition NAECE spends approximately 80 pounds of its recurrent expenditure per month on books.

Rating six to seven out of 35 points were community playgrounds, building repairs, new buildings and infant school liaison. NAECE could play some part in mobilizing on this issue as well as setting up one or two. NAECE already plans to work on building repairs but our experience has shown us that the establishment of new buildings is a drawn out and costly exercise to which there can only be concentration on one at a time. As noted previously, a technical assistant is the only staff member cum volunteer along with myself. This causes some constraint in terms of all fund raising, not only that of building repairs. Nevertheless, through LABCEC and NAECE, six new buildings have been built, one well placed building bought in 1998, one building repaired and the land secured for another building. This has been done over a period of 17 years between 1983 and 2000. I have managed to get promises for aid towards SOUCEC's mortgage over the next fifteen years almost fully.

In terms of Infant School liaison, initially a list of these Principals and their addresses and telephone numbers had been compiled. Two newsletters were sent to them in 1997 and they were invited to NAECE's first annual general meeting in 1998. Seven of them attended. Activities in this area remain suspended in 2000. However, during this same year, I received a letter from the Ministry of Education asking for my participation in the evaluation of a screening instrument proposed for children from the Infant School between the ages of five and six. This letter, followed by my comments of evaluation, earned me an invitation from this same Ministry to a follow up meeting in what may be an ongoing process. Sharing research results through the Permanent Secretary, as well as continued work on the screening instrument, and the follow up group which may evolve from this seem to be the next step.

Evaluation and involvement of the poor

Children's evaluation received four out of 35 points. At LABCEC, the adapted Child Observation Record of High/Scope has been found to be the most exciting and efficient. (See

Appendix nine for Perline Francis's Child Observation Record). Training is held with centres but the instrument does take time to prepare - about half a working day to two working days depending on the teacher. This report is also costly in terms of the amount of paper required.

Involvement of the poor received four out of 35 points. NAECE continues to encourage its members to give scholarships to the poor. However, this question can only be tackled efficiently by Government which can also provide scholarships for poor children to developmentally appropriate centres. NAECE can assist with the involvement of poor parents only to the extent that it can find funding for such activities as weekly home visits for example.

In many of NAECE's affiliated centres scholarships have been given to some poor children. However, the only documented information can be taken from LABCEC. Between 1997-1998, sixteen poor children from the Vieux-Fort area attended LABCEC sponsored by the Pitons Foundation in Switzerland. The opportunity which resulted from this was that the Vieux-Fort parents started to recognise the value of early childhood education, put it on their priorities at last and thus started registering their children in the centres of Vieux-Fort itself. This programme was stopped due to lack of funding. However, there were other problems. The salaries are so low, however, because money is so tight that it proved difficult to acquire staff of calibre needed from this poor section of Vieux-Fort. For instance, it was difficult to find adults who possessed the attributes required to care for and educate these children and who could accompany them to LABCEC. The first one possessed perfect attributes for the job. She was strong, willing and capable. However, she soon found another higher paying job, being visited by the Prime Minister himself. The replacement was silent and never spoke one word to the children. Of the next replacements, one was an alcoholic and the other went insane. Nevertheless, at LABCEC work continues with the low income and poor of the Laborie Community. 48 out of the 51 children registered in June 2000 paid only one fourth of the fees required for developmentally appropriate education. The rest is fund-raised

Items members considered least important

Finally, staff monitoring and evaluation, reimbursement of expenses or honoraria for volunteers, networking, publications and home visits received two out of 35 points each. The first is the responsibility of Government and the second is linked to salaries which I have already discussed.

Networking was also of interest to the centres. Thus, three annual general meetings, two northern and one southern regional meetings have been held between 1996 and 2000. Continued contact has been maintained with SERVOL, Trinidad, which paid three visits to Saint Lucia hosted by NAECE. In addition, through LABCEC in association with NAECE, early childhood education coordinators from nine Caribbean countries have attended two conferences held at LABCEC. Internationally, sustained networking has taken place with High/Scope, the National Children's Bureau in London, Early Education formerly BAECE in London, the Thomas Coram Institute in London, the Pen Green Centre in Corby, the Riverside Centre in Newcastle, the International Community Educators Association and, since 2000, the Association Generale des Institutrices des

Ecoles Maternelles in Paris, Martinique and Guadeloupe. This networking is, however, only in its incipient and tentative stages. In all cases, contact has been made with only one or two significant figures in each organization. This networking remains somewhat personalized in 2000 in that Board members have yet to meet and discuss with many of these contacts.

Publications between 1995 and 2000 have only been mine. There was the postage of my handbook funded by the German Embassy (Renard, 1997). Other publications included an edition of the 'Multicultural Teaching' containing an article of mine (Volume 17, Number 3, Summer 1999). This was posted only to the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education. He told me, however, he had shared it with the Minister of Education. Another issue of 'Multicultural Teaching' containing another article of mine was sent in 2000 to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister of Education. Publications have been used both in the area of national mobilization as well as in the area of fund-raising since all sponsors have included a copy of the above mentioned handbook in their initial letter package. Other publications, referred to below, emanated from LABCEC.

Home visits have only been done through LABCEC, apart from the HIV/AIDS NAECE home visitation programme. In 2000, LABCEC continued to do these home visits which teachers and parents find necessary. At this centre, these home visits concentrate on the 'Facts for Life' as published by UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO and UNFPA in partnership with 165 leading medical and children's organisations. NAECE has agreed to adopt the parenting programme and will benefit from the LABCEC experience and research. The facts for life chapters are:

1. Timing births
2. Safe Motherhood
3. Breast Feeding
4. Child Growth
5. Immunization
6. Diarrhoea
7. Coughs and Colds
8. Hygiene
9. Malaria
10. Child Development.

In addition, information on these topics was extended to include such leaflets to parents as 'The Approach of a good pre-school' and 'The Advantages of a good pre-school'. Material related to the development of trust, autonomy and initiative is used and is accompanied with reading stories and playing games with the children and their parents. For the three to five years old, the home visits also focus on early literacy and numeracy. Evaluation forms have been devised for these home visits. Such visits require constant overseeing. Yet, the evidence of the minutes indicates that the teachers can do them well. Since the programme is a volunteer one, NAECE can only hope to extend on the work done by LABCEC through those centres which have indicated an interest in home visits. This item, having been given a low priority by the early childhood educators, will be followed up after other items on the list of 22.

It is of significance that the three items which never appeared in the centres preferences were national mobilization, parents evaluation and research. Yet community mobilization and group meetings and home visits with parents were rated by NAECE's members. There is some association between community mobilization and national mobilization, for instance.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The situation for NAECE in 2000 offers both hope and challenges. One such field of hope is, for instance, remarkable in that the Board is in 2000 working with all of the four Board members who earlier had resigned. Other areas of hope include the fact that NAECE's identity is in sharper focus. Its constitution is legal. Government has recognised NAECE although there is room for greater partnership. It has managed to raise about three-quarters of its recurrent expenditure since its inception in 1996 and to make grants to centres. Another promise is that over the four years of existence of NAECE from 1996 to 2000, all of the centres' directors chose to associate themselves with this organisation. There is the challenge of the question of stabilised administration, in terms of what happens to NAECE when I leave, has still not been solved in 2000. The solution to this question is, however, crucial to the idea of NAECE's continuity.

Not the least of these challenges is that funding for recurrent operations had to be sought at least for the first three years. NAECE partly survived this lack because of my family's own personal financial and other investment during the first year. In 1999-2000 NAECE has met less than half of its recurrent expenditure costs compared with three-quarters in the two previous years. There is still no certainty that NAECE can achieve its targets in recurrent expenditure and survive in its present form.

Community based management is, consequently, one issue among many issues and NAECE is but one partner in the process. Community based management does not even receive high priority from its members compared to other higher priorities. As such, this item has to be integrated into the larger aim of developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Yet, for developmentally appropriate early childhood education to be achieved - the raison d'etre of NAECE - in developing nations such as Saint Lucia, all the stakeholders have to participate. Beginning with the children themselves at the centre of this process, these include the union, the Government, the parents, the early childhood educators and NAECE. While NAECE has to collaborate with all the stakeholders, it has to concentrate on work done with the early childhood educators in the areas of the priorities identified. Yet, for all of the 22 items on the agenda to be pushed into the realm of action each stakeholder has to play its part and LABCEC has to assist in training and to play a unique role in research.

NAECE's main achievement is that it has embarked on a journey. That journey is also its destination. All the priorities of all the stakeholders are part of the vision for the future of early childhood education in Saint Lucia. These priorities are an integral part of NAECE's vision. This

vision is the subject of the last chapter.

