Servol pre-school and adolescent training programmes in Trinidad and Tobago

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Increasing and improving the quality of basic education

Presentation of the series of monographs

The renewed interest being given to basic education calls for the design and implementation of new strategies to stop the present deterioration in the expansion and quality of primary and adult education in various developing countries, especially among the most underprivileged.

In response to this concern, the IIEP has undertaken an extensive programme of research, training and dissemination with a view to reinforcing the decision-making and planning capacities of the different countries. This series of monographs, *Increasing and improving the quality of basic education*, is part of this programme.

The aim of the series is to disseminate, as quickly as possible, relevant documentation on basic education to all planners and decision-makers.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

I.   Summary

Servol, a non-governmental, community-development organization which was founded in Trinidad and Tobago in 1972, has, in the intervening years, developed an effective system of pre-school education and programmes to assist adolescent drop-outs in attitudinal development and parenting skills. In 1988 Servol entered into an arrangement with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Ministry of Education, whereby, in two joint ventures, they would take over all public pre-schools and would set up training centres for those adolescents aged between 17 - 22 for whom there was no place in the formal educational system. Servol in the early years was to provide administration for the projects, teacher training, furniture and equipment, and teachers salaries for the schools. The communities in which the schools were located provided the housing for the schools, community boards of education, and candidates to be trained as combination teachers/community leaders. The government provided moral support and, as the project progressed, funding towards the payment of the teachers' salaries on an increasing annual basis. A technical committee was set up to supervise the progress of the pre-school programme.

At present there are 195 Ministry of Education/Servol centres operating throughout the country. One hundred and fifty-four of these are early childhood care and education centres (pre-schools) where parents and community get involved in the child-based educational programmes for 4,500 children between 0.5 years of age. Forty-one of these centres are Adolescent Development Life Centres where the community and parents are brought in to the programme which teaches some 3,000 socially rejected young people in the 17 − 23 age group how to be responsible parents and helps them develop attitudes which will enable them to go on to successfully complete the vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities provided by Servol and a sister organization − Fundaid.

The contribution of the Government in both cases is financial. It provides a basic contribution towards salaries of the teachers in the pre-schools and life centres. The communities in which the schools and centres are located are expected to provide the premises, a board of education to manage the schools, and financial resources to 'top up' the teachers' salaries. The amount given by government for teachers' salaries under the Servol programme is slightly less than 40 per cent of salaries paid to primary school teachers or 25 per cent of salaries paid to teachers in the junior secondary schools which most of the adolescents would have been attending prior to coming to Servol.

II.   National context

Influencing conditions

Trinidad and Tobago was a British colony until 1962 when it became an independent country within the Commonwealth. Until that time its educational system was determined by that of the United Kingdom, using English curricula, textbooks and teaching systems. The major differences between the two systems were the lack of resources for facilities and equipment in Trinidad and Tobago's primary and secondary schools, no training in the technical and vocational areas and tertiary education mainly limited to agriculture. The training orientation was one that prepared people for the consumption of, rather than the production of, goods. Consistent with colonial policy, raw materials were shipped from Trinidad and Tobago to the metropolitan centres of the United Kingdom — sugar, copra, cocoa and coffee beans, cotton, petroleum, asphalt etc, and were there turned into manufactured goods, which were in turn sold to consumers back in the colonies.

Emphasis in education was on academic achievement and prestige was accorded to a concept of education that could ensure that a few aspiring lawyers, accountants, doctors and civil service administrators from Trinidad and Tobago be accepted for entry into the United Kingdom universities each year.

The engineering, production, maintenance and manufacturing disciplines were not given the same kind of status or prestige, nor was there an emphasis in the educational system on training in scientific or technical subjects.

The population of Trinidad and Tobago at the time of independence was scarcely one million. The mainstay of the economy at the time — as it remains today — was petroleum, a highly capital intensive industry which employed a relatively small percentage of the workforce — none of whom had historically been allowed to rise very far into the management hierarchy. The petroleum industry, at the time of independence, was owned and operated by multinational companies such as Shell, Texaco, British Petroleum and Standard Oil. Over the intervening thirty years this has changed so that all the former production and refining activities are now carried out by state-owned companies, with the exception of one multinational company which drills and produces oil, but ships it to its own refineries elsewhere for manufacturing.

The rest of the population are employed in agriculture (which has diversified over the years from an emphasis on sugar and cocoa to sugar, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, food crops, animal husbandry, horticulture and aquaculture), in light manufacturing industry, and in heavy industries such as iron and steel manufacturing and the production of methanol, urea and other industrial chemicals and fertilizers. Tourism has increased in recent years.

Historically, Trinidad and Tobago has had a high literacy rate and a concomitant obsession with education. Over the years, since independence, the fledgling University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago, which grew out of the old Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, has grown into a multi-faculty university with undergraduate and graduate programmes in engineering, agriculture, natural sciences, computer sciences, social sciences, arts, international relations, education, law and medicine. Two technical institutes have been

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established offering a full range of national certificate courses in technical disciplines, a hotel and catering school has opened and technical education has been included in the curricula of 20 junior secondary and twelve senior comprehensive secondary schools. These provide secondary education in addition to that provided by the private and government-assisted secondary institutions — usually financed and run by Christian, Hindu or Muslim organizations.

Secondary education in the public sector is dependent on the students successfully passing a qualifying exam called the 'common entrance' examination, also known as the 'eleven plus' since it is usually taken when the student is over eleven years of age. There are some ten thousand fewer places in secondary schools than there are students trying to qualify each year. Those who do not qualify are, in effect, barred from further academic development. There are 'school leaving' classes — which come under the general umbrella of a post-primary programme for these students which, theoretically, if they do well enough, may give them another chance to enter junior secondary school. For most of them, however, it is a sort of 'holding bay' until they reach the age of 16 and compulsory attendance of school ceases.

Non-governmental schooling available for the eleven-plus failures is limited and beyond the means of most students and their families.

Trinidad and Tobago is a parliamentary democracy following the Westminster style of government. There are three main political parties, with little real ideological difference amongst them. The official opposition party aspires to a greater degree of socialist philosophy than either the party that formed the last government or that which forms the present one, but its manifesto supports the development of business and many of its leaders are prominent business people. All emphasize the need for the provision of greater social services and are in favour of divestment, differing in matters of degree and emphasis rather than kind. All three include representatives of the three major religions: Christianity, Hinduism and Islam and the major ethnic groups of African, Indian, Chinese and Arab origin, with proportions varying according to the geography of their party origins. There are several small splinter parties which include more radical ideologies often arising from disaffected sectors of the society, and appealing to the alienated, unemployed and frequently youthful adherents.

Unemployment is officially cited as being 22-23 per cent, but is unofficially acknowledged as being as high as 30 per cent; higher among the young. As there is no unemployment insurance, or 'dole', the unemployed are under considerable pressure. Not all of them have family or institutional support, and vagrancy is common.

The use of drugs and the levels of violent crime particularly among young people have been, not unexpectedly, rising, particularly in recent years, since the crackdown by the USA and Colombian governments on the export of Colombian cocaine to the USA has made Trinidad and Tobago an attractive transhipment port for the European drug market. The availability of drugs and the extent of trafficking among young people continue to increase.

The traditional outlet for social pressures in an island nation — emigration to metropolitan centres — such as the USA, the United Kingdom and Canada— has become less

viable as immigration policies in those countries have become more restrictive. The effect is that the educational system has been marked with increasing violence, truancy and general lack of discipline in state schools and a decline in literacy standards generally.

At one time Trinidad and Tobago had an official literacy rate of almost 95 per cent. That has declined sharply in recent years and is now no more than an estimated 80 per cent although education of all children is compulsory, by law, up until the age of 16. Many children, for economic reasons, are simply not sent to school. Others, although they attend primary school, receive so little attention that they reach the age of the common entrance examination functionally illiterate.

Factors in the development of community and non-governmental organizations

Trinidad and Tobago was ruled by one political party continuously from independence in 1962 until 1986, when it was almost unanimously voted out of power. During its long period in office, this government forged a culture of dependency upon political largesse, particularly in disadvantaged areas that actively discouraged community organizations other than those connected with its political activities. Non-government organizations with international affiliations such as the Red Cross and the Family Planning Association did exist but did not influence government policy or operate beyond their own interest areas.

With limited resources to put into social services, there were large gaps in the services offered by government to many sectors in the country. As happens with governments following long tenure in office, the administration of what services there were was frequently inefficient and corrupt. While non-government organizations were not specifically discouraged, there was limited practical support by the government for their activities.

When Servol first began to operate in the areas of early childhood education, training of handicapped individuals, community development and adolescent training, it received little help from the government.

When the government changed in 1986, however, the new administration, faced with virtually empty coffers, encouraged the establishment of non-government organizations and community associations, promoted the concept of self help and began to work in collaboration with various organizations in the area of social services. There was some resistance in the civil service however, while the political directorate recognized the value of the work Servol was doing and welcomed the results its innovative approach to education and community development achieved in making people more self-reliant and responsible. Once this reluctance was overcome, the collaboration between Servol and Government worked reasonably well. Set backs have occurred however. In 1989, although the Servol programme was expected to expand by setting up 41 new nursery schools and 3 adolescent training centres, with 104 new staff required to run them, and had, in fact begun the expansion exercise, the money allocated by government in that year's government budget for staff salaries remained at the pre-expansion levels. This turned out to be a bureaucratic error rather than a change in government policy, and the following year it was rectified.

By 1991 the government was turning to Servol more often for ideas and for help in such areas as motivating daily-paid government workers and helping to deal with problem

children in secondary schools. In December 1991, however, national elections took place and the government was replaced by the one that had been in power previously. Servol's budget was cut by 40 per cent in 1992, threatening the shut down of 33 early childhood education centres.

Although Servol managed to negotiate a restoration of approximately 30 per cent, thus avoiding the shut down of the pre-schools, two Adolescent Life Centres were merged in order to cut costs and other administrative economies were made so that the programme has continued to date.

Although attempts in various areas have, in recent years, been made by government to bring together NGO's — most noticeably in the social services area — under the umbrella of the Family Services Council, in fact what few meetings such councils have had were mainly information sharing meetings, or, on occasion, vehicles through which a government ministry would introduce the NGO's to a visiting official from an international agency — usually for the purposes of their research.

Chapter 2
The basic education system

I.   Structure, size and coverage

The basic education system in Trinidad and Tobago consists of both public and private facilities, pre-schools, primary schools, and secondary and tertiary educational establishments of various sorts. The private sector includes most nursery and pre-schools, as well as primary schools wholly run and maintained by various religious bodies or run on a private fee-paying basis providing facilities and education otherwise not readily available, and a number of secondary schools catering for those students that either could not get places in the government run secondary schools or were placed in schools considered to be of a low educational and disciplinary standard.

In addition, there are a number of commercial schools teaching typing, book-keeping, and basic computer use as well as part-time schools specifically oriented to computer programming. At the tertiary level, apart from the University of the West Indies, which is funded jointly by the governments of the Commonwealth Caribbean, there are several institutions offering academic education in business and accounting practices, law, insurance and business administration. In some cases, through affiliation with universities abroad, these go up to post-graduate accreditation levels. There are also two technical institutes and two theological colleges offering courses to degree level as well as a government teacher training college, a governmental agricultural college, a government run nurses training institution and numerous private skills training courses.

The public sector educational system consists of 469 primary schools covering 186,566 students and 7,686 teachers. At the end of primary school all students have to take a qualifying examination before they are given places in a government supported secondary school. There are 96 secondary schools, with 4,891 teachers and 98,884 students.

All of the better secondary schools are schools originally run by various religious bodies which now, by law, come under the Ministry of Education but are still maintained financially by the religious bodies, although the teachers are paid by the Ministry of Education which controls general educational policy and gives broad curricula directives. These secondary schools, called government assisted schools, develop some of the details of their own curricula, hire their own staff (within government qualifying criteria) and maintain their own religious and cultural orientation. Students from any religious, ethnic, social or economic background are as free to apply to these schools as to any purely government run secondary school. The religious bodies are allowed to reserve 20 per cent of the entrance places to students of their own denomination. The other 80 per cent are chosen competitively from among those applying after qualifying through the national 'eleven plus' examination.

In addition, there are purely government run secondary schools, mainly divided into three-year junior secondary and two-year senior secondary schools. Although there are a few comprehensive and composite schools, the latter schools take children up to the English 'O' Level standard. 'A' levels — an additional two-year, pre-university qualifying standard — are offered at some of the 'government-assisted' secondary schools and by one or two colleges set up solely for that purpose.

Entrance into the two government-run technical institutes requires 3-5 'O' level qualifications and entry to the University of the West Indies demands 'A' levels. Ninety-five per cent of the school-age population gets primary education in Trinidad and Tobago. Public primary education is free of charge, but parents have to pay for school uniforms, books, and in most schools for lunches, although there is a three-day-per-week school feeding programme that provides lunches for the neediest children in some schools. Of those who attend primary school, 70 per cent are exposed to three years of secondary education. Each year, some 30,000 children take the common entrance qualifying examination. Of these, approximately 20,000 pass and are allocated the existing places in secondary schools. Of the remaining 10,000, approximately half will be allowed to repeat the year, the others go into the post primary 'holding bay' system mentioned above, or simply drop out of school, as there are no places in the secondary system for them to occupy.

Of the 70 per cent that do qualify for secondary education, approximately 40 per cent will go on to two years or more senior secondary education. Of those not in school and therefore eligible for Servol/Ministry of Education programmes, the statistics are as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Students eligible for Servol/Ministry of Education programmes

Category	Age	No. of children
Pre school	2-5	3 000
Post primary	12-14	3 000
Post junior secondary	15-16	4 000
Post secondary	17-20	8 000

Source: Education Plan 1985-1990, Ministry of Education

In addition, the Central Statistical Office has indicated that some 3,000 children cannot get a place in primary schools. The Ministry of Education is headed by a Minister responsible to Cabinet for major policy decisions in the field of education. The Ministry is run, administratively, by a permanent secretary who is a career civil servant and acts as its executive officer. Permanent secretaries are moved from ministry to ministry under different administrations so their skills are administrative, not necessarily specific to the ministry's function — i.e. the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education need not be trained in education.

II.   The typical primary school prior to the innovation

Structure and size

There were 50 government pre-primary schools prior to the Servol/government collaboration. Originally funded some twenty years ago by the Van Leer Foundation, an international funding agency interested in early childhood education, the schools came under the Ministry of Education when the funding was discontinued because the government of the day did not honour the terms of the funding agreement.

When the Servol/government collaboration began, there were still only the same 40 schools, still under the aegis of the association of village councils. The schools were mainly housed in government community centres, facilities shared with sports, handicraft, cultural and political bodies. The schools would usually be allocated the use of a room or part of a room during school hours, but as the facilities were used by other bodies at other times of the day, they could not have permanent fixtures, pictures, charts and so on upon the walls.

Resources and personnel

Resources included desks and chairs, usually a sandbox, a blackboard and paper, writing and drawing implements. There were no particular qualifications listed for teachers in these schools — the teachers would usually be appointed at the suggestion of one of the officials on the village councils.

School management: environment

Teachers were given a little on-the-job training by an official from the Ministry who would inspect the school on a periodic basis. By 1986 there were only three people in the Ministry's pre-school unit, only one of whom had any background in early childhood education. One person did make occasional visits to the pre-schools, trying to cover all 40 in a term which, of course, limited the time and attention that could be paid to any one school. Written directives were sent from time to time from the Ministry's unit to the pre-schools.

The pre-schools were, as a result, more or less on their own, with no organized parent/teachers association activity. The association of village councils which was theoretically in charge had relinquished most responsibility to the teachers themselves, who were fairly autonomous.

III.   The education problems the innovation was meant to address

The extent of the problem

The majority of children come out of the primary school system in Trinidad and Tobago with no love of learning, natural creativity stifled and the attitude that education is a difficult chore that one has to do. While there is little that Servol could do to change the public system of primary education, it did observe that at the pre-primary level there was a great dearth of quality education, and a concomitant lack of teacher training. Children at the

pre-school level in most of the poorer districts, if they attended pre-school at all, tended to be kept sitting at desks tightly disciplined, learning from the ages of three to five how to write, read and count, to keep silent and not to move around. The other existing pre-schools that existed were privately owned, mainly based on the Montessori or Montessori-derived systems, and were too expensive for most low-income families.

Servol had learned from dealing with adolescents that it was often the early years in life that most marked children so that effects from the years before five frequently determined the attitudes and behaviour of the 17-20 year old adolescent. Children from economically deprived families, especially from the single parent families that form a significant percentage of lower income families in Trinidad and Tobago, often found an introduction to primary school traumatic and emotionally stressful because they had no preparation for it and no prior training appropriate for adjusting to the bewildering systems of school.

Trapped in the school system by law and social custom, alienated from learning by over disciplined control at early ages, and personally neglected by poorly trained and unmotivated teachers, many of these children became emotional and psychological misfits with behavioural problems both in and outside school.

Academic achievement lost to them, they marked time until finishing the post-primary classes provided for academic non-achievers and then, at the age of 15 or 16, dropped out of the educational system, untrained, unskilled, rejected and labelled as failures by the entire society.

Causes of the problem

A rigid educational system governed by a civil service bureaucracy that resists change or innovation, has limited financial resources and an inability to connect early childhood deprivation with poor academic achievement and patterns of criminal behaviour later in life are the chief causes of the particular patterns of neglect of the early childhood and adolescent educational levels. In addition traditional attitudes towards children are to regard them as possessions to be treated any way parents wish to treat them, under the stresses of low income and social neglect, without any training in parenting or understanding of child psychology.

Chapter 3
Development of the innovation

I. Nature of the Servol programmes

How the collaboration came about

Servol, being aware of the inefficiencies and abuses in the public school system, had tried in unofficial ways to influence public educational policy. Ministers (including the Prime Minister) were invited to open various Servol centres, to attend graduation ceremonies and to make speeches.

They often accepted these invitations and at least were exposed, at some level, to what Servol was doing, and the first Prime Minister expressed his encouragement, even responding favourably to requests for financial assistance. When he died, however, what support that had existed came to an end, and Servol's experience in dealing with the poor and the under-privileged was not used by the government in any way.

With the change in government in 1986, the new Prime Minister himself, within weeks of assuming office, approached Servol with a request that Servol co-operate with the government in spreading its programmes throughout the country. Servol agreed with the proviso that it would remain an independent organization, not a part of a government ministry.

On 7 January 1987, three weeks after coming into power, the new Minister of Education visited Servol's premises on Beetham Estate and negotiations began for the establishment of a collaboration between Servol and government.

Goals and objectives

This section will reflect the goals and objectives of both innovations, i.e. the pre-school as well as the adolescent training collaboration.

The goal of the pre-school programme is to establish pre-schools with trained pre-school teachers in every community in Trinidad and Tobago where such schools are wanted and needed. Servol structured pre-schools are characterized by:

1. Community choice of the pre-school teachers.

2. Community provision and maintenance of pre-school premises.

3. The establishment of a management committee from the community to operate the pre-school and to provide that proportion of the teachers' salaries not covered by the small government subsidy.

4. The understanding and acceptance by the parents of Servol's child-centreed educational approach as compared to the traditional academic approach in pre-school education.

5. The use of the SPICES curriculum incorporating pre-school education in the Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Cultural, Emotional and Social areas.

6. The existence of Parent/Teacher Associations and the involvement of parents in PTA and school activities.

7. Servol trained teachers, under the supervision and guidance of the Servol early childhood education programme.

The goal of the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) is to provide adolescents in Trinidad and Tobago, who have no readily available alternative means of education within the standard school system, with training in life skills and in vocational skills wherever communities establish the desire and need for such programmes. The characteristics of the Ministry of Education/Servol Adolescent Development Programme are:

1. The provision by the community of an adolescent development community life centre.

2. The establishment of a board of education from the community to run and maintain the life centre and to raise funds to pay that portion of the teachers' fees not covered by the small government subsidy.

3. The existence of PTA's and the involvement of parents in the programme.

4. The use of trained ADP teachers using the Servol developed curriculum with teaching supervision by the Servol ADP directorate.

The intention was to disseminate the two programmes as widely as possible, in accordance with the expressed needs of the communities in Trinidad and Tobago.

Context and components

The Servol/government collaboration in respect of the pre-school programme takes the form of government financing for part of the salaries of the teachers in all pre-schools that come under Servol's supervision. These include the 50 pre-schools that formerly came under the Ministry of Education and were administered by the association of village councils as well as the pre-schools run by Servol-trained teachers and supervised by Servol's early childhood education department. Servol provides the training for all teachers and teacher assistants to qualification level.

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The Servol pre-school training programme has been granted certification status by the delegacy of Oxford University, which acts as external examiners for the programmes. It consists of one-year full time study at the Servol Caribbean Teacher Training Centre and two years of internship. This includes supervision and zonal workshops and updates. The teachers in the pre-schools formerly coming under the Ministry of Labour receive zonal in-service training consisting of afternoon classes twice weekly and six-week vacation workshops followed by continuous instructional supervision. The training is supplied by Servol, as is the supervision and the curriculum which is continuously being refined, updated and made relevant to the needs of the pre-school population.

The communities in which the pre-schools are located provide premises for the schools and a Board of Education to maintain the schools and raise funds to supplement the basic allowance which is provided by government to the Board of Education to pay teachers' salaries. Servol provides all furniture and equipment.

The choice of pre-school teachers to be trained is left to each community. Usually they choose a girl, or two girls, who are active in church, mosque, temple, or other religious organizations, who are known in the community to be responsible and of good character, and whose families are part of the community. Each Board of Education has its own means of canvassing the community for candidates, but those finally chosen for training at the Servol teacher training school will have had the majority support of the Board of Education from that district. The Board will be financially responsible for their schooling expenses during the year's training course. There is no rigid educational qualification for entry to the course. In some cases a community has chosen someone who already runs a small nursery school in a manner approved by the community, in other cases it will be a girl with secondary education who appears interested in the field. Most of the candidates chosen have at least three years' secondary education when they start. In a number of cases, once trained by Servol and working as pre-school teachers, they go on to finish their secondary education via evening classes.

The nature of the collaboration between Servol and the government in respect of the adolescent programme is similar in that Servol trains the teaching staff for the adolescent development programmes and provides an updated curriculum, on-going supervision, guidance and assistance where the teacher or the community requests help. The community provides premises and a board of education. Government provides a basic allowance which is paid to the school's Board for teachers' salaries. The allowances in both cases are approximately one quarter of a teacher's salary in a government school.

Once again Servol provides all furniture and equipment for the adolescent programme which is a full-time programme spread over a three-month period providing training in attitudinal development, parenting practices, civic awareness and self analysis and growth in self esteem.