Chapter Eleven

Quiet revolution

'A morning could come in which Governments might ask what happened not merely to the forests and bays but to a whole people.' (Derek Walcott, Saint Lucian Nobel Laureate, The Antilles, 1993)

This final chapter is about the future of community based early childhood education in the context of its history and contemporary life. The thesis has been about early childhood provision in Saint Lucia. It is not a thesis about early childhood education in general. However, since community based early childhood education is only one of the characteristics of developmentally appropriate early childhood education, the future of early childhood education in Saint Lucia will also be discussed.

In Saint Lucia, like in the rest of the Caribbean, there was a sense of being community-less in terms of community life in general. The planter was the only source of power on each plantation. Mothers and especially fathers were compelled to give up their authority to the planter and his wife. Disobeying this structure during the plantation era meant death or severe torture. So, the majority of slaves chose to accommodate to it. Primary care givers only had the option of sharing the control the planters did not wish with their kith and kin. They were beholden to their kith and kin in the light of their often extreme exhaustion.

During the period of colonisation, this sharing of control by the primary care givers of their children with other community members was extended tremendously. Old people still tell with nostalgia stories of the era when any community member could 'correct' their child. These old people bewail the individualism of modern days.

Nevertheless, even during colonialism this community spirit did not openly challenge the authority of the colonial masters and their Caribbean subalterns. Communities in Saint Lucia continued to accommodate to the colonial institutions even in the very community institutions that they formed. In the years of post colonialism which followed independence, challengers of colonialism came into their own. However, social, political, economic and cultural structures were slow to change and community based organisations remained, for the majority, oppressed and accommodating organisations.

So much so that even in 1996 some intellectuals deplored the shambles in which Saint Lucia and the wider Caribbean found themselves (Lloyd Best in Kari Levitt and Michael Witter, 1996, p. 4). Populations remained terrified under conditions of freedom and independence. After more than 16 years of independence from 1979, Saint Lucia still remained a petty principality. So, what could be the excuse? How could the colonial legacy still be blamed? Why after 17 years of independence in 1996 and now 21 years of independence in 2000 are there extreme societal divisions? Why do the former 'mother-countries' and now North America still permeate the

thinking of Saint Lucians? Why is the saying "When France sneezes, the West Indies catch a cold!" still applicable? Why are the most colonized minds still found within the higher ranks of the social order? One answer can be found in the simple word - time. After all, 20 years of freedom and independence represent but infancy compared to 300 years of slavery, colonialism and post-colonialism where the whip - replaced by force - was more important than food or justice.

With a new Labour Government which was elected in 1997 replacing the former Government which enjoyed 22 years of rule broken for only two years, Saint Lucia had for the first time in its Government espousers of participatory democracy and community based management. Nevertheless, this Government is still composed of an elite who were privileged to achieve educated status. All elitism may possibly contain elements of authoritarian behaviour. Even more so because only a few members of Government have actually studied and practiced previous to entering Government the ideology of participatory democracy or community based management. Yet a pregnant consideration is that in Saint Lucia, the blacks are in charge. They run the politics and the dynamics of the culture. It is not merely a question of numbers, it is a question of the relationship to the place, the special patterns of society and power and of culture.

Evidently in this young democracy, there is a need for organizational struggle other than party politics. The political leader needs the support of other modes of thought including that of the historian, the poet, the artists, the folklorists, community based organisations such as LABCEC and non-Governmental organisations such as NAECE.

Fully fledged community based organisations such as LABCEC are thus still in the minority. Nor does the socio-cultural, economic and political history of Saint Lucia favour the rapid emergence of full fledged community based centres. This emergence necessitates a quiet revolution that fosters those partially based community centres which already exist and creates new ones. In the words of Bob Marley in 'Heathen':

Rise, O fallen fighters
Rise and take your stance again
For he who fights and runs away
Will live to fight another day.

As a young nation, and within the context of its roots as a community-less society, Saint Lucia cannot be too impatient for the realisation of the inclusionary paradigm, or it may never come. Such impatience and inappropriate judgement could lead Saint Lucia to the vision of its Nobel laureate, Derek Walcott. 'A morning could come in which Governments might ask what happened not merely to the forests and bays but to a whole people' (1993).

Complete community based management - as much as Saint Lucia will in the future accommodate - needs to await a generation which has worked and reasoned itself out of the terrors of slavery, colonialism and post-colonialism. It needs to await the realisation of the present Governmental education plan and long term sustained plans for social and economic development with the help of civil organisations.

As an ideal, these plans, in terms of developmentally appropriate early childhood education, might include:

1. Integrated early childhood care and development inclusive of health, care and education
2. A ratio of one adult to ten children from three to five years old and one adult to three or four children from birth to two and a half years old
3. An active parenting programme including home visits and group meetings
4. A developmentally appropriate curriculum
5. Appropriately trained staff
6. Continuity of services in the care and development of children during the pre-operational stage.

To make the above characteristics a reality in a nation where democratic traditions are in babyhood even a fully committed Government needs all the help it can get. Civil society through its collective strength as well as Government need to support community based institutions and national based non-Governmental organisations such as LABCEC and NAECE even and especially when they challenge. Such organisations offer the checks and balances of power in a weak democratic society - accustomed to Government by force. These balances of power are more important than the symbols of power such as policies, rules, regulations and even legislation not gainsaying the importance of the latter.

There are no absolute solutions. In our pursuit of the never-ending and elusive goals of community based early childhood education, the participation of all stakeholders is necessary. However, crucial partners for inclusion are Government, full and partial community based early childhood education centres, such as LABCEC, and national early childhood organisations, such as NAECE.

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Appendix One

SELF-STUDY (Adapted and extended from NAEYC Accreditation procedures, see Bibliography. This self-study is in the process of further extension to include 14 more statements under Curriculum and a new section on Peer Interaction).

STAFF/CHILDREN INTERACTION

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1.1	Do you smile, touch and hold the children?			
1.2	Do you talk with and listen to children during worktime, structured activities, playground, when arriving and when departing?			
1.3	Do you converse a lot with the children?			
1.4	Do you give children one to one attention when feeding, bathing or diapering them or taking them to the toilet?			
2.1	Do you quickly comfort a crying child?			
2.2	Do you make crying children feel safe?			
2.3	Do you listen to the children with attention and respect?			
2.4	Do you respond to children's requests and questions?			
2.5	Do you look up from your group or work often at the entire class?			
2.6	Do you observe each child without interrupting actively involved children?			
3.1	Do you speak to individual children often?			
3.2	Do you include children in conversations, describe things which happened, experiences you had and listen to their comments and suggestions?			
3.3	Do you stoop or sit down on a low chair often so you can speak to the children at eye level?			
3.4	Do you call the children by name?			

4.1	Do you talk with individual children and encourage all children to use language. For example, do you repeat the sounds of the toddlers, talk about things toddlers see, ask 2 year old questions which make them answer in long sentences instead of saying yes or no or other one word answers. Do you ask more how and why and what questions (these are open ended questions) instead of when and where questions?			
4.2	Do you treat children of all races, religions and family backgrounds and cultures equally with respect and consideration. For example, do you see African hair also as good hair and say so to the children as see the African nose as good as the European or the Indian?			
5	Do you provide children of both sexes with equal opportunities to take part in all activities. For example do you use words such as strong, gentle, pretty, helpful for both girls and boys and do you not divide small groups into boys and girls?			
6	Do you encourage independence in children. For example, do you allow the older children to feed themselves, the toddlers to wash their hands and select their own toys, the threes and fours to dress and pick up toys, the 4-5 to set the table, clean and help themselves?			
7	Do you use positive approaches to help the children behave constructively. For example, do you acknowledge the child's feelings "You look upset Camille", plan, encourage the children for good behaviour, discuss the rules of the class with the children, describe situations rather than give our own solutions?			
8	Do you refrain from using physical punishment, calling children's names or frightening the children and making them feel ashamed?			
9	Do you help children to deal with anger, sadness and frustration by comforting, identifying, reflecting feelings and helping children use words to solve their problems?			

10	Do you encourage pro-social behaviours in children such as cooperating, helping, taking turns and talking to solve problems. For example, do you role-model good behaviours, do you search for ways to develop pro-social behaviours and describe them. Do you start opportunities for exploring and valuing differences?			
11	Do you encourage children to talk about feelings and ideas instead of solving problems with force. For example, do you supply appropriate words for infants and toddlers to help them learn ways to get along in a group. Do you step in quickly when children start fighting and discuss with them why fighting is inappropriate. Do you discuss other solutions children could take with 2 years and older?			