In addition to this, annual full time vocational training in a variety of disciplines is available at Servol's regional vocational training centres, and small business loans can be made available through a sister organization, the Trinidad and Tobago Development Foundation or 'Fundaid', for graduates who wish to go into small business for themselves.

The boards of education choose themselves one or two persons in a community, usually, but not always, parents, together with a person or persons active in community affairs will approach Servol, having heard of their programmes via the media, or by word of mouth from other communities, and ask that Servol mount a pre-school or adolescent development programme in their area. Sometimes the requests will come via the parliamentary representatives for the district. A Servol representative for the relevant programme will meet with the community requestors and explain how the programmes work and what the responsibilities of the community will be. This core group from the community then goes back into their own district and asks people they regard to be prominent people in the community, who are responsible and willing to provide support for the programme, to join the board of education.

Sometimes it takes a good while to get enough interested people together. Sometimes they cannot, and the programme is aborted. In other instances, people say they are interested and never show up. By trial and error and perseverance, however, the majority get their board of education together, and Servol will assist them, once assembled, with the mechanics of setting up a memorandum and articles of association, whereupon they elect officers and begin to identify potential candidates to be trained as teachers, and potential sites to be used to house the programmes.

Servol's collaboration with the board of education and the community is always at the request of someone from the community. A teacher, one of the parents from the parent/teachers association, or a member of the board of education may request help. Servol is there as a resource the community can call upon. Usually, once the programmes are established, these requests are channelled through the teachers or through the boards themselves. Periodically, Servol will organize a regional meeting when members of boards of education and teachers throughout the region can come to discuss matters of common concern. Even these meetings, however, are usually as a result of requests arising from the communities themselves.

At every stage of the collaborative process Servol's representatives listen with respect to the community, working from the premise that, however their views are expressed they are substantial and meaningful, and that the subsequent discussions that will take place will do so with those views as the basic premise.

II. Changes expected as a result of innovation

Resources and materials

The improvement in resources and materials expected as a result of the collaboration arose from the responsibility for the provision and maintenance of building facilities moving from a government ministry to the community in which the school is based.

In addition, the provision of furniture, equipment, and training materials especially designed for early childhood care and education by Servol was an important improvement in the former government pre-schools, and an innovation in those communities that had previously been without pre-schools. That Servol was to broker funds for both pre-school and

adolescent training programmes in order to provide furniture and equipment was a major change in itself.

Insofar as the adolescent development programme was concerned, the change in resources was total as there had been no such resources nor any such programme in the past.

Knowledge, skills and attributes

Servol's early childhood educator training is on an unusually high level. It is culture specific, not derived from systems or concepts developed in metropolitan areas alien to the Caribbean way of life, needs and interests. It includes the responsibility of each pre-school teacher to become a community leader, bringing community concerns and involvement into the school and providing counselling and education to adults in the community, particularly to the parents, not just to the children in her care.

This produces a change in the teacher's approach to education and to the community, as well as a change in the community's approach to education and to the children in its midst. Teachers who felt, because they lacked educational skills, that they had to physically discipline children and keep them quiet, learned how to control a classroom full of noisy, chattering children without letting it get out of hand and without being authoritarian. For the children the change to early socialization and an awakening desire for learning and creative expression were the major changes expected. It was expected that there would be an improvement seen in children's abilities to face primary school as a result of the Servol pre-school training.

The pre-school curriculum has six facets upon which all activities are centered. These are the Spiritual, the Physical, the Intellectual, the Creative, the Emotional and the Social — commonly referred to by the acronym SPICES.

Teachers in the Servol system are not provided with formal pre-set manuals to be rigidly followed in the classroom. They are, however, given a curriculum guide and taught to draw up lesson plans based on the SPICES curriculum to suit the time of year, cultural events, resources at hand and childrens' interest levels. Over their two year internship these lesson plans are supervised and assessed until the trainers are satisfied that the teachers are flexible enough to adapt the SPICES format to the needs of the students.

In the adolescent programme there is an instructor's handbook for the parenting programme and one for the spirituality course with handouts to go along with each segment.

The spiritual part of the curriculum is an awareness of God and of the manifestation of the spiritual in all the child sees about itself. It is not limited to any one religion as the children in the pre-schools will come from many different religious backgrounds, but they will be taught about the various religious holidays and what they stand for.

Physical activities include gross physical co-ordination exercises as well as the usual stretching and games-playing suitable to pre-schoolers.

Intellectual activities usually involve learning concepts of space, time, language, colours, machines, plants, animals and environment numbers, shapes and sounds. Creative foci include the various popular expressions of culture — music, art, dance, folk tales and songs as well as aspects of drama — 'acting out' things. The children are encouraged to identify emotions and feelings — their own and other people's, and to talk about them and explore their causes and how they affect other people.

The social areas include learning about a sense of community, how to live with and talk to other people, the nature of social interactions — sharing and co-operating, and such social skills as good manners, places that are safe and not safe to go to, keeping the environment clean, our country, our festivals and other countries.

In the adolescent development programme the expected changes were two-fold. The first was to teach young people, many of whom were already parents or on the verge of parenthood (the majority of first births in Trinidad and Tobago are to women between the ages of 17-22) and whose own childhood experiences may often have been characterized by neglect and/or abuse, how to be sensitive and responsible parents, aware of the psychological and emotional needs of children and of how they develop. The second aim was to improve the self-image and self-esteem of these young men and women who had been condemned by society as being 'dropouts' and failures, and psychologically battered by a largely irrelevant school system, and to awaken in them the motivation to take control of their own lives and to do something constructive with them.

The teachers in the adolescent programme have themselves been through the programme as trainee teachers — and for the first two weeks of teacher training they attend classes daily with the students under the tutelage of experienced teachers. During this daily training they listen in as the teachers begin to lead the youngsters into various stages of self-awareness and as their anger and their pain come out, the trainee teachers are not allowed to respond verbally. They are only allowed to listen, until, at the end of two weeks they have really heard what young people think and feel. Each of these sessions is followed by a teacher training discussion period in which the trainee teachers discuss their feelings about what they have experienced and how it relates to the course objectives.

These two weeks are followed by a period of classroom training in communication skills, development psychology, teaching methods and classroom management as well as in the Servol philosophies and curriculum components. Each teacher is then given practice in a classroom under the guidance of an experienced teacher. The whole process takes three and a half months to complete, unlike the training for the Oxford certified pre-school teachers which, as described takes three years.

The curriculum for adolescent development does go into the spiritual, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional and social areas, as does that of the pre-schoolers, but at the adolescent level, it covers such areas as individual spirituality as well as the functions of the human body, conception and pregnancy, the relationship of the adolescents to their culture and how people are affected by different aspects of the cultures they grow up in.

Students explore their own early childhood experiences, the parenting they received and the messages given to them by society and the community. All adolescents are taught

the elements of civics and each one establishes a bank account, registers as a voter and receives an identification card and passport before graduating. They learn to identify emotional responses in themselves and others, to talk about feelings and how they are affected by them and to consider how other people can be affected by their attitudes and behaviour.

The basic elements of developmental psychology teach the young people about the needs of children and the responsibilities of parenting, about their own sexuality and how it affects them emotionally, physically and socially. They are also taught about the importance and functions of communities as well as the Servol concepts and philosophies as reflected in this report.

Administration and structure

Putting the administration of the centres — both pre-school and adolescent training — in the hands of a village or community board of education was a major change. Ensuring that teachers were well chosen, that their salaries were paid, that the premises were maintained and kept secure and that the community involvement aspects of the programmes were kept active was to be a major innovation resulting in greater autonomy and self respect for the members of the community itself. That the board of education would consist not just of parents and/or teachers but include people in the community who were respected for their ability, achievements or interest in children was intended to ensure that the effect of community achievement was widespread.

Organizational norms

The cultural change most expected was that of a development of confidence and self-respect among people in the communities. Servol's policy of respectful intervention — of not interfering or intervening until asked, of listening with genuine respect to what the community wanted and not interposing its own views on the community was intended to assure the community that its importance and singularity were recognized. The avoidance of the kind of cultural arrogance inherent in most social development programmes predicated on an erroneous assumption that the possession of a masters degree in social work or its equivalent means that a well meaning developer from outside the community knows better than members of the community itself what that community wants and needs was expected to result in the support of the community for the projects.

No change was expected in the organizational norms of the Ministry of Education, and none was perceived.

Teaching — learning environments

The major change in teaching — learning environments expected was a supportive, community involved, child-led policy which would be flexible and genuinely centreed on the interests of the child. The Servol policy of actually listening to children to find out uncritically what their ideas, feelings, needs and interests are is quite unusual. It is unusual when it applies to adolescents since the results are often contrary to the accepted canon of academic thought, but it is even more unusual when it applies to early childhood.

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Pre-schoolers are not usually consulted on the form or content of early childhood education because the assumption is that they are not mature enough to know what is useful or good for *them*. It is the same cultural arrogance that leads social workers to assume that low income communities and adolescents are not educated or mature enough to know what is useful or good for them. To get this concept established in a teaching/learning environment would constitute a radical change in the teaching/learning process.

III. Implementation of the innovation

Resources available

In the first year of the collaboration, 1987-88, as regards the pre-school programme, the government of Trinidad and Tobago contributed no finances to the project. The local business community contributed TT$75,000 (TT$1 = US$.24) and the Van Leer Foundation contributed TT$1,000,000.

In 1988 the government contributed TT$100,000., Van Leer TT$1,000,000. In 1989 the government contribution grew to TT$400,000 and the Van Leer contribution remained at TT$1,000,000. In the fourth year of the project, 1990, the government contribution moved to TT$1,000,000 and the Van Leer contribution decreased to TT$900,000. In the fifth year, 1991, the government contribution was TT$1,700,000 and the Van Leer contribution remained at TT$900,000. The 1992 financial breakdown was Van Leer TT$700,000., Government TT$1,600,000. In 1993 the Van Leer contribution comes to an end and the intention is that the entire project will then be supported by government. If government financial support is not forthcoming, alternative funding will have to be found if the project is not to close down.

In the adolescent development programme the Servol/Government Collaboration also started in 1987. In that year government's contribution was $130,000. Servol brokered donations from two major funding agencies, the Inter American Foundation and Misereor, of a total of TT$870,000, and from two minor ones, Helvetas and Cebemo of $100,000.

For each of the next four years the Servol brokered donations remained at the same level, while the government's donations rose from TT$70,000 in 1988, to TT$752,000 in 1989, to TT$2,100,000 in 1990 and to TT$3,600,000 in 1991. As in the case of the pre-school programme, the overseas funding stops at this point (October 1992) and the government will be expected to continue the project on its own thereafter. Barely adequate funds have been allocated for both projects in the recently drafted upcoming government budget, which will not be presented until January 1993. In the meantime, Servol is trying to raise funds from the private sector and from various government sources to maintain the projects in the intervening months.

Facilities and materials

The actual school buildings provided by the communities for both programmes vary from purpose built buildings built with community labour, to houses or parts of houses donated by people in the community, to public buildings which the community has managed to somehow secure from a government ministry or state enterprise. The furnishings are

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provided by Servol, usually made in one of the Servol vocational training workshops by Servol trainees with materials paid for out of the Van Leer Foundation grant. Teaching materials are bought by Servol or made by the teachers with objects found or donated by the community, the students or their families.