HEALTH, SAFETY AND NUTRITION

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1.1	Do you see that tables are washed and floors are swept after meals?			
1.2	Do you see toys are picked up after use?			
2.1	For Daycare only. Do you see that soiled diapers are put in closed rubbish bin and that soiled clothes are kept in a closed container out of reach of the children?			
2.2	Do you help keep the toilet area clean regularly?			
3	Do you clean the water-play containers with chemico daily?			
4	Do you see that drinking water is always available for the children at their reach?			
5	Do you see children wash hands after going to the toilet and before meals?			
6	Do you encourage the children to assist with the clean up after meals?			
7	Do you sit with the children and converse with them regularly during snack and lunch time?			
8	For Daycare only. Do you see that toys that are mouthed are washed daily?			
9	Do you see that individual cribs, cots and mats are washed if soiled?			

STAFF PARENT INTERACTION

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1	Do you keep a book with observations of the children children so you can both inform the parents and develop on the children's schemas? This book could be the High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR). One COR should be compiled for each child per year.			
2	Do you keep a daily diary of important happenings, especially children's strengths and weaknesses so you can inform parents?			
3	Do you attend six (6) parent meetings per year?			
4	For teachers-in-charge only. Do you inform parents about important matters or about changes taken place at your centre through newsletters, bulletin boards, frequent notes, telephone calls and so on?			
5	When a parent brings a complaint and/or other matter to your attention do you listen to the complaint of the parent, state your agreement first with points of the complaint you agree with and then only afterwards mention areas that you may not necessarily agree with?			
6	Do you refrain from bad-mouthing parents who bring complaints but discuss instead only the content and importance of the complaints themselves?			

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT/CURRICULUM

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1	The programme has written policies with the centre's mission statement and objectives available to all staff and parents. This policy includes hours, fees, illness, holidays, refund information and termination of enrolment			
2.1	The programme has a written curriculum based on up-to-date knowledge of child development			
2.2	Activity plans are regularly done and kept available for Administrator and parents			
2.3	The learning environment and activities for children reflect the programme's philosophy and goals			
3.1	Changes are made in the environment and staffing patterns for children with special needs			
3.2	Staff refer children to appropriate professionals - eye doctor, ear doctor for example, when necessary			
3.3	When disabled, developmentally delayed, or emotionally disturbed children are served, staff are aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans			
3.4	Parents are involved in development and use of individual education plans for children with special needs. Staff address the needs of parents of children with special needs			
4.1	There is a written timetable for each group of children			
4.2	All age groups play outdoors daily, weather permitting			

4.3	The timetable provides for periods of both quiet and active play			
4.4	There are at least five different learning corners in each classroom			
4.5	Children under 2 ½ years are not expected to function as a large group			
4.6	A balance of large muscle/small muscle activities are provided			
4.7	There is a time per day when children initiate activities and a time when staff initiate activities.			
4.8	There is a written curriculum which is based on appropriate developmental foundations for children.			

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT - STAFFING

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1.1	There should be 1 adult to 3 - 4 infants			
1.2	There should be 1 adult per 5 - 6 children under 2 ½ years			
2	There should be 1 adult for 10 - 12 children from 2 ½ - 5 years			
3	Substitutes are provided to maintain staff-child ratios when regular staff are absent			
4.1	Every attempt is made to have continuity of adults who work with children			
4.2	Infants and toddlers spend majority of the time interacting with the same person each day			
4.3	There should be a minimum of 25 - 35 square feet of usable classroom space per child indoors			
4.4	There should be a minimum of 75 square feet of play space outdoors per child			
5	Records are kept of staff résumés, on the job training and results of evaluations			
6	The centre has written policies defining role and responsibilities of board members and staff			
7	Board Members and Principals of the Infant and Primary Schools are informed of the elements and methods involved of developing a high quality programme			
8	Minutes of Board Meetings are kept			
9	Financial accounts are kept			
10	Accident protection and liability insurance is maintained for children and adults			

11	The Administrator uses the community resources available including Health Aides, food producers and so on			
12	Staff and Administrator communicate frequently about the programme, children and families			
12.1	Staff plan and consult together			
12.2	Regular staff meetings are held			
12.3	Staff are provided paid planning time			
13.1	Staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes for each 4 hour period			
13.2	Staff keep information about children, families and other staff members confidential. They do not comment about children or parents in presence of other adults or children			
13.3	An appropriate person (or persons)-on-site is designated to assume authority and take action in the event of Director's absence			
14	The programme meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education.			

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT - ADMINISTRATION

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1	At least annually, the Administrator and staff conduct a self - study looking at self-children interaction, staff-parent interaction, health, safety and nutrition, the Administrators reports, activity plans, training reports, classroom observations, staff duties assigned and staff conduct of their job description			
2	The centre has written personnel policies including job descriptions, resignation and termination benefits and grievance procedures			
3	Benefits packages for full time staff members and volunteers include paid leave (annual, sick and personal), NIS benefits, subsidized daycare and pre-school for their own children and educational benefits			
4	Attendance records of staff and children are kept.			

ADMINISTRATOR's REPORT/STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1.1	Teachers-in-charge are 18 years of age or older. Volunteers are 16 years of age and older, receive orientations and only work with children under supervision of trained staff members			
1.2	All teachers and volunteers participate in regular on the job-training by the Ministry, NAECE or other relevant institution			
1.3	Teachers in charge have completed or are in the process of completing the Ministry's one year training programme or NAECE's Level 2 training programme			
2.1	The Administrator has completed or is completing the Ministry's one year training programme or NAECE's Level 2 training programme			
2.2	New staff are adequately oriented about the goals and philosophy of the program, emergency health and safety procedures, special needs of children assigned to the staff member's care, guidance and classroom management techniques, planned daily activities of the program, and expectations for ethical conduct			
3.1	Accurate and current records are kept of staff qualifications			
4	A food programme is provided			
5	All assistants and volunteers have completed or are in the process of completing a Level One training			
6	There is an adequate supply of instructional materials both local and foreign			

7	There is within the centre a culture that demonstrates commitment to poor children and their parents.			

TIME ON TASK (TOT)

		Not at all	Some-times	Very much
1	Do you prepare monthly financial statements with bank reconciliations?			
2	Do you have a written programme of training for your staff who have not completed the one year programme at the Ministry or other relevant training?			
3	Does each care giver pay one or two monthly home visits with a parent education programme to children who are cognitively inexperienced or, alternatively, does the administrator or teachers call in the parents of children who are cognitively inexperienced for individual parent sessions and keep records of the same?			
4	Does each teacher-in-charge visit the homes of parents who never attend parent meetings and keep minutes, or alternatively, does the administrator request parents who never or rarely come to meetings in for consultation and keep records of the same?			
5	Do your teachers bring new items into your classrooms each month?			
6	Are your charts well hung up and appropriate?			
7	Are your charts free from basic grammar mistakes?			
8	Do you keep careful records of the children's work?			
9	Do you have end of term reports for your three to five year Olds which include narrative reports?			
10	Do you have ample quantities of simple parent supplied and made and teacher made materials such as coloured yarn, cut lined paper, burnt match sticks and matchboxes?			
11	Do you have paper and pencils easily accessible to the children?			
12	Do you have daily sand play or other equivalent such as bead play with ample supplies of beads?			

13	Are your materials kept in good condition, for example, are your books repaired regularly?			
14	Do you keep registration forms which include relevant information for the children and their families?			
15	Do you have a written timetable for parent, board and community members visits?			
16	Do you have written duties for all staff including assistants and volunteers which are checked monthly?			
17	Is there training for parent home visits?			
18	Is there checking of individual activity or work time such as sand play, water play, clay or playdough, painting, teacher interaction with children, paper with pencil or crayons drawing and so on?			
19	Is there a monthly inspection for repairs to premises?			
20	Are minutes of board meetings kept?			
21	Are interviews with staff kept on file?			
22	Are registration forms kept on file?			
23	Is an annual registration book kept?			
24	Are minutes of staff meetings kept?			
25	Are report books of children kept on file?			
26	Do you have field visits with your children from 2 ½ up at least once a term?			
27	Are your toys in good repair?			
28	Do you keep a punctuality book for staff?			
29	Do you keep an attendance book for staff?			
30	Do you send letters home to each parent at least once per term and keep copies of these letters?			
31	Are all your staff required to be present at parent meetings?			

Induction Training Assessment Sheet

Name of Trainee ....

Centre ....

Name of Administrator ....