Implementation, structures and procedures

(a)   Management of the innovation

At the time of the innovation a joint Servol/Ministry of Education Committee was set up to manage the pre-school programme and the collaboration itself. The Ministry pre-school unit was headed by a Director and staffed by one person who worked only part time at the Ministry as she was attending university at the same time. The committee actually never got off the ground since the Director of the Ministry's unit would not attend scheduled committee meetings. If anyone else did attend and decisions were taken, the Director would go to the Minister of Education and have the decision rescinded.

There was no similar committee set up in respect of the adolescent programme — Servol was left to manage that on its own.

Servol has a co-ordinator of the early childhood education programme who manages a staff of fifteen field supervisors and seven trainers. Each pre-school is visited once a week and instruction methods and community involvement are monitored. The adolescent development programme co-ordinator supervises seven field officers and three trainers who train the instructors who handle the programmes at the various centres.

There are 308 teachers and teachers' assistants in the pre-school programme and 164 in the adolescent development programme.

(b)   Monitoring

Boards of education meet on a monthly basis to monitor the programmes in each community. These meetings are attended by the teachers in the programmes and on occasion by the Servol field officer. The field officers monitor the programmers on a weekly basis in both the pre-school and adolescent areas as well. In addition, Servol writes annual reports for the funding agencies in accordance with their very precise criteria, and their desk officers visit Trinidad and Tobago from time to time to keep in touch with the programmes. Servol produces a monthly journal report of its activities which is sent to the funding agencies, and audited accounts are produced of all Servol's activities on a yearly basis. The overseas funding agencies have commissioned independent evaluation reports from outside consultants on the operations of the pre-school project as well as on aspects of the adolescent training project.

Problems of implementation

Servol's initial difficulty was in getting a bureaucracy to accept its philosophy of doing things from a community involvement base rather than from a government aid base.

The Ministry of Education officials, as they were accustomed to doing, took it for granted that the Ministry would be in charge and that Servol would follow its lead and just provide the funds for the project. The one original area of agreement was the need for the expansion of both pre-school and adolescent education — throughout the country.

Servol staff were equally insistent that the projects, to be successful, had to be done on Servol lines, convinced that all programmes that had been run by the Ministry had eventually been buried in red tape and inefficiency .

The flexible adaptability of Servol's modus operandi was at direct odds with the Ministry's method of slow establishment of policies, procedures, check and balances and cross referencing to other government policies and programmes. The initial adjustment between the two different styles of management took some time.

There was always a shortage of government finances available for any social project, including these two.

How it looks now

At present the Servol/Ministry collaboration is operating 154 pre-schools, 32 adolescent training programmes and nine regional vocational training centres. The progress has been steady, but a 40 per cent cut in the 1992 budget has made the future of the programmes uncertain.

The new Prime Minister has visited Servol and commended its work and the Minister of Finance has given indications that Servol's budget will be restored for the collaborative project, but until it actually happens, the uncertainty remains.

Meanwhile Servol has adapted its pre-school programme to include yet another innovation: an outreach programme in which trained nursery school teachers go into the community in disadvantaged areas to focus on children who have not come into contact with an established early childhood programme. The teachers visit homes of parents of small children, talk to them about child development and encourage them to come together two or three times a week with their children — sometimes at someone's home, at a health centre — or even in the street. The teachers talk to the parents about disciplining children without using violence, about nutrition, stages in child development etc., while teaching the little ones nursery rhymes, handicraft and other aspects of the pre-school programme and teaching the mothers simple crafts as well. The outreach programme currently operates in three pilot areas: the Beetham Estate, an urban, densely populated, low-cost housing development, Sangre Grande, a medium-sized town, and Moruga, a rural village. In each of the three areas it has been welcomed by both parents and children. The ages of the children participating are from birth to six years old.

The regular pre-schools continue to operate to capacity as does the adolescent development programme. There has been no other expansion of the programmes in 1992 due to budgetary restraints, but the course content and teaching approaches continue to evolve.

A typical pre-school can be sited in a building of its own — a small wooden building or even one of concrete blocks which the community has managed to secure for the purpose. Some, being unused dwelling places need a lot of 'fixing up' to make them presentable, and the 'fixing up' has often turned into a community event. Others, secured from the local village or county council may have been underused or unused store rooms, or even an abandoned district office cleaned, made weather-proof and painted. Almost any structure that is safe and accessible to the community will be happily converted.

The pre-schools are very cheerful, colourful places. Inside, they are decorated with pictures, posters, children's drawings and various found objects that the children bring to school. The adolescent centres look more grown up — the posters they display more often refer to nutrition or human development, but often will be done by the students as well.

Many houses in country districts in Trinidad and Tobago are built on concrete pillars ten or twelve feet high, to keep the house and its contents safe from flooding in the rainy season. Even in districts where floods are no longer common, such houses are traditional, and many a pre-school has been set up in the space under the house, which, walled-in, makes a spacious and comfortable little school. The adolescent centres likewise are found in all sorts of buildings. Rarely are they purpose-built since the buildings are found by the communities themselves, and few have the finances to build a centre from scratch, so they use what is available and decorate from there.

Where the pre-schools are located next to or close to an adolescent centre, there is generally interaction between the two as the adolescents get a chance to practice some of the parenting skills they learn on the pre-schoolers. In the Servol vocational centres, where nurseries are also located it has become commonplace to see huge, bulky, young men, more accustomed to the football or cricket fields, gently bathing and feeding little ones with great concentration.

The pre-schools themselves are a joy to be in. Consistent with the Servol philosophy of non-violence, children are never spanked or punished by being humiliated in front of a class. The pre-school teachers are all trained in classroom management so that they are not averse to children moving about and becoming involved in many activities. As a result, the pre-school classrooms are very happy, moving places with 'activity corners' where the children get involved in various classroom projects. There are usually two teachers for every classroom, often with a parent (male or female) coming by to voluntarily help out with the days' activities or to teach the children some aspect of local culture, or to explain what he or she does at work.

The teachers recognize that pre-schoolers need to move around a lot, so there is a lot of movement, a lot of chatter and singing and clapping. At frequent intervals the children will be taken outside the classroom on little 'excursions'. They will visit elderly people in the village, or go the village bakery or shops, or go to visit people who are bed-ridden and welcome company. These activities are also part of the adolescents' training albeit on a higher level. The adolescents, in their visits, will clean up and prepare meals for the elderly, helping the bedridden to bathe, doing shopping and laundry for them as well as minor repairs around their dwelling-places.

The pre-schools project a cheerful, bustling extroverted atmosphere without ever giving the appearance of disorder. What is most immediately striking is the self confidence of the children and the willingness to talk to an adult stranger as an equal without either shyness or manipulative coyness.

Because of their very nature, the atmosphere of the adolescent development centres is quite different. At the beginning of their programmes there is considerable tension, and communication from the students can be hostile, reticent or suspicious. Although they have come to the programmes looking for another chance, the young people that are there exhibit the brashness of 'street kids' anywhere — the brittleness that covers up the knowledge that they are already labelled the bottom of the social pile and they really do not care.

It is an unusual experience for an outsider to visit the same adolescents at their graduation. They speak more openly, they interact with each other and with adult outsiders with assurance and with no trace of the previous hostility or territorality. They organize their graduation exercises efficiently and actually address the public gathering at graduation with an aplomb, unusual in many accomplished managers. This marked change both in self-esteem and in interaction is not a guarantee of anything in a depressed economy, but it does give the graduates an edge when seeking employment over those without such training and it provides the inner motivation to keep seeking improvement which is an asset in itself.

Chapter 4

Development and implementation of collaboration

I.   The nature, extent and management of collaboration

The nature of the collaboration between Servol and the Ministry of Education is fairly simple. The government, as a policy, recognizes the value of the collaboration and provides funding for the salaries of the teachers in the national budget. Servol does the rest, with little supervision other than its participation on the National Council of Education.

The formal structure set up to oversee the pre-school project consists of the national council for early childhood education which includes representatives of Servol, the Ministry of Education, the National PTA Association and the National Association of Early Childhood Educators. It meets periodically and reviews the progress reports and makes whatever recommendations it considers necessary to the furthering of the programmes' aims within this management structure.

Servol raises funds to keep the programme going, to provide furniture and equipment for the schools, to train and supervise the teachers and to ensure the on going development of the programme. It carries out these activities and provides the management and administration to ensure that proper financial records are kept and that reports are made to the various funding agencies on time.

There is no committee for the management of the adolescent development programme. Servol acts as government's agent in respect of that project.

Likewise, the nature of the collaboration between Servol and the communities it serves is fairly straightforward and is based on the Servol principles of respectful intervention, listening and avoidance of cultural arrogance as reflected throughout this report. Once the boards of education are established in accordance with context and components above, Servol's collaboration takes place through those boards, and through the teachers it has trained until the schools are set up and furnished. Subsequently, the collaboration is through field officer supervision, visits to board of education meetings and the organization of regional meetings on request. The whole thrust of Servol is to empower the community to manage on its own, using Servol as a consulting resource where needed, and in this it has been largely successful.

II.   Problems and constraints at macro- and micro-levels

Financial

The financial difficulties that have hindered collaboration are problems that beset the national economy. With the drop in the international price of petroleum, on which the country's economy depends, the government found its income dwindling and the effects of the international recession meant that revenue from other sources was not forthcoming. The availability of government financing in the first years was thus a constraint but that was overcome by Servol's ability to get international funding for both projects. More serious have been the constraints on the expansion of the projects due to the inability of poor communities to provide the housing for hoped for pre-schools and life centres, and, in some of the communities, the failure of the Board of Education to raise funds to top up the extremely small salaries paid to the Servol teachers.

On both occasions when Servol's funding was cut by the government it managed to survive by cutting back on planned expansion and development and through the voluntary sharing of salaries by staff members. Some staff who had parental or spousal support, volunteered to go without salary so that other teachers could continue to work in the programmes.

Capacity for change

The nature of the collaboration itself was affected from the beginning by the inability of the Ministry of Education's pre-school unit director to adjust to the idea of a non-government organization collaborating with a government ministry. The project has, however, gone ahead despite the non-participation of this individual and, indeed, her active opposition to the collaboration.

In the communities the biggest problems arose with the capacity of older parents and Board members to adjust to the Servol child-centred programmes, which are very different to their memories of schooling in their own childhood days.

Organizational, administrative, logistical problems

There have been logistical and organizational problems which have affected the progress of the two programmes but none which have affected the collaboration relationships themselves. The national council for early childhood education, which is the main vehicle through which the collaboration with Government is carried out, operates in a very simple straight forward way. Minutes are kept of the meetings and Servol is responsible for carrying out the committee's recommendations and for reporting back progress. To date the collaboration has worked very well from an administrative and organizational point of view.

The major logistical problems have been in the programme itself and its extensive geographical coverage which involve some far-flung villages as well as urban areas. A zoning system and the provision of transport for the field officers have solved most of these difficulties. In some of the communities where programmes were started at community request, it has been difficult to maintain the interest of the Board of Education and in one or

two instances where even the combined work of teachers and field officers were unable to effect any lasting improvement, the composition of some of the boards has had to change. In other instances the boards have had a certain measure of internal dissension, and struggles for individual power have impeded progress for a short while. When the dissension threatened to dissolve any particular programme the teachers, trained in community work, have appealed to Servol field officers for assistance and together they have managed, with the board members, to keep the projects going.

Political

From its inception the collaboration has received political support at the highest levels. The reported hostility or indifference of one or another individual Minister of Education to the collaboration has always more to do with the unwillingness of a particular individual to share any power or prestige than to government policy as such. The politics of power can be very damaging, however, and the collaboration is about to embark on its most critical stage, when the external financing ceases and the government will be expected to take over the funding entirely. Whether the easy nature of the current collaboration will continue under these changed conditions remains to be seen.

Village politics have affected individual boards of education, but this, being expected, has been dealt with in the normal course of events and has not caused any lasting problems.

Cultural

Since the programmes are specifically designed around respect for the desires of the communities they serve and the children and parents involved in the programmes, cultural problems have been largely avoided. In the pre-school programme the major ultural constraint has been the propensity of parents to consider discipline to be synonymous with physical violence and children as being there to be controlled.

The lack of knowledge of nutrition, child psychology, human development and parenting practices among the disadvantaged populations in which the programmes operate is not culture-specific. It is a characteristic of most disadvantaged populations. The belief that young children at pre-school level should sit quietly at desks and silently learn the alphabet and how to do sums, however, is one cultural attitude that did take some time to change, particularly in the country districts. It was effected by the education of parents by the pre-school teachers who are given parent education as one of their responsibilities as early childhood educators. This they manage through parent teachers association's meetings, through parent voluntary activities, which provide an opportunity to talk, and through home visits to students on both levels.

III. Conditions encouraging collaboration

Resource management

The existence of human and material resources that Servol had built up over eighteen years was of key importance to the success of the collaboration between government and Servol in both the pre-school and the adolescent programmes. Servol's vocational training

centres constructed most of the furniture and some of the teaching equipment and Servol's management and administrative staff in turn became the management and administrative staff of the collaboration between government and Servol.

The efficiency of Servol's systems and their effectiveness in using community resources meant that the programmes being run by the collaborative effort were able to operate at a fraction of what the government pays to operate its own schools.

Where communities were able to obtain buildings to house the schools — and the majority of communities requesting pre-school and adolescent programmes have, in fact, been able to do so — the collaboration was thereby encouraged. Once the Board of Education has taken over responsibility for the school, management of resources become its area for concern.

Knowledge and skills of actors

The knowledge, attitudes and motivation of the people involved in the two projects have been the major factors in their success. The Servol staff and the teachers of both the pre-schools and the adolescent development programme are totally convinced of the importance of the work they are doing. They evince a quite unusual commitment to the philosophies on which the projects are based, the community orientation, the focus on the children, the participation of parents and the concepts of respectful intervention, and the abandonment of cultural arrogance.

Their training in listening skills, as much as their sophisticated pre-school and adolescent training skills, have pre-disposed the programmes to community acceptance.

Administrative structures and procedures

Servol's administrative structures and procedures have been kept as simple as possible. As a result, they are fairly flexible and allow the organization to respond rapidly to changing needs in the community and in the two collaborative projects under consideration.

It is probably the simplicity of the machinery involved in administration that has allowed the programmes to grow as rapidly as they have, and to be as responsive to community needs as they have.

Organizational norms

The organizational norms that have most encouraged collaboration are the insistence on community and child centres. No programme is ever imposed on a community. There is no need to sell any of the programmes in any district, urban or rural. All programmes are set up in response to community request and with community collaboration from the beginning. The organizational norms involve listening intently and respectfully to the feelings, opinions and ideas of the children and adolescents, the parents and people in the community. Any innovation or change comes as a result of this listening and after consultation with them. Nothing is imposed from above in the belief that it will be good for the community.

The depth of this communication can cause situations reminiscent of village chaos at times, but the participants seem to be accustomed to this and work their way through it eventually to an accepted conclusion. It takes a lot of time, but the result is an unusual level of self-determination in disadvantaged populations where self determination and empowerment are the exception rather than the rule. The result is that the projects are highly valued by the participants.

Key people

In each community there are a few key people who have the energy, the interest, the determination and the community-mindedness to be the originators of a project. Without the authority and the perseverance of these key people there would be many false starts. Why do they play this role? In many instances for reasons of status — it builds up their authority as community leaders and allows them to wield more influence in community affairs. In other instances worried parents and relatives of small children and teenagers get the impression that their children are not getting a fair chance in an increasingly competitive world because they lack the head start that pre-school training gives them in the case of the small children, or in the case of the adolescents they lack the motivation and self-esteem as young adults that will give them a chance of employment and a decent family life.

Often community leaders genuinely concerned about the future of young people in their area will take on these key roles for purely altruistic reasons. The mobilization of resources to provide school space, the long gestation period in choosing and supporting the teachers during their training, the gathering of supporters from the community itself takes considerable time and energy.

Other key people are the teachers, as they are teachers, public educators, community mobilizers and executive managers of the programmes all at once. The choice of girls from the communities is generally based on their interest in the job, the regard with which they are held in the community and their own inherent abilities. Most of them, as a result, have been 'good' choices from the point of view of an in-built community support and a reciprocal unwillingness to let down the community that chose them. Communities vary in the extent of their responsiveness, but the vital back-up that the teachers get from the field officers keeps them motivated and encourages them to keep on trying to overcome difficulties as they arise.

The salaries paid to the teachers are too small for them to live on without topping up by the community or by family members. Since the teachers come from the communities in which they work, many of them still live with parents and manage to survive that way. The position of teacher gives them a certain status in the community that they would otherwise not enjoy and their training provides a sense of self-esteem, reinforced by the feeling of self-worthness at the knowledge they are improving other peoples' lives. They complain with justification about salary levels but the money they earn is obviously not the motivating factor in the work they do. It is the role they play in the life of the community that provides the chief incentive.

Political opportunities   27

The political opportunities that encouraged collaboration between government and Servol in the first instance, perversely enough, arose out of economic recession and the government's realization that it could not fund development in certain key areas and that by collaborating with Servol they would be providing a quality service to dispossessed people at initially no cost to themselves. Servol's ability to source international financing and its ability to run the programmes at a fraction of what it would cost the government itself to do so were added attractions.

The two changes in the government over the past six years meant that the incoming governments were anxious to be associated with this success and with programmes that had virtually country-wide 'grassroots' respect and support. By collaborating with Servol, both governments gained a measure of automatic respectability which was of political advantage to them.

Chapter 5

Achievements of Servol

Because of the community base of both the pre-school and the adolescent training programmes, there was no need initially for managers and planners to encourage greater participation. Participation was guaranteed before the projects were implemented.

There is generally considerably more demand for places in the two programmes than there are places available, so the problem of managers is not to encourage greater participation from students but to find more facilities.

I.   Extent and process of replication, dissemination and sustainability

Current scope

At the present time there are 154 pre-schools and 41 adolescent training centres scattered throughout Trinidad and Tobago. The pre-school programme in three centres has been extended beyond the walls of the school and now extends to the streets and homes in the surrounding communities. Each of the 195 centres operates as a community outreach centre as well as a training centre, and each one is administered by a Board of Education. Neither Servol nor the Ministry of Education had any say in where the centres were to be located. That was done by people in the communities themselves.

Replication

Some two years after the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration was originated, the government, facing an eminent general election, and realizing the political potential of youth training programmes set up another youth training scheme called YTEPP — Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme — which received funding from the World Bank.

Its funding was many times that put into the Servol/Ministry of Education programme, and the stated objectives of the programme were very similar to those of the Servol/Ministry collaboration to the extent of being aimed at providing 16-19 year olds and to provide them with vocational skills and attitudinal training. It differed, however, in that the extent of the programme was much wider in scope — intending to reach some 10,000 students and to use existing government schools after hours. The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme was, therefore, set up as a part-time evening programme.

The World Bank officers, having found the Servol/Ministry of Education programme successful, insisted as a condition to their funding of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme, that it would include a Servol-like attitudinal training component. Servol extended its collaboration with the government by training the YTEPP teachers in its attitudinal training methods, which had been very effective. The Attitudinal Training Programme, as conceived of by Servol, lasts for three months and is an essential pre-requisite as Servol has found that, without it the students were not able to persevere with the vocational training.

Unfortunately, as soon as the funding was received from the World Bank, the YTEPP directorate reduced the attitudinal training from three months to three hours. New teachers, many of them scarcely older than the students they were going to teach were recruited without Servol training. The programme has been only minimally acceptable. When the government changed, the World Bank insisted that the YTEPP structure be made into a state corporation, which was done. It received a loan of US$20.7 million over five years from the World Bank in order to continue in operation. It continues to operate, but the drop-out rate of both teachers and students is high and it is currently under investigation. The current costs of training a YTEPP student to the pre-vocational stage is TT$8000.00 compared to Servol's cost of TT$1400.00 to take each student to a job earning stage.

In addition, the government's water and sewerage authority, which was over-staffed and facing a retrenchment exercise, asked Servol to do a training course for its staff in attitudinal development. Servol trained a core group of WASA workers who were regarded as opinion leaders — mainly from the daily paid levels of staff -to be trainers, and they, in turn, held training sessions for their fellow workers. The workshops they held were so popular with the workers that workers were asking, far in advance, to be allowed to participate.

Servol has also been asked by the Ministry of National Security, to do attitudinal training in the Youth Training Centre — the country's largest reform school for juvenile offenders. Since some 80 per cent of young men who have been in the youth training centre become habitual criminals and graduate from that centre to the adult prisons the government hoped thereby to lower the recidivism rate. This training has also been well received, both by the youthful offenders, and by the prison authorities.

Servol's training in attitudinal development, parenting and vocational skills has been further extended, at government request to the state-run orphanages, and in recent months at the request of involved non-government organizations, to drug rehabilitation centres for addicted young people.

II.   Educational, institutional and developmental achievements

Educational system

In several of the state supported secondary schools, students regarded as problem students or delinquents have been sent to Servol for attitudinal training. There have been, however, no changes in the curricula of the state-run schools as a result of the Servol/Ministry

of Education collaboration despite the perceived value of the Servol training in the areas mentioned in section 10 of this report.

No extra resources and facilities other than those mentioned above have been allocated as a result of the innovative approach achieved by the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration both at the pre-school and the adolescent training levels. The establishment of the 195 Servol/Ministry of Education pre-schools and Life Centres (as the adolescent training centres are called) has in itself been regarded as a positive achievement throughout the community.

Evaluation reports by outside consultants have been written on both the Servol pre-school programme and on both the adolescent training programmes. In respect of the pre-school programme the latest evaluation report (dated 1990) commenting on the change produced by the Servol programme on parents and children stated:

Parent education programmes

"Each trainee teacher is charged with the responsibility of setting up and/or participating in a monthly Parent Education Programme in the community to which she is assigned. With the exception of the very new schools, this has been done in most of the areas, although in some areas it has received little response from parents. In other areas, it has been amalgamated with the P.T.A. monthly meetings as parents seem unwilling to attend two separate monthly meetings. Parents are also invited to attend zonal workshops along with the teachers and this practice has improved both the extent of the involvement of the parents in the school and the quality of that involvement. Most schools reported that parents gave voluntary assistance at school outings, sports days, field trips and concerts and also came to the school to talk to the children about different religious festivals, to show them how to wrap a sari or a dhoti, or to make simple craft items. In addition, volunteer parents supervise the schools and even take over the teaching on days when the teachers are required to attend workshops and seminars[1]."