Trainee's telephone .... (w) .... (h)

Activity	Date done	Mark
1. Observation/Numeracy class/Trainee should be able to explain objectives, materials and methods for ALL OBSERVATIONS. Use curriculum for this and for all observations		
2. Teaching/Numeracy		
3. Observation/Language and Literacy/Key alphabet and so on		
4. Teaching/Language and Literacy/Key alphabet and so on		
5. Observation/Key talk book		
6. Teaching/Key talk book		
7. Observation/Language and Literacy/Montessori shapes		
8. Teaching/Language and Literacy/Montessori Shapes		
9. Observation/Story time		
10. Teaching/ Steiner's Spiritual Story/learn one of choice by heart/Stories provided for choice (get booklet from teacher in charge)		
11. Observation/Key book		
12. Teaching/Key book		

13. Observation/Seriation or space		
14. Observation/Emergent Writing		
15. Observation/Onsets		
16. Observation/Creative Representation		
17. Observation/Music and Movement		
18. Observation/Montessori Manipulative Math. Name toys.		
19. Teaching/Montessori Manipulative Math		
20. Observation/Key words		
21. Observation/Key talk		
22. Teaching/Emergent writing		
23. Observation/Concept Formation		
24. Teaching/Concept Formation		
25. Observation/Local Nursery Rhymes (say one by heart)		
26. Oral test/Brain at sensori-motor stage. Document provided for this and all oral tests (Read each oral test paper three times at least)		
27. Oral test/Brain at the pre-operational stage		
28. Oral Test/Values and High Quality		
29. Oral Test/Curriculum/Timetables birth to five/small group time activities		
30. Oral Test/Attributes of developmentally appropriate early childhood education adhered to by LABCEC		
31. Oral Test/Child Observation Records COR. Remember choose one or two child to observe at the beginning of this induction training (30 marks)		
32. Oral Test/Self Study		

33. Oral Test/Characteristics of a good pre-school		
34. Oral Test/The importance of action time, also know as work time, choice activities, free play or individual activity?		
35. Oral Test/Phonic Sounds		
36. Oral Test/Direction of upper and lower case letters		
37. Oral Test/Plan and Review		
38. Activity plan on Classification		
39. Activity plan on Time		
40. Activity plan on Seriation		
41. Activity plan on Space		
42. Activity plan on Initiative and Social Relations		
43. Activity plan on Numeracy/ Use guideline		
44. Activity plan on Montessori Shapes		
45. Activity plan on Onsets and Rimes		
46. Activity plan on Key talk		
47. Activity plan on Key words		
48. Compose a Rhymed story with key words from key book and common key words (get booklet from teacher in charge)		
49. Ending evaluation/ Form provided		
50. Final written test including post evaluation (70% pass required for distribution of certificate).		

To remember: Trainee should play with children during each and every action or work time. She is there for at least 20 minutes every day in order to raise their level of proximal development as well as to observe them more closely.

Appendix Three

Draft Strategic development plan of NAECE, 1999-2005 (September 1999)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

   Overview of E.C.Es
   History of NAECE

2. Rationale of NAECE

   Use Doctorate and develop

3. Mission, values and Principles

   Develop

4. Objectives

a. To raise awareness to issues around Early Childhood Education

b. To campaign for high quality Early Childhood Education for every child in Saint Lucia

c. To ensure all required information is available to practitioners of Early Childhood Education

d. To build the capacities of Early Childhood Education institutions and practitioners

e. To encourage the development of community based management in Early Childhood Education

f. To ensure continuity of NAECE philosophy in education.

5. Priorities

   Campaigning
   Poverty Alleviation
   Infrastructual Development
   Educational materials and equipment
   Institutional Development
   Parenting
   Services
   Infant School liaison
   Community Based Management

Fund-raising
Public Awareness and Education
Legislation
Evaluation
Training
Needs Assessment and Data Collection
Research and Publications
Building Membership Base
Salary Discussions
Networking (to develop)

6.   Outcomes of the plan

      To develop

7.   Evaluation and Monitoring

      To develop

8.   Action plans

      To develop

9.   BREAKDOWN OF NAECE'S ACTIVITIES/use for ACTION PLAN

      1.   Campaigning

      1.1   Government

            1.1.1   Document sent to relevant government officials on the importance of increased moral and financial commitment to early childhood education
            1.1.2   Follow up meetings, telephone calls, letters reminding of above document
            1.1.3   Relationship building through meetings and follow up meetings with key government officials
            1.1.4   A quality published book on early childhood education sent to government officials or information of same
            1.1.5   Two newsletters sent to government officials with relevance to government and NGO involvement in children's rights
            1.1.6   Soliticing government officials help in specific projects
            1.1.7   Meeting with all government officials concerned

1.1.8 Soliciting for an annual subvention to NAECE

1.1.9 Half yearly reports to liaising Government Ministries.

1.2 The Private Sector

1.2.1 Information on published books on early childhood education

1.2.2 Soliciting for annual donations

1.2.3 Half yearly reports.

1.3 Parents

1.3.1 Group meetings for all parents

1.3.2 Monthly home visits for poor parents and their children

1.3.3 Group meetings for poor parents in their own areas.

1.4 Youth

1.4.1 Preliminary meetings with National Youth Council on involvement of youth in rights of children

1.4.2 Document on above circulated to members and local youth councils

1.4.3 Follow up meetings and documents.

1.5 Non-Governmental organisations

1.5.1 Distribution of published book on early childhood education

1.5.2 Attend regular meetings of NGO body with discussion also on institutional sustainability of NGOs and their importance as counter powers

1.5.3 Sending of strategic plan of NAECE

1.5.4 Follow up calls, meetings and so on with reference to NAECE's strategic plan

1.5.5 Initiate annual meetings with executive Members of NGOs.

2. Poverty Alleviation

2.1 Scholarships for the poor

2.1.1 Government and private individuals encouraged

to provide scholarships for the poor at quality centres

  2.1.2 Government asked to construct centres to
cater for poor pre-schoolers in selected areas.

2.2   Financial assistance to pre-school volunteers and assistants

  2.2.1 Government asked to provide subsidies for
pre-school teachers, volunteers and assistants.

3.   Infrastructural development

3.1   Land acquisition

  3.1.1 Government approached for the lease and donation of
land
  3.1.2 Private owners approached for the lease and sale of land.

3.2   Construction and Property Acquisition

  3.2.1 Funding agencies approached for construction of property for both
individual owners and community based centres
  3.2.2 Funding agencies approached for the acquisition
of property for individual owners and community based
centres
  3.2.3 Loans sought from banks and credit unions.

3.3   Building repairs and extensions

  3.3.1 Funding agencies and banks approached for grants and loans for
building repairs.

4.   Educational materials and equipment

4.1   Local Toys

  4.1.1. Parents encouraged to bring matchboxes, matches, sand and other
local materials to parent meetings
  4.1.2 Centres encouraged to get clay from Choiseul or use
Breaddough
  4.1.3 Exhibitions of teacher made toys set up at centres and Annual General
Meetings.

4.2   Imported Toys

    4.2.1   Centres be encouraged to select their imported toys with care

    4.2.2   Inexpensive, appropriate and sturdy imported toys ordered by NAECE and sold to the centres

    4.2.3   Campaigning with Government for subventions to
Early childhood education centres for acquisition of
Toys.

4.3   Playground equipment

    4.3.1   Funding agencies and government asked to provide playground equipment for centres with land space.

4.4   Books

    4.4.1   Centres encouraged to buy multicultural and other appropriate books

    4.4.2   Multicultural and other appropriate books bought by NAECE and sold to centres

    4.4.3   Development of local books.

4.5   Sale and ordering of essential educational supplies.

5.   Institutional Development

5.1   Secretariats

    5.1.1   An office set up at the Laborie Community Education
Centre

    5.1.2   A property acquired or a room identified for a reference library and resource centre in the north

    5.1.3   Photocopying services available both in the north
and south

    5.1.4   Board reiumbursement travel

    5.1.5   Full and part time staff appointed.

6.   Parenting

6.1   Home visits, group meetings and volunteerism

    6.1.1   Monthly Home visits paid to poor parents of children from birth to

three years old with funding from Government and other sources

6.1.2 Centres encouraged to hold twice termly group meetings with parents of registered children

6.1.3 Centres encouraged to use parents as volunteers paying them a stipend and offering child care and food where available.

6.2 Technical assistance to formation of National Early Years Parent Association

6.2.1. Assistance for annual general meetings

6.2.3 Other Assistance resulting from above.

7. Services

7.1 Sale and ordering of educational supplies

7.1.1 Promotional educational supplies for early childhood education such as pins and buttons sold by NAECE so that the centres can make some profit from this sale also.

7.2 Newsletters to members

7.4 Annual general meetings

7.5 Grants to centres for:

- building construction
- toilet construction
- acquisition of water supply
- building repairs and extenstion
- Scholarships for the poor
- tiling
- food programme equipment
- instructional materials
- any other need that centres request which NAECE can meet.

7.5 Annual raffle

7.5.1 An annual raffle held with attractive prizes with half the proceeds going to the centres and half to NAECE.

7.6 Insurance coverage

7.6.1 Centres encouraged to pay NIS for their employees and administrators

7.6.2   Investigation into other possibilities for insurance.

8.   Infant School liason

   8.1   Principals on boards and within organization

      8.1.1   Centres encouraged to include Principals of Infant and Combined Schools on their boards of management
      8.1.2   Principals of Infant and Combined Schools encouraged to become members of NAECE.

   8.2   Information sharing

      8.2.1   Principals and staff of Infant and Combined schools informed of any NAECE publications
      8.2.2   Relevant information on early childhood education sent to Principals of Infant and combined schools
      8.2.3   Half yearly reports
      8.2.4   NAECE newsletters to Principals of Member Infant and Combined Schools.

   8.3   Training

      8.3.1   Induction on-site training.

9.   Community based management

   9.1   Community cluster organization

      9.1.1   Proposal writing and presentation by groups or communities of pre-schools
      9.1.2   Meetings of these groups to monitor and evaluate the projects
      9.1.3   Encouragement of centres to have active community boards
      9.1.4   Encouragment of centres to conduct annual general meetings with as many community invitees as possible
      9.1.5   Community fund-raising.

10.   Local, regional and international fund-raising

   10.1   Local private individuals and private sector to amount of $40,000.00E.C. per year

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10.2 Regional French Caribbean private individuals to amount of $30,000.00E.C. per year through LABCEC and NAECE

10.3 International St. Lucian private individuals to amount of $12,000.00E.C. per year

10.4 Regional and international foundations to amount of $100,000.00E.C. per year

10.5 Annual Raffle to amount of $20,000.00E.C. per year.

11. Public Awareness and education

11.1 The general public

11.1.1 Weekly newspaper article
11.1.2 Weekly television appearance on parenting
11.1.3 Weekly radio programme in creole on parenting
11.1.4 Yearly meetings with selected persons in all media corporations.

11.2 Private patrons

11.2.1 Document on importance of supporting specific pre-schools
11.2.2 Board members identify prospective patrons
11.2.3 Patrons contacted by board members, administrators and fund-raising organizer.

12. Legislation

12.1 Half yearly reports and other relevant documents to Attorney-General

12.2 Legal registration of NAECE.

13. Evaluation

13.1 Pre and post home visit questionnaires
13.2 Post parent group evaluations
13.3 Pre and post trainee evaluations
13.4 Termly board evaluations
13.5 Children's reports
13.6 Self-studies.

14. Training

14.1 Training for social, intellectual and financial
sustainability of centres

    14.1.1.   Preparation of NAECE diploma/level one for
                     every caregiver - "What all parents
                     and teachers should know about birth to
                     six years old"

    14.1.2   Preparation of NAECE diploma/level two for
                     lead teachers and assistants with field visit
                     to an international centre of excellence

    14.1.3   Encouragement and assistance to members
                     training in distance education B.Phils and
                     M.A.s

    14.1.4   Preparation of local distance education
                     B.Phils and M.A.s in association with
                     International centres of excellence and
                     Caribbean and International universities
                     Bachelors degree

    14.1.5   Submission of packages for possible
                     validation by regional and international
                     specialists

    14.1.6   Testing of training packages locally

    14.1.7   Pursuing local and regional training using
                     these packages

    14.1.8   Pursuing of links with pre-school unit in
                     collaboration on training

    14.1.9   Building and stocking a reference library and
                     ressource room

    14.1.10   Building links with regional and international
                     quality training institutions

    14.1.11   On site training at centres themselves

    14.1.12   On site training at local centres of
                     Excellence.

15.   Needs Assessment and data collection

    15.1   Needs assessment and Data collection forms
    15.2   Visits to centres
    15.3   Review of evaluation forms
    15.4   Visits by Administrators, staff and volunteers to NAECE.

16.   Research and publications

16.1 Research
   16.1.1 Identification of areas of research to be done
   16.1.2 Conduct of research in quality centres only.

16.2 Publications
   16.2.1 Identification of necessary publications
   16.2.2 NAECE publications
   16.2.3 NAECE support for members' publications.

17.   Building Membership base

17.1 Regional area meetings
17.2 Newsletters to members
17.3 Annual general meetings
17.4 Insurance coverage
17.5 Initial contact visits to all private pre-schools
17.6 Follow up visits.

18.   Salary Discussions

   18.1.1 Discussions and negotiations with government On:
      -   Salary subventions to senior teachers
      -   Salary subventions to assistant teachers And volunteers.

   18.1.2 Discussions and negotiations with the S.L.T.U. On above.

Appendix Four

Data form for pre-school teachers

Date form is filled out ....

1. Name of centre ....

2. Name of administrator ....

3. Address of Centre ....

4. Telephone number at Centre ....

5. Telephone number at Administrator's home ....

6. How many children attended centre this year?

   6.1. In all   (   )
   6.2 Birth to threes (   )
   6.3 Threes to fours (   )
   6.4 Four to fives   (   )

7. Fees charged per month or term ....

8. Do you have a food programme? Yes ( )   No ( )

9. How much money do parents pay per child for the food programme? ....

10. How much money do you spent in rental? ....

11. Other main expenses per month besides rent, water, electricity, telephone? (please list)
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

12. Visitor please state if the school is: (a) overcrowded ( )
                                         (b) could accomodate more children ( )
                                         (c) adequate ratio of children to physical space ( )
                                         (d) needs to be measured to be sure of exact
                                             amount of physical space ( )

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13. What are the qualifications of the Administrator?
    a) C.X.C (state subjects, grades and number of sittings)   ( )

    ....
    ....
    ....
    ....

    b) Junior Secondary leaving certificate ( )

    c) Standard Six leaving certificate ( )

14. Does any other member of staff have 4 C.X.C at least including English?
    Yes ( )   No ( )

15. If yes, how many?

16. How many staff members including yourself work at your centre?

17. How many of your staff have completed the one year training at the Ministry of Education?

18. How many of your staff have completed one year courses at other institutions? State which institutions?

19. Does any of our staff have a B.A. in early childhood education?

20. How many of your staff have certificates or diplomas for shorter term training at the Ministry or other relevant institutions? (State which institutions)

21. How many members of your staff are:

    Under 18 years of age (   )
    Between 18-25 (   )
    Between 26-35 (   )
    Between 36-55 (   )
    Over 55 (   )

22. No. Of staff earning:

    Under $E.C.200.00 (   )
    Between $201.00-$400.00 (   )
    Between $401.00-$600.00 (   )

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Between $601.00- $700.00 (   )
Between $701.00-$1,000.00 (   )
Between $1,001.00 - $1,500.00 (   )
Between $1,501.00 - $2,500.00 (   )
More than $E.C. $2,500   (   )

23.   Do you have a board of management? Yes (   ) No   (   )

24.   How many times a year do you have parent meetings?

monthly   (   )   twice termly   (   ) termly (   ) yearly   (   )
less than yearly   (   )

25.   If you had more money, what items would you buy or what other activities would you do for your centre?

----

26.   I would like Government to help my centre in the following areas:

1.   Subventions for teachers salaries to be the same as salaries in
       Government Day Cares ($785 - 1,085.00) (   )
2.   Subventions for toys and other instructional materials (   )
3.   An open subvention to be used as Administrator feels necessary
       (   )
4.   Other areas state:

       1.--

       2. --

3. --

4. --

.

Interview form for fathers

2.   How many different child mothers do you have?

A. More than eight ( ) B. Between 4 and 8   (   ) C. Between 2 and 4   (   ) D. Only one (   )

3.   What job do you have?

4.   What is your income, if you would care to tell us?

A. Less than $200.00 per month
B. Between $200.00 and $500.00 per month
C. Between $500.00 and $1,000.00
D. Between $2,000.00 and $4,000.00
E. Over $4,000.00 per month

5.   How much money do you give to all your child mothers combined? Include expenses like books.

A. Less than $200.00 per month
B. Between $200.00 and $400.00
C. Between $400.00 and $800.00
D. More than $800.00

6.   Do you support all your child mothers equally or do you spend much more on one child mother?

A. Support all equally
B. Spend much more on one
C. Spend much more on 2 or more. State how many.

7.   Are you married? Yes   No

8.   Are you living with one partner now? Yes   No

9.   If no, do you have one partner you see much more than the others? Yes. No.

10.   What is your age group?
18-25
25-35

35-55
55-70
above 70

11.   What is your religion?
Catholic
Pentecostal
Evangelical
Other

12.   Do you go to church?

A   Never
B   For funerals and Weddings
C   Once a year
D   Occasionally
E   Almost once a week

13.   What do you feel about the two readings from LABCEC and PARENTING PARTNERS.
Give personal examples (Parent Educator please write a least a page on this).

Appendix Six

Minutes of Home Visits

Name of Family _____

Name and Age of Child _____

Date of Visit _____

Topic _____

Lesson _____

What went well and why?_____

What didn't go well and why? _____

What should be done differently next time? _____

_____

Special Problems (if any) _____

_____

Minutes _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____
_____

Registration form of LABCEC

Note to parent:

The questions on this registration form are detailed. This is because LABCEC is conducting a study over the years (longitudinal study) in order to see if the teaching or curriculum used at LABCEC gives the children life long advantages. We count on your understanding and cooperation in answering all the questions on this registration form. This information will be treated confidentially

Note to Deputy Principal:

Please make sure that the parent reads the above note and understands it. Make sure that I have put in the monthly payment. Next, fill out the form with the parent or check that all questions are answered on the form. The next step is to send the parent back to me to check and sign the form. The parent will then bring it back to you. Only then is the child considered registered and the parent given a registration card.