Adolescent training:

There have been no programmes specifically organized for adolescents by the trainee teachers so far reported, but in many, if not most areas a substantial number of parents are, in fact, teenagers and they are the ones who are most willing to attend the parent education courses and who get the most from them. They appear, from all reports, to be more susceptible to the new ideas and ways of bringing up their children promulgated by the trainee teachers than older parents who are more experienced with established patterns of behaviour".[2]

1.   Evaluation Report on Servol's Development of a Non Formal Programme of Early Childhood Education and Care in High Risk Areas prepared for the Bernard Van Leer Foundation by Personnel Management Services Ltd. dated April 6, 1990. pages 13 -14 .

2.   op. cit. page 14.

Impact on parents' and children's growth

"Any evaluation on the children' and parents growth must inevitably be somewhat subjective in nature and varies considerably from region to region as well as in relation to the person reporting. In the more isolated agricultural areas such as Tamana and Blanchisseuse, little parental growth has been noted or reported. In areas such as Caroni and Chaguanas, where ethnic customs and cultural practices are deeply etched growth is slow and hesitant, particularly among the parents. In other areas, particularly those where the parents are very young, the growth of both parents and children has been rapid and gratifying. Overall the value not only of the teaching curriculum and methods advocated by Servol, but the community involvement practices built in to the system itself, appear to be extraordinarily effective."[3]

Effectiveness in terms of children's performance on entering primary school

"In some areas there were no pre-schools other than those established by Servol, but in those areas where there were other pre-schools, Servol trained children performed creditably in comparison with children from the more traditional nursery schools. It is the practice in traditional nursery schools in Trinidad to train pre-school age children of 3, 4 and 5 years of age in much the same manner as children are trained in primary schools. There is a major emphasis on reading, writing and arithmetic and the children are expected to sit at their desks or tables other than at designated recess periods.

The major concessions to their age is the size of the furniture in the class-rooms. This kind of system gets the hearty approval of most parents who were themselves taught that way in the rare instances where they attended nursery school at all. The primary schools in some instances therefore reported that some children from the traditional pre-schools out performed some Servol trained children in the traditional 'three R's'. Out of a total of the one hundred and seven schools reported on, however, these were in a definite minority with not more than three such reports being made.

In all cases the reports indicated that it was in some instances only that the traditional pre-school children out-performed some of the Servol trained children. In all other cases the primary school teachers reported that the Servol trained children compared favourably with the traditionally trained students.

Primary schools particularly commented on the Servol trained children's superior conceptualization and superior social skills. They commented on the ease with which the Servol children spoke up in class, their communication

3.   op. cit. pages 15-16.

skills generally, and their co-operativeness in mingling with other children and in getting along with their teachers."[4]

"Unfortunately, these are skills that are not necessarily encouraged in a number of schools in the primary school system and there is no way of assessing, at the present time, whether the improved communication, conceptual and socialization skills conferred by Servol training will endure the regular school system."

In a 1985 evaluation report on the adolescent development programme, the section on social involvement states:

"The effect on the business community of Servol training has been positive and pronounced. The expressed preference for Servol trained employees despite their limited academic backgrounds, when there are ample resources of unemployed academically superior job hunters, is an endorsement of both the Servol technical training and the Servol philosophies.[5]

In a basic civics course all students are taught about the concept of communities, why they are important and are given some insight into their environment generally, into their country, the Caribbean and the fact that it interrelates with other world communities.

The young people are taken to get national identification cards, passports, to open their own bank accounts, to attend sittings of Parliament and to visit the Town Council. They are taught the basic elements of citizenship to emphasize the importance of themselves as members of a community and citizens of a country.

The students who responded when asked of their involvement in community affairs, reported involvement in two hundred and eighty-one activities in the aggregate — most of the students, of course, being involved in more than one area. Less than 20 per cent of the students reported non-involvement in any community activity, approximately 5 per cent of those women with small children or others who added words to the effect that they hoped to in the future.[6]

37.95 per cent were involved in sporting activities. 22 per cent included 'church' as one of their community involvements with 11.8 per cent citing music, 17.1 per cent helping children's groups and 4 per cent respectively in cultural activities and community centre work and a scant 3 per cent — perhaps reflecting the age of graduates — being involved in politics.

4.   op. cit. pages 7-8.

5.   op. cit. page 23.

6.   op. cit. page 15.

The involvement in children's groups, either in teaching evening classes or organizing outings, weekend groups helping with sports etc., was high among both male and female graduates."[7]

Financial reports on both Servol/Ministry of Education programmes indicate an efficient use of resources. The management structures and procedures in place are effective and are constantly under review. They are very different from the structures and procedures that operate in the Ministry of Education itself and in the public education system. There has been no discernable change in the Ministry's own structures and procedures as a result of the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration.

The evaluation report on the adolescent programme quoted above indicated that the Servol graduates were well regarded as employees by local business organizations and their self-confidence and work discipline were generally higher than in employees from a comparable educational and social background, and in many cases higher than in employees with a superior educational background. As the excerpt quoted above showed, Servol adolescent development programme graduates were reported to take an active part in community affairs. Recent reports indicated that there have been comparatively few instances of crime and drug related offenses among Servol graduates compared with their contemporaries.

There are more demands for the establishment of Servol/Ministry of Education centres which indicates a high regard for the training produced by these centres and considerable confidence in the benefits of the Servol type training.

III. Changes in the nature and activities of the partners to the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration

Knowledge and skills

The major changes noted in the nature and activities of partners to the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration have been in the increase in self esteem and empowerment of people in the communities in which the educational centres operate. Coming from a culture in which dependency on government handouts is stressed and, indeed politically approved, the self confidence that has resulted from the community originating and managing these educational institutions marks a considerable change in people. The knowledge they have gained in the management and resource mobilization skills has been considerable and in a number of instances has inspired the people involved to go on to other projects — the building of a sports field, the repair of a common road etc.

The self-knowledge and skills in self-management that the teacher trainees receive in their training, lay the framework for the extension of their knowledge and their skills to the students and parents that relate to them in the programmes. Training adolescents who are 'society's drop outs' is not an easy task, particularly for teachers who may have come from

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7.   op. cit. page 16.

backgrounds similar to those of the trainees and who have been trained in the traditional modes of adult/child communication.

The latter are authoritative and often exploitative, with a strong assumption of "you don't have to tell me, I'm from the 'grassroots' myself. I've been through it and I know". The Servol system of training which puts teachers in the classroom with these troubled adolescents for two weeks, during which time they are not allowed to speak -only listen — is a difficult, frustrating and enlightening experience.

Attitudinal behaviour

The humility of realizing that they do not know, that they always have to listen and find out anew — from adolescents, from children and from parents — changes attitudes and behaviour in all concerned. There is not a one hundred percent success rate. Some of the teachers drop out of the system for psychological reasons, some for financial reasons.

The level at which staff recruitment takes place, because of the generally low salaries offered, often means that staff potential for development in some areas is itself limited, but that the development takes place and that attitudes and motivation change and grow, in a mutually reinforcing cycle as the attitudes and motivation of students, parents and community leaders change and grow, is inescapably obvious.

Another area in which change is noticeable is in the attitudes which the adolescent students and the pre-school children's parents adopt towards the responsibilities of parenthood. Having set up a programme in which adolescents are taught parenting skills — both because most first time births in Trinidad and Tobago occur to young women between the ages of 16-22 and because of its objective of breaking the long term cycle of poverty/abuse of children/lack of self esteem — the anecdotal evidence over the past nine years has shown positive results.

Roles and responsibilities

The fairly low fertility rates among Servol adolescent graduates reflected in the 1985 report may be indicative of this. That report states:

> "Evidence suggests that the pattern of single parenthood and non-permanent relationships starts early and is strongly established in the communities from which Servol students tend to come. Out of the 122 male and 123 female graduate students covered in the study whose ages ranged from 16 to 23, 22 or 8 per cent of the female students had children but no permanent relationship with a man. Only 11 or 4.4 per cent of the male students reported that they had children and no permanent relationship. The sexual partners of the female students may not have come from among the Servol trained male students, indeed, since the students would tend to be classmates of the same age, it is more likely that the females would mate with males somewhat older than themselves, as is the general pattern in the community. What these figures indicate is not necessarily the irresponsibility of the female student graduates who may, in fact, have been more responsible in avoiding an unhealthy

permanent relationship and opting to raise their children alone. What it does indicate is the relative responsibility of the males. 15 or 6 per cent of the female graduates reported that they had children and an established permanent relationship, 3 being married, while 5 or 2 per cent of the males reported both a permanent relationship and children."[8]

That formal evaluation of the Servol vocational training programme was completed in 1985, however, before the collaboration of Servol/Ministry of Education took place, but when Servol was using the same programme basically that it is using now. In that report the evaluators stated in their conclusions that:

"In terms of the objectives it has set for the training programme, Servol appears to have been successful on two counts — the provision of vocational skills of a level to enable dropouts to become employed and self sufficient to a degree significantly in excess of the norm of Trinidad and Tobago for dropouts without such training. It has further furnished its students with attitudes towards work, timekeeping, discipline and interpersonal relationships which make them superior to the average worker in the country without such training.

In the seven years covered in the study the Servol organization has provided significant incentive and training in self development and personal growth for significant numbers of its students."[9]

Economic, social and political

Determining changes in the economic, social and political power of the partners to the innovation involves by definition a subjective definition. As the experts from the evaluation reports quoted above show, Servol adolescent vocational training graduates are more employable than comparable groups of young people in the society. The economic position of the collaborative effort itself is reflected in Chapter 3 section III under the *Resources available* heading of the *Implementation section* of this report.

Trinidad and Tobago is going through a long recessionary period and the economic position of the small rural and low income urban communities among which its programmes work is increasingly desperate. There are advantages, however, which the Servol programmes have brought, marginal though they may be, in the actual usage of resources as this pre-school evaluation report, done in 1990, indicates:

"Improvements in nutrition were reported by most teachers and supervisors. It would appear that the instruction on what is good to eat, and what is not, given to the children themselves has been taken very seriously, and the children go home demanding that they be given the 'right' kind of food. Junk food, soft drinks and snacks have virtually been eliminated from the children's

8. op. cit. page 16.

9. op. cit. page 23.

lunch pails, replaced by fruit, vegetables, fruit and, according to one report, macaroni pie with cheese, stewed red beans and fish. The only exception was in the most urban of the schools, in Port of Spain, where, parents were still sending 'convenience foods' for the children to eat.

In most of the schools surveyed the trainee teachers had given lectures to the parents themselves on nutrition at parenting classes, parent/teacher association meetings or at a teacher-organized function. In certain areas the district health nurse had been invited to a parenting class or parent/teacher association meeting to speak on health and nutrition and had reinforced the good nutrition message.

The trainee teachers must have been very emphatic in their communication, because, in spite of a steadily worsening economic situation in most areas of the nation, the reported improvement in nutrition as measured by the quality of lunches and snacks the children brought to school was marked. In some instances, particularly in country areas, where a family was extremely destitute, the other parents supplied food for the children of the destitute family. There have been no reported instances of children going hungry without receiving support from the other parents or the community."[10]

In terms of social/political power, the success of the programmes in the communities in which they operate has resulted in an empowerment of disadvantaged people which has made them less easy to manipulate and more conscious of the value of their own thoughts, feelings and efforts. They are also becoming demanding, and the level of requests to the National Commission for Self Help for financial assistance in providing materials for community improvement projects is not unrelated.