REGISTRATION FORM

1. Child's Full name
....

2. Date of Birth
....

3. Home Address
....

4a. Name of Mother
.... (if mother is not principal caregiver please give the name of the principal caregiver)

4b. Nickname of Mother.......................................
(if mother is not principal caregiver please give the nickname of the principal caregiver)

5. Age ....

6   Educational Background ....
     State if

     Did not attend Primary School (   )
     Primary School only (   )
     Junior Secondary but left before graduating   (   )
     Completed Junior Secondary (   )
     Secondary but left before graduating   (   )
     Completed Secondary   (   )
     Teachers Training College   (   )
     Technical Vocational (   )
     University (state type of degree)   _____

     Other (state which)

7.   Name of Father...

8.   Age ....

9.   Educational Background ....

10. Mail Address ....

11. Type of Work of
mother...

12. Work Address ....

13. Type of Work of father
....

14. Work Address ....

15. Working hours of mother
....

16. Working hours of father ....

17. Who is looking after your child now
....

18. Telephone no. Of mother
(h).....................(0).............

19. Telephone no. Of father
(h)...................(0).............

20. Telephone no. Of relative, neighbour or friend living close
by   in case of an emergency
....

21. Other Members of Family

Age   Name   Relation   Place of
                                             Employment

        ----

22. Yearly Salary of Mother   Under $1000   ( ) 8001 - 10001 ( )
                               $1001 - 2000   ( ) 10001 -15001 ( )
                               $2001 - 4000   ( )15001 -20001   ( )
                               $4001 - 6000   ( )20001 - 50001 ( )
                               $6001 - 8000   ( )50001 -66000   ( )
                                                 66000 plus   ( )

23. Yearly Salary of Father (only if living with mother)

                               Under $1000   ( ) 8001 - 10001 ( )
                               $1001 - 2000   ( ) 10001 -15001 ( )
                               $2001 - 4000   ( )15001 -20001   ( )
                               $4001 - 6000   ( )20001 - 50001 ( )
                               $6001 - 8000   ( )50001 -66000   ( )
                                                 66000 plus

24.   Do you receive money regularly from abroad? Yes (   ) No (   )

25.   If yes about how much do you receive

       per month --
       per year -- ?

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25. Monthly contribution of father (if not living with mother)

    ----

26. Are you

    Single? (   )
    Married? (   )

27. In addition the the child registering at LABCEC, do you have any other
    children? No (   ) Yes   (   )

28. If YES, please tell me their names and dates of birth:

    Child's Full name   Date of Birth

    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------

29. Do all the children above have the same father as the child registering at
    LABCEC? NO (   ) Yes   (   )

30. If no, please tell me the name (s) of the father (s) of the other children?

    Child's Full Name   Father's Full Name

    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------
    -----------------------------------   -----------------------------------

31. At what age did you have your first child?

    ----

32. How many children did you have in all before you were 21 years of age?

    ----

33. How many rooms are there in your house? Include the kitchen? Do NOT include the bathroom.

    1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) 6 ( ) More than six ( )

34. How many of your children live with you?

    ----

35. How many of your own children live with a relative or a friend?

    _____

36. Do they live with

    A relative ( ) State if aunt, grandmother or other ----------------------------
    A friend ( )

37. What type of toilet do you have?
    a. a flush toilet   ( )
    b. a pit toilet   ( )
    c. no toilet at all ( )

38. If you have no toilet at all, how far is the public toilet?
    a. five minutes walk   ( )
    b. ten minutes walk   ( )
    c. twenty minutes walk   ( )
    d. more than twenty minutes walk ( )

39. What type of water supply do you have?
    a. running water at your home   ( )
    b. access to a stand pipe   ( )

40. If you use a standpipe, how far is the standpipe from your home?
   a. five minutes walk ( )
   b. ten minutes walk ( )
   c. twenty minutes walk ( )
   d. more than twenty minutes walk ( )

41. How many children have you given birth to and are alive?......

42. How many children have you given birth to and have died? ....

43. How many children do you have with your present partner? ....

44. How many children does your present partner have? ....

45. No of children who succeeded in common entrance examination. ....

47. Is your first language creole ( ), English ( ) or both ( )

Now, I have a few questions for you and your child at home.

Question	Not at all	Once or Twice	Three or more times	Every Day
48. How many times have you or someone in your family read to your child in the past week?				
49. How many times have you read something like a book or a magazine in the past week?				

Question: In the past week how often have you or someone in your family...	None	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times
50. Told your child registering at LABCEC a story				
51. Taught or worked with him with letters, words or numbers				
52. Taught him a song				

53. Played with toys or games indoors				
54. Played a game, sport or exercised together				
55. Took him/her along while doing messages (errands) like going to the post office, bank or the shop				
56. Involved him or her in household chores like cooking, cleaning or setting the table				
57. Talked about what is going to happen at the LABCEC Pre-School				
58. Talked about TV or video programmes				
59. Played counting games like singing songs with numbers or reading books with numbers?				
60. Played counting games while cooking?				
61. Played counting games while shopping?				
62. Played with math toys?				
63. Beat your child?				
64. Shouted at your child?				
65. Cursed your child?				
66. Humiliated your child in any fashion ie made your child feel that he or she was bad?				

Question	All of the time	Most of the times (3-4 times this past week)	Some of the times (1-2 times this past week)	A little of the time or rarely (Less than 1 time per week)	Not at all	Not applicable
67. Do you allow your child to brush his or her own teeth?						
68. Do you allow your child to comb his or her own hair?						
69. Do you allow your child to pour his or her own water or juice?						
70. Do you allow your child to button his or her own shirts?						
71. Do you allow your child to tie her own ribbons?						
72. Do you allow your child to lace her own shoes?						
73. Do you allow your child to wipe his or her own bottom?						
74. Do you allow your child to water flowers and plants						

Do you have the following in your home?	NO	YES
75. Children's books		
76. Magazines for adults like Time and Newsweek?		
77. Newspapers?		
78. Catalogues?		
79. Religious books like a bible or prayer book?		

80. Dictionaries or encyclopedias?		
81. Other books like novels or biographies or non-fiction?		

Now I would like you to look ahead to when CHILD enters kindergarten in Infant School and beyond to Common Entrance and even C.X.C.

In your opinion how well will your child do at school	Not well	Fairly well	Quite well	Very Well
82. In passing Common Entrance				
83. In passing C.X.C.				
84. In making friends and joining clubs				
85. Overall				

PARENTS

. . . .
Date   Parent or Guardian

TO HELP US INCLUDE FATHERS BECAUSE WHEN THEY ARE INVOLVED CHILDREN ARE BRIGHTER AND MORE EMOTIONALLY STABLE, PLEASE FILL THE FOLLOWING

Does your child father live with you. Yes .... No
. . . .

If no, give his address and telephone no
. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

If you do not have his address, please give the address of the man closest to your child. Give also his telephone number.

....

....

....

HEALTH RECORD CARD

Child's certified name

....

Child's certified date of birth

Date of Admission

....

Mother's name

....

Address

....

IMMUNIZATION

	1	2	3	4
Small pox				
D.P.T.				
B.C.G.				
Polio				
Other				

CONDITIONS ON ADMISSION

Weight ....

Appearance for age ....

Cleanliness and general appearance ....

Marks of Injury/violence/child abuse/Accident ....

....

Skin Condition ....

Eating habits at home ....

Allergies ....

Other observations ....

....

                    Please note that there is a

                  REGISTRATION FEE OF $50.00

                    It is payable only once.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

....
Signature of Principal

....
Signature of Coordinator (certifying registration)

Signature of Deputy Principal...............................

Signature of Coordinator..................................

Date of registration ....

Medical checks

Result of Eye Check

Date ....

Comments by Doctor

Result of hearing test

Date ....

Comments by Doctor

Weight check   Date   Comments

Context of early childhood education in Saint Lucia

In 1999,there were approximately 106 early childhood education centres in Saint Lucia which were private and there were also 18 fully Government owned and run centres. Of the 106 private centres, only six were owned by the community. These six were - SOUCEC , LABCEC, BANCEC, THE A B C FUN HOUSE formerly the HAPPY HOUSE in Augier, the MICOUD COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL and the MADELEINE MONCHERY CENTRE in Getrine. 79 of the private centres were partially community-based in terms only of their attempts to include parents, and to a smaller extent community boards, as stakeholders. Finally, there 21 centres which were private centres without a community base.