Ruth N. Cohen, in a report prepared for the Bernard Van Leer Foundation 1991 The Hague called 'Shaping Tomorrow' — The Servol Programmes in Trinidad and Tobago says: "The changes come about because of the programme's integration of all aspects of a young child's life. What actually happens in the pre-school is important: the way the pre-school teacher behaves with and relates to the three to five year olds in her charge matters very much, particularly in the example she sets for the parents and other members of the community who come to listen, to watch and, frequently, to join in. But the pre-school teacher trained by Servol has a remit wider that the four hours or so that she spends each day with the children. She is expected to undertake parent education activities, she has to support and work with a Community Board of Education and a Parent Teachers Association (PTA), she is expected to influence the wider community so that it can provide a loving and healthy environment for the young children growing up within it. And, extraordinary though it may seem, many of these 'slips of girls' do manage to influence the wider community." [11]

10.   Personnel Management Services Ltd. 1990. Evaluation of Servol programme and methodology for the Inter American Foundation .

11.   Ruth N. Cohen, 1991. In a report prepared for the Bernard Van Leer Foundation "Shaping Tomorrow" The Hague.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

The success of this programme has inspired attempts to copy it as has been shown by the establishment of the government's *Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme*, mentioned above, and in a related programme entitled *Youth Enterprise Support System* which attempts to replicate Servol's sister Organization — Fundaid. These attempts indicate the interest that exists at the national level in developing such educational programmes generally, although the two instances quoted above have not had the success hoped for due to management problems.

The actual collaboration between government and non-governmental organization in setting up and carrying out a programme has not been emulated with much success.

There does exist, between the National Steelband Organization and the Ministry of Culture, a strong interactive relationship, but it is mainly one where government funds certain clearly defined areas of steelband activities.

There is close collaboration also between the Government and the National Carnival Commission, which organizes Trinidad and Tobago's nation-wide annual carnival activities. This collaboration involves various government ministries, Pan Trinbago (The National Steelband Organization), the Calypsonians Association, the Carnival Band leaders Association and other related bodies.

These instances of collaboration have gone on for some time and have always been fraught with strife and trouble and disagreement with a cosmetic surface co-operation for political reasons. They have not been stimulated by the relationship between Servol and the Ministry of Education, but could, perhaps benefit from Servol's experience in tapping into community support, ensuring the establishment of simple and effective management and administrate systems and a tight and efficient reporting system.

Interaction between other non-governmental organizations and the community has both preceded and followed the Servol/Government collaboration, in areas as diverse as music and medicine, but there are none which actually approach or replicate the work that Servol does in education on a pre-school or adolescent development levels.

I.   Lessons that can be learned

The three most salient achievements

The three most salient achievements of the innovation are:

(1)   The achievement of built-in participation and support from the communities in which the programmes have been mounted.

(2)   The flexibility and adaptability of the programmes to the needs of the communities in which they operate through minimal involvement by civil servants, with entrenched bureaucratic responsibilities and complex reporting systems to work with.

(3)   The centering of the programmes on the actual need of the parents, adolescents and children in the programmes through active and receptive listening to what they say, only intervening once that respectful listening has taken place and the resultant adjusting of all programmes without the cultural arrogance that says "I know what you need — let me provide it for you". These programmes empower people because they say "what do you need, and how can we help you to get it for yourselves through your own efforts?"

Important lessons

The school system in Trinidad and Tobago does not, traditionally, seek participative views from the people it teaches. Decisions on curricula, books to be used, teaching methods, class organization and teacher training methods are all made, not with the collaboration of students, parents and teachers, but in the Ministry of Education.

All government ministries, by virtue of their very natures, must be concerned with collective financial responsibility, overall social and economic patterns and the checks and balances inherent in the collective national nature of their missions. As a result they cannot function with the flexibility of a non-governmental organization, however committed and talented the civil service personnel may be.

The collaboration of Servol and the Ministry of Education in the two programmes they have undertaken together, namely the pre-school programme and the adolescent development programme, has been successful because it had been structured on genuine political will and trust from the highest policy making levels of government and minimal involvement on a bureaucratic level coupled with stringent and professional periodic financial and general evaluation reports. The collaboration has also been successful because Servol is, in fact, a trust-worthy organization and has not allowed itself to become, as so many non-governmental organizations do, an end in itself. The Servol directorate genuinely does try to ensure that decisions are taken in the community — including the responsibility for dispersing funds — not by the Servol administrative staff.

It has been able to go into dispossessed communities and to help young people that the school system had left behind as rejects because Servol's teaching programmes were

based, not on verbal expressions of caring, but on behavioural demonstrations -through listening and interacting and caring. The teachers are trained to listen, to interact and to express love through their behaviour to young people who distrust words. This kind of subjectivity does not show itself in the official government standards for recruitment and training of teachers. Perhaps it cannot.

But it seems to be this level of interactive activity that makes the success of Servol/Ministry of Education Programmes where the previous government pre-schools were stagnant and unpopular and the post primary training for adolescents was non-existent.

If the school system could be changed so that schools all became student oriented and community centreed — where the responsibility for running the schools and paying the teachers became the responsibility of the communities in which the schools were located, the parents and the students, the entire school system would take on a different cast.

The current levels of vandalism at schools and the lack of maintenance of their physical structures then become concerns of the communities in which they are found. These problems are no longer shunted off to the government to take care of. Community pressure, like peer pressure being immediate, with supervision built-in, is more effective than authority from afar.

There are lessons to be learned in community choice of teachers, of locating schools in areas where the students live, and for government financing to be provided by the central government, through a local Board of Education under the monitoring of the relevant Ministry, while the actual management of schools becomes a community responsibility. Given that kind of system, the traditional involvement of the various religious bodies in the management of the schools would arise from community action and strengthen the importance of those organizations at grassroots levels as well.

II. Conditions essential to greater collaboration and more effective partnerships

Resources

The pre-requisite to the extension of the collaboration between Servol and the Ministry of Education must be resources. Firstly, the financial resources to provide the physical infrastructure must be present — either via the central government, via international funding of some sort or from community sources. Secondly, the human resources to employ and extend the Servol methods of teacher/ community activist training to more teachers and to enable Servol to extend that training to people on community boards of education and to parents (or primary care givers) both those whose children attend and, through the outreach programme those who do not attend the schools and life centres where education is offered.

Knowledge, skills and attitudes

There is an attitude of trust which must exist between governmental and non governmental organizations if a successful collaboration is going to exist. While the trust and respect must come from the very highest levels of political decision making in both

government and non governmental organizations, the formal establishment of the nature of the management of collaboration must be clearly defined and delineated so that the nature of the relationship cannot be destroyed by subsequent political shifts, or the indifference of key individuals on either side.

It would be useful if parties to the collaboration could be trained in project planning, interpersonal relations and, communications, including skills in listening. The governmental and non governmental organization systems, background and training are so different that mutual suspicion, distrust and disagreement are virtually inevitable without the attention to attitudinal and behavioural development inherent in good interpersonal relations training.

The extent to which participants to the collaboration are aware of their own psychological and emotional reactions and can be assertive about their ideas and feelings without feeling threatened or becoming aggressive will mark the extent to which the collaboration will be successful.

This training should be made part of the training of people in supervisory offices or joint supervisory bodies as well as that of the teachers, field officers and course administrators, not just of the students of the courses.

Administrative structures and procedures

The administrative structures should be simple but thorough. It is essential that a sound financial accounting system be established and audited regularly by an independent body to establish strengths and weaknesses, areas that need shoring up or improvement, and to identify areas in which cost controls are possible. The success of the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration has resulted from minimal government interference in the administration of the programmes which has only been made possible because of the trust engendered by Servol's sound financial and administrative controls, and the high ethical standards of its directorate.

The monitoring of the actual programmes that arise out of the collaboration should be thought of on three levels, the first of these should be on the *organizational policy-making level* where representatives of the organizations which will be directly involved in the collaboration as well as representatives from those that will be directly affected by the collaboration have an opportunity to have their views, needs and wants known and taken into consideration by the others.

The second level should be on the *organization management level* where the technical monitoring of the quality of the programme operations takes place through field visits, meetings, on-the-job training, periodic workshops etc., and where individual and personalized support can be given to each of the persons who are actually carrying out the training programmes.

The third monitoring level should be the *community based level* where people in the community including but not limited to parents and teachers involved in the educational programmes should give their support and accept some of the responsibility for supervision of the programmes in their midst.

Organizational norms

The organization must maintain its flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the people it is set up to serve — to the point of being willing to dismantle any stage of its operations or to change it radically where this is called for. There must be an on-going interaction with the people — the children, students, parents, community members that the organization is set up to serve — so that this process remains a fluid one, never allowing the organization's norms to change from being community focused to being organization focused.

When the needs of the organization and the maintenance of its systems and procedures assume greater importance than the needs of the pre-school children and the adolescents it was set up to serve, this collaboration will have failed.

III. Recommendations for action

Educational needs, priorities and resources

Up until this collaboration took place and with the exception of a massive, politically opportune national consultation on education which took place some years ago at a government convention centre, there has been no attempt to find out from the people what they want in terms of education — what their needs are, what their priorities are and what resources the people involved have and are willing to put towards education. Given a society that has traditionally put a high priority on education, and whose literacy rates have been falling.

Given the conditions of the structures and norms needed to encourage effective participation in collaborative systems, this report recommends a system of on-going community development work by community oriented field officers, where, through individual interviews and in community group meetings, the views of the communities are gathered as to what their needs and priorities are as well as the needs of special interest groups, and of professional and business people. These views, once collated and co-ordinated through the planning unit at the Ministry of Education, would then be considered by a *National Committee for Educational Development* on which representatives of relevant non-governmental organizations and government ministries would sit to assess the results.

It is the recommendation of this report that it is only through such an on going assessment that the setting of educational goals and the planning of educational programmes take place. The present system is clearly inadequate for the purposes for which it was set up. Disaffected unemployable, frustrated young people graduate yearly -or drop out — from schools in Trinidad and Tobago as Chapter 2, Section III, page 8 shows. The goals presently aimed at may have been set for all the right reasons, but they are not satisfying the needs of the people.

The groups that form part of this consultation should be made part of the machinery of implementation and management of the programmes that result. The communities from which the students come should not be allowed to turn over their collective responsibilities for how these future community members develop, to an impersonal Ministry of Education.

A system of regional and institutional boards of education should be established which would be responsible for collecting funds to supplement those allocated through the national budget allocating resources, paying teachers salaries, managing educational and developmental budgets and ensuring that standards, set through the consultative process outlined above, are met.

The actual systems to be put in place to ensure that the management of these resources is effective would have to be professionally established and monitored by the auditor general's department or by independent organizations designated by the auditor general and entrusted by that office to carry out this work.

IV. The development of educational materials and participation in teaching and training

The Faculty of Education at the University of the West Indies, the Learning Resource Centre of the Ministry of Education and their Planning and Curriculum Development departments all do excellent work in developing educational materials. At the University, programmes for participating in teaching and training are built-in to the Faculty of Education's teaching systems. Unfortunately, while primary, non graduate teachers are required to have a teacher's training certificate, there is no incentive in the system for qualified (i.e. graduate) secondary school teachers to get training at the University in education. They do not need a teaching certificate. Although there is a part-time University diploma course that can be fitted into most teaching schedules, secondary school teachers are not encouraged to take the course, nor are they given any financial increment once they have successfully completed it.

While the training at the University is of a very high standard and includes attitudinal training, once teachers have been trained and are back in the school system they are discouraged from using what they have learned at University for it just does not fit easily into the fairly rigid secondary school system. These resources are only presently available for the public school system, however. Servol/Ministry of Education projects coming outside that system do not qualify for use of these resources.