In 1999, these 106 centres had an intake of 4,379 children mostly from three to five years for the most part. (Draft National Policy, p. 27). This number represents more than 61% of the children between these years. With relation to the 18 Government centres in 1999, an additional 10% or 720 children between three to five years old were registered in these centres. Also, in 1999, there were 454 children between birth to two registered in the Government day cares and 151 children over the age of five years. (Figures obtained from Day Care Coordinator, Ministry of Community Development). The remaining approximate number of 30% of the children between the ages of three to five who did not attend early childhood education centres were usually absent because their carers were unable to pay the fees.

Private centres started to increase from 1983 following the creation of a pre-school unit within the Ministry of Education and the appointment of a pre-school coordinator. Most of the centres, particularly for the ages of three to five are private centres. 80 out of these 106 private centres were visited by Ramona David, chairperson of NAECE, Justina Ernest, part time employee of NAECE and myself between 1996 and 1998. We visited these centres as part of a patient campaign of enlisting their progressive cooperation. The table below outlines the information gathered during these visits and compares the national percentages with those of the five of the six community based centres (excluding Micoud) and those of LABCEC's only. The five centres are of LABCEC's origin and are separated from LABCEC in the table below. The centres visited represented both urban and rural centres.

Question	National Percentages	Percentages in five community based centres	LABCEC
1. What proportion of the staff receive salaries for all 12 months of the year?	30	59	100
2. What proportion of the teaching staff have done or are in the process of doing the one year diploma by the Ministry or other equivalent training?	40	71	100
3. How many teaching staff have a minimum qualification of G.C.E. or C.X.C. English and Math?	40	42	66
4. How many staff receive between 150 - 300 E.C. dollars per month?	47	50	50
5. How many staff receive the range of salary (772.00 E.C. to 1,085.00 E.C. per month) given to Government Day Care workers?	14	31	33
6. How many centres have a ratio of at least one adult to twelve children?	50	20	100
7. How many centres have running water?	90	100	100
8. How many centres have boards to help manage the centres?	43	100	100
9. How many centres conduct regular parent meetings?	73	90	100

REPORT BOOK OR CHILD OBSERVATION RECORD OF

PERLINE FRANCIS (ONE YEAR AND ELEVEN MONTHS)

SENSE OF SELF

A.   EXPRESSING INITIATIVE

Perline says no. For example, Perline says no when I ask her to come and comb her hair. She says no when I ask her to come and bathe. (4)

B.   DISTINGUISHING SELF FROM OTHERS

Perline recognizes own body parts. For example, when I ask Perline where are your eyes, she will show me her eyes. When I ask Perline to wash her vagina, she will do it. (3)

SOLVING PROBLEMS

Perline moves herself or an object to find an object that has disappeared from sight. For example, Perline was filling a bottle with water and the bottle went down into the water container and Perline kept looking for the bottle. (3)

D.   DEVELOPING SELF-HELP SKILLS

Perline attempts a simple self-help task alone. For example, when I ask Perline to come and bathe she takes off her top and diaper and asks for her towel. (4)

SOCIAL RELATIONS

E.   FORMING AN ATTACHMENT TO A PRIMARY CAREGIVER

Perline physically seeks out the primary caregiver. Perline will run to Rosie and open her arms for Rosie to take her. (3)

F.   RELATING TO UNFAMILIAR CAREGIVERS

Child initiates contact with or brings an object to an unfamiliar caregiver. While Amanda was combing the child Mcguy, Perline went to a visitor who had come in for the first time that day and sat on the visitor's lap and asked for a comb. (4)

G.   RELATING TO ANOTHER CHILD

Child calls to another child by name. When I ask Perline to call Sheve, Perline will say 'Sheve come!' (5)

H.   EXPRESSING EMOTION

Child shows pleasure upon completing an activity. For example, Perline went to the sandbox and filled bottles with sand. She was happy and she smiled. Perline will fill a bottle with sand and then she will call Meltina, Amanda or me and say 'Mama look' and Perline will smile. (4)

I.   DEVELOPING EMPATHY

Child spontaneously brings a comfort item to a child who is in distress. For example, Perline brought a doll for Sheve when Sheve was crying. (4)

J.   DEVELOPING SOCIAL PLAY

Child enjoys participating in hide-and-seek or chase game. Perline runs across the playground chasing me, Christine, for the ball. (4)

CREATIVE REPRESENTATION

K.   PRETENDING

Child makes the sound of, or acts like, a person, animal or object. For example, Perline saw a picture of a cow and started to do 'Moo, moo.' (4)

L.   EXPLORING BUILDING AND ART MATERIALS

Child reaches for and explores paper or blocks. For example, Perline reaches for the blocks to play with them. She responds to and identifies pictures and photographs. (2)

M. RESPONDING TO AND IDENTIFYING PICTURES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Child gestures, points to, or makes the sound of a familiar person, animal, or object in a picture or a photograph. For example, Perline will point at the picture of a cow and Perline will make the sound 'Moo'. (3)

MOVEMENT

N. MOVING PARTS OF THE BODY

Child throws a ball towards a person or an object. For example, Perline throws a ball to Sheve for Sheve to kick. (3)

O. MOVING THE WHOLE BODY

Child runs, walks down stairs, or climbs down a climber by self. For example, Perline can climb in the sandbox and climb out of the sandbox by herself. (5)

P. MOVING WITH OBJECTS

Child propels herself on a wheeled riding toy. Perline can ride the bike by herself. (5)

Q. MOVING TO MUSIC

Child moves from one foot to the other in response to music. Perline will move her feet when Mr. Ives plays the drum, listening and responding. (4)

V. COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

R. LISTENING AND RESPONDING

Perline turns around and looks at me when I call her name. (4)

S. COMMUNICATING INTEREST NON-VERBALLY

When I ask Perline for her shoe Perline will guide me to her shoe. (5)

T. PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNICATION GIVE AND TAKE

Child takes turns exchanging sounds or gestures with another person . For example, Perline and Sheve will put their tongues out and make loo loo noises. (2)

U.   SPEAKING

Child utters a sentence of three or more words. For example, Perline will utter three or more words such as 'I want water.' (5)

V.   EXPLORING PICTURE BOOKS

Child names a person, animal, or object pictured in a book. For example, Perline will see a picture of a lady in a book and say 'Mama' (5)

W.   SHOWING INTEREST IN STORIES, RHYMES AND SONGS

Child sings or joins in on a story, rhyme or song. Perline will join in or sing when it is circle time. (5)

EXPLORATION AND EARLY LOGIC

X.   EXPLORING OBJECTS

Child uses two objects together, one in each hand. Perline uses two wooden blocks one in each hand to clap to the music by striking them together. (4)

Y.   EXPLORING CATEGORIES

Child selects an object to taste, touch or smell. Perline will select a doll to touch the hair. (2)

Z.   DEVELOPING NUMBER UNDERSTANDING

Child asks for 'more' of something. Perline will take her empty plate to Sister, Lucille, and she will ask for more. (4)

AA.   EXPLORING SPACE

Perline will fill a container with water and then she will empty it. (4)

Child's date of birth = 24th June, 1998

Mother's Educational Background = Secondary School, Private School

Father's Educational Background = Primary School

Type of work of mother = Factory worker

Type of work of father = Fisherman

Form written by Christine Yarde - Friday, Wednesday, May 24, 2000

TIME ON TASK (JUNE 1999)

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple- tion
1	**Computer printout monthly payment list**	**Thomas**	**P**
2	**Monthly statement LABCEC**	**Thomas**	**P**
3	**Parent owing 10th month (30 marks)**	**Thomas**	**P**
4	**Collect and sign contracts before 10th of month (10 marks)**	**TLVRMC**	**P**
5	**Prepare with Sister a list of the duties she already does (15 marks)**	**Meltina**	**P**
6	**Do home visit two Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the first week of the month. Linelle, Meltina and Thomas in that order. (30 marks)**	**LMT**	**P**
7	**Do final home visit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the second week of the month Linelle, Meltina and Thomas in that order. (30 marks)**	**LMT**	**P**
8	**One creative representation art from 100 small group experiences per child with name and date on it for me to place in Christmas card each month, starting from this month. Hand up to me by 14th of each month. Put comment on it as in report book (5 marks)**	**MRV**	**P**
9	**I will be on study leave from next Tuesday coming in only for essential tasks until 3 weeks to come at least.**		

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of completion
10	Minus 15 for not coming to school and not seeing that an effective message was appropriately sent.	Linelle	
11	Minutes of staff meeting	Thomas	R1
12	Key Talk	ATRLV	R2
13	Key words	ATRLV	R3
14	Water play	ATRLV	R4
15	Clay play	ATRLV	R5
16	Painting	ATRLV	R6
17	Paper with pencils/crayons drawings	ATRLV	R7
18	Teacher interaction	ATRLV	R8
19	Are charts falling down (10 marks)	ARLV	R9
20	Photocopies	Thomas	R10
21	Minutes of Board meeting	Amanda	R11
22	Work Time Check	MT	R12
23	Two CORS per month for all children two to four in second month of first term and second month of last term (20 marks)	Amanda	R13
24	Two CORS a month four to five (20 marks)	Thomas	R14

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple- tion
25	Field visits also to collect materials once a term. Write company one month in advance. Call company 10 days after letter written. Make sure they know you would like to collect relevant materials. Visits to be made include: toilet factory, shoe stores, plastic bag factory, plastic bottle factory, egg producing factory, cotton wheel factory, cloth factory, quarry, Infant School Stage 1. One of these field visits should be to a pre-school (20 marks per person per term)	ATRLV	R15
26	Two CORS per month (20 marks)	RVL	R16
27	End of term reports one per week (20 marks)	Christine	R17
28	Check broken toys and bring to TOT meeting	TA	R18
29	Montessori Knobless 1 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R19
30	Montessori Knobless 2 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R20
31	Montessori Knobless 3 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R21
32	Montessori Knobless 4 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R22
33	Montessori Knobbed 1 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R23
34	Montessori Knobbed 2 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R24
35	Montessori Knobbed 3 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R25

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of completion
36	Montessori Knobbed 4 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Thomas	R26
37	Montessori Shapes 1 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Amanda	R27
38	Montessori Shapes 2 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Amanda	R28
39	Montessori Shapes 3 INTACT. Bring to TOT session	Amanda	R29
40	Home visit one (10 marks)	MTRVLAC	R30
41	Home visit two (10 marks)	MTRVLA	R31
42	Home visit three (10 marks)	MTA	R32
43	Home visit four (10 marks)	Thomas	R33
44	Drinking Water	ATRLV	R34
45	Pay NIS by 6th of month. In case of sicknesses make arrangements (!0 marks)	Thomas	R35
46	Key talk words on bristol board	TARLV	R36
47	Punctuality book	Restituta	R37
48	Two plans for plan/do/review per day . Use forms in curriculum. Remember to reread curriculum on this thoroughly (20 marks)	ATRLV	R38
49	Identify all columns on columnar pad with more than one item by number. See me	Thomas	R39
50	Sister is to see juice is bought and someone accepts to make juice for parents if she will be absent for parent meeting	Sister	R40
51	At least once a term a letter to parents. Keep copies in file	MRVTL	R41
52	Train in first aid	Amanda	R42

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple-tion
53	Conduct Fire Drill once a term. Agree on procedures. Write down (10 marks)	Amanda	R43
54	One days work on training per month (20 marks)	TAMRVLC	R44
55	Room for parent meeting to be arranged by Meltina and Restituta, followed by Verlyn and Amanda, followed by Christine and Linelle, followed by Thomas and Liz in that order	MRVACLT Liz	R45
56	Toilet cleaning (15marks)	whosoever	R46
57	Teacher to supervise children during parent meeting each month. Read a story to children. They should play quietly inside. Take them on the playground with the FOUR BIKES. Only written excuses sent in before accepted (10 marks)		R47
58	Recurring key words for term 2 (15 marks)	LMRV	R48
59	Prepare report book 1	TLMRV	R49
60	Prepare report book 2	TLMRV	R50
61	Prepare report book 3	TL	R51
62	Prepare report book 4	TL	R52
63	Collect insurance fees same time children register. DO NOT FORGET (10 marks for each one)	Thomas	R53
64	Punctuality (20 marks)	TAMLR	R54
65	Punctuality (20 marks)	VCSLiz	R55

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of completion
66	Certified one year course one day per month in training room before the Friday of the last week of the month ie 1st week Thomas, 2nd week Amanda, 3rd week Meltina, 4th week Liz (20 marks)	TAM	R56
67	On time at staff meetings called 5 marks per meeting	TAM	R57
68	On time at staff meetings called 5 marks per meeting	LVRCLiz	R58
69	Present at parent meetings (20 marks)	LVRCLiz	R59
70	Present at parent meetings (20 marks)	TAM	R60
71	Present at board meetings (20 marks)	TAM	R61
72	Materials brought at TOT meeting in advance	TAML	R62
73	Materials brought at TOT meeting in advance	VRCLiz	R63
74	Buy one box of detergent for no more than three dollars per month for play in water play container	Meltina	R64
75	TOT for the month should be finished typing out no later than two days after TOT meeting	Thomas	R65
76	Remember to put no. of tasks per month on TOT	Thomas	R66
77	Put in marks for Liz time on task each month. Get the marks from me	Thomas	R67
78	Opening	Whoso-ever	R68

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple-tion
79	Watering	Whoso-ever	R69
80	Make sure that board minutes are deposited with Coordinator the day before board meeting	Amanda	R70
81	Check yard and REPORT TO ME every day.	Whoso-ever	R71
82	Are teachers on time at parents meeting?	TlinMARV Liz	R72
83	A minus 30 on your TOT for every person absent without a written excuse, telephone call to me or a message left on my answering machine. This includes lead teachers absent during the school holidays when no holidays have been given	Whoso-ever	R73
84	A minus 10 on your TOT for every person who tells me they will carry out a duty (like come to the centre on a particular day) and fails to do so without sending a written excuse, calling me or leaving a message on my answering machine	Whoso-ever	R74
85	Prepare all children's work for Montessori shapes, emergent writing and pre-writing before meeting for the month grouping them by the children's names. SHOW ALL THE TEACHERS IN YOUR CLASS WHERE YOU HAVE PLACED THE PREPARED WORK	MVRTLin	R75

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple-tion
86	Did you bring to the TOT for the beginning of the meeting for the month your - Montessori shapes (5marks)TLinVRM - Emergent writing (5 marks) Tlin - Pre-Writing (5 marks)TLin - Sensori Alphabet (5 marks) TlinVRM - Sensori Numerals (5 marks) TlinVRM - Symbolic Function (5marks) TLin	Whoso-ever	R76
87	Date for parent meeting for the month of July is Sunday 2nd at 2:30. Invitations to be out at latest by Wednesday of previous week. Let me see invitations before you send out	Meltina	R77
88	Clean both fridges once per month	Lucille	R78
89	Clean the freezer once per term	Lucille	R79
90	Playground week one	MT	R80
91	Playground week two	MT	R81
92	Playground week three	MT	R82
93	Playground week four	MT	R83
94	Remind me two months before Rotaract Bazaar, upcoming Jazz Festival and any other major festival of this sort	ALL STAFF	R84
95	Communual outings once per term during holidays	Meltina	R85
96	Playground week five (if applicable)	MT	R86
97	Start Independence preparation for NEXT YEAR 2001 from the first term of 2001. Leave this on TOT	MT	R87
98	One full day training by lead teachers and all volunteers (50 marks)	TLMRVA	R88

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple-tion
99	Measure all children in your class put month measured. Give me paper with headings Names, Age, Weight, Height, State of Health, Remarks	MT	R89
100	Complete Induction Training test (50 marks)	LizVLAMR	R90
101	Did Amanda do account book (50 marks)	Amanda	
102	Green sand box one thirds full of sand (20 marks)	Christine	
103	FOR NEXT MONTH wooden sandbox one thirds full of sand	Christine	
104	Montessori golden beads on the computer. One set of ten per child	Thomas	
105	Activity plan Class Inclusion (10 marks)	TAVR	
106	Activity plan Counting and Conservation (10 MARKS)	TAVR	
107	Activity plan SAS= Substraction, Addition and Symbolic Function (10 marks)	TAVR	
108	Activity plan Commutativity (10 marks)	TAVR	
109	Book of favourite songs children like. Prepare on computer. Discuss together first	MT	
110	Make sure that all staff and volunteers have their own ten copies of each sandpaper letter and numbers. Begin this month by making sure you have ten of each.	ARVL	
111	Thomas to correct Amanda's financial book	Thomas	
112	Do Common Entrance Statistics for last year. This will take you three hours so see me well before	Thomas	

No	Responsibilities	Person(s) responsible	Date of comple-tion
113	Do activities 5.1 to 5.22 for the new Creative Representation. Make your own cards. See Meltina for the activities and Thomas for the Cards (10 marks)	TAMRLV	
114	Take a FACTS FOR LIFE book along with card from me to Nurse Henry at Health Centre	Restituta	
115	Prepare one set of sand paper letters from 0 - 10 children	VRA	
116	Prepare one set of alphabets from A - Z and a to Z for 10 children, that is you need to make the balance for 10 which you do NOT have.	VRA	

NAMES	Average Task per month
Thomas Charles	82
Meltina James	57
Amanda St. Brice	20
Christine Yarde	14
Restituta Canchon	36
Linnell Williams	37
Verlyn St. Louis	31
Lucille Chicot	2