The most useful recommendation that this analysis can make in respect to the development of educational materials is that the resources already present in the country be used more effectively. In the collaboration effort between Servol and the Ministry of Education, the development of teaching materials is of a high priority in teacher training both in the full time programme and at zonal workshop levels. There, teachers and parents who are encouraged to attend the workshops, develop teaching materials from available resources. This seems to be a sensible and practical approach and works well in both the pre-school and adolescent programmes. Access to materials developed at national-level would be useful for the programmes covered in this report.

At the Ministry of Education Learning Resource Centre and at the University, sharing of educational materials and teacher participation in all programmes should be adopted and encouraged.

V.   Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of all educational programmes should be done on four levels. First, there should be clearly defined standards of performance, aims and objectives set with the participation of teachers or teacher trainees and instructors, against which those running the pre-school and the adolescent programmes can evaluate themselves. Each programme unit should have a weekly evaluation session to monitor progress, discuss difficulties and plan how to deal with them.

Secondly, there should be established a system of regular monthly reports made by the staff to the community boards of education, covering such areas as finance and cost control, school maintenance, programme progress, development of teaching materials, community and parent involvement, quality of teaching and student progress. These reports should be circulated to the regional boards of education as well as to the national council on educational programmes and the field officers to provide the sort of data base on which developmental decisions can be made.

Third, field officers should be assigned no more than five or six schools each to cover and they should spend time with each school on a weekly basis, monitoring, evaluating, guiding and counselling where necessary, reporting back to their respective co-ordinators (as they do now) and ensuring that the monitoring reports from each school are examined, discussed and changes made in the system as appropriate.

Fourth, once every two years an independent evaluation should be made by someone outside the system to see how well the programmes are achieving their aims and objectives and to provide a permanent record of development.

VI.   Technical guidelines

The technical guidelines that exist at present in the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration are adequate for the purposes they serve. They are being continuously evaluated and updated through analysis and discussion by the technical co-ordinators and operate effectively.

In the larger public system the technical guidelines that need preparing involve the establishment of standards of consultation, guidelines on how teachers should approach community interviewing and meeting-holding, guidelines on reporting back and implementation mechanisms.

Guidelines must also be established for the selection of staff to be used for community consultation purposes and for their briefing, training and supervision.

As will be evident from the analysis presented in the body of this report, the system at present being operated by Servol and the Ministry of Education has been very effective. The extremely pragmatic and flexible approach that has been adopted in this particular collaboration has proven its worth in this culture given its resources and its present stage of development.

As conditions change the systems and approach may need changing, but the essential feature of the approach lies in its simplicity, flexibility and consultative nature. The guidelines that need establishing, therefore, must be centered on these principles and will themselves be subject to change as time goes on, resource allocations change and the country's economic and social conditions advance or recede.

It is outside the scope of this report, lacking as it does a detailed analysis of the human, financial and material resources, as well as the structures, systems and reporting relationships in the entire network of educational institutions, to attempt to make recommendations for technical guidelines that would be relevant to the country as a whole.

Insofar as the two areas in which the collaborative approach between Servol and the Ministry of Education has operated and with which this report has concerned itself, the technical guidelines most effective to date are those presently in operation.

VII. Sensitization and training

The training and sensitization found most effective for successful implementation of the above recommendations are based on five clearly defined principles, listening, respectful intervention, avoidance of cultural arrogance, child/student/orientation, and parent and community involvement.

Listening

The first of the training and sensitization needs is the most basic and most difficult. To be able to listen without talking back; without expressing one's own views; without letting one's own judgement, feelings or experience intervene; just listening, absorbing, understanding what the sender is saying involves training which demands considerable self discipline, effort and failure, perseverance and a high frustration tolerance. It is, however, a prerequisite for any genuine community based educational development. This kind of training cannot be completed in a two or three day course. It must extend over a period of time and have periodic reinforcement.

Respectful intervention

Although educational projects and programmes may be successful and of proven value forcing them on suspicious or unwilling people (adults or children) brings a negative element to the programme, to the system that promotes it and to the people entrusted to carry it out. The effect on the recipients may, on one level, have varying degrees of success, but on a very different level it reinforces lessons of lack of empowerment and lack of self esteem. Where any introduction of a new educational system is done from a basis of respectful intervention, it is done with an explanatory approach — a presentation of an idea for consideration, a sharing of views and ideas, a genuine willingness to adapt where that is needed. In order to work, change in any organization this is desirable. Because it take time it rarely is employed successfully. In introducing the approach used by the Servol/Ministry of Education collaboration, this is an essential concept, and training and sensitization on all levels in this concept is a basic requirement.

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Avoidance of cultural arrogance

The entire structure of our educational and administrative systems is based on cultural arrogance, both in governmental and non governmental organizations. The higher the educational achievement the system teaches us, the greater value the person, the more weight his or her views should be given. The converse is also accepted — the lower the educational attainments, the less value and status is accorded to the individual, and the less weight given to his or her views.

In non-governmental organizations the assumption is rife that such organizations are superior to a government bureaucracy which is seen as being rule bound, slow, inflexible, tied up in red tape and cautious in taking decisions to the point of ineffectiveness In government ministries, the assumption of superiority is equally strong, condescendingly looking at the non governmental organizations as being unprofessional, do-gooding, poorly organized, non comprehending gaggles of usually undisciplined, if well meaning, civilians.

On both sides there is a frequent assumption that their superior knowledge, experience, education, training, commitment, spiritual worth, etc., gives them a greater level of insight into what should be done to improve the situation at hand. Adults assume, because they are adults, that they automatically understand more and have better judgement in any situation than a child would have. Officials and people with education assume superior knowledge/understanding over the grassroots community member, the poorly educated and especially the inarticulate. That such assumptions are based on sheer cultural arrogance and result in inappropriate, ineffective, and insensitive solutions being proposed for social programmes is seldom admitted or even realized. Intelligence, judgement and awareness are not necessarily linked to educational attainment, social or official status, or even articulateness. In fact, there is at least an argument that an over emphasis on academic achievement may impair those very abilities which permit sensitivity and awareness, as a side effect of the very concentration required by an exclusive focus on academic study.

The Cohen Report quoted above described the evolution of this philosophy by saying of Servol's founder. Fr. Gerard Pantin: "Gerry Pantin was not trained as a social worker or as a community worker and he later realized that lack was one of his great advantages. Not knowing what to do, he went to the people in the shanty towns and he asked them what they needed. And he listened to what they told him"

Servol's own description, from "Servol through the years 1970 — 1989" is: "Anyone trying to help disadvantaged people should base this approach on a *philosophy of ignorance*". Expressed simply, this means that you should never presume that you know the needs of people: ask them what these needs are and what type of help they want. The next step is that of *attentive listening*. You should listen carefully to what the people tell you, convinced that their voice is the most important element in their own development and you should continue to adopt this listening stance throughout your dialogue with them.

What pernicious attitude exists in each one of us that prevents us from offering genuine help to a fellow-man and which attentive listening seeks to eradicate? It is the attitude of *cultural arrogance* which tends to make people believe that because they come from a certain country or ethnic background or have benefited from a certain type of

education that this makes them superior to other people. In Servol's view, it is only when a serious attempt is made to grapple with that problematical attitude, that people are entitled to interfere in the lives of others through a process of *respectful intervention*. The only way to help another is to do so respectfully, conscious that we both have a lot to learn from the dialogue and that we will both emerge richer for the experience.

Fundamental to this approach is self development, that individual and communities are helped to develop at their own pace, in accordance with their own needs and at a level that they can afford. Servol is not a welfare organization. It does not give handouts to anyone. Respectful intervention also means respect for the other's dignity — those who receive also give, and those who give receive much.

To avoid this kind of cultural arrogance, which is built into almost everyone's educational and social conditioning, demands training and sensitization. It is a kind of training which is important for the success of community based, child/student oriented educational programmes, but it is a kind of training that many educators and administrators find threatening to their own self esteem and feelings of security, and that they therefore may resist.

Child/student orientation

Training in child/student orientation provides a sensitization in educational programmes to the feelings and the emotional psychological and developmental needs of the child or student in the programme as being of primary importance at the time they exist and not just as part of an overall growth pattern. The development of creativity, self awareness and self esteem are regarded with as much importance as self discipline and understanding of community. The training of early childhood educators and of adolescent educators must be of a very high level professionally to ensure that this kind of focus can be maintained in a classroom without the classroom becoming chaotic and the training taking on negative lines.

Parent and community involvement

In order that acceptance for responsibility for the development of young people be returned to the parents and the communities that nurture the young people, and in order that the education of the young have a reflective educational effect on parents and community, it is important to emphasize the training and sensitization of planners, teachers, organizers, and policy makers in the concepts of parent and community involvement, on the interactive process as inherent in such involvement, and on the multi-layered effects (educationally, socially and politically) that this involvement implies.

It is the interaction of these different areas of sensitization and training that are necessary if the successful implementation of collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations in setting up innovative educational programmes in communities in Trinidad and Tobago is going to be effected.

VIII. National application

To disseminate the Servol approach on a national level would require a fundamental change in the teacher training system in Trinidad and Tobago, both on primary and secondary levels, as well as a change in the curricula of both primary and secondary schools.

The change required need not be either expensive or time consuming except in the sense that teachers already in the system would have to be called back for periodic updating and refresher training during school vacation periods, but the system could readily expand to accommodate that. It would, however, require a change in the concept of education that places students at the bottom of the pile, in a position of supplicant receiving an educational handout from teachers and from a Ministry that they should be grateful to, to placing them in a position of prominence where it was accepted that neither teacher nor Ministry of Education would exist without the student, and it is therefore the students' needs that should be the focus of both the programme of education and the practice of teaching.

Building such a concept into teacher training would imply a new teacher training component — an emphasis on the Servol approach as outlined in the paragraphs above, together with training in the methodology for putting these concepts into practice. This would mean teachers on all levels having to undergo the three-month Servol sensitization and community involvement programme as a pre- qualification to holding down a teaching post — not more difficult and less expensive than providing them with training in computer literacy.

Both primary and secondary school curricula would have to be altered to include an on-going appropriate student self-awareness element along the S.P.I.C.E.S. model in each year of school. The existing curricula include impressive social studies programmes — they just are not structured in such a way that teachers, in carrying them out, have their own sensitization training reinforced, and in doing so, reflect back to the student body the principles inherent in both their training and the students. The national public teacher training programmes at present only compulsorily cover primary school teachers and do not include teacher self awareness or sensitization, nor do they include community involvement and parent education components. The Servol model already works in 195 educational units. It could be extended to both primary and secondary systems provided the existing teaching staff were required to undergo this training in concepts and methodology, and the network of on-going inspection and supervision were expanded. For each school the development in community involvement would be a different experience, but there is no reason why inner city schools could not develop this as easily as rural schools have. Servol centres work in the least developed and most crime-ridden areas in both urban and rural districts, and could be used as models that have already proved successful in which they operate.

This may go someway towards restoring prestige as community leader to the position of teacher and toward drawing the immediate community into accepting responsibility for the conditions of schools and the standards of student behaviour in the schools in their midst.

The present government of Trinidad and Tobago has, in fact, very recently asked Servol for a proposal as to how the Servol concepts can be made to benefit all young people who are educationally deprived, and therefore socially and developmentally 'at risk'.

While there is no commitment yet about implementation, at least the first steps are being taken to explore the applicability of the concepts reflected in this report on a wider scale.

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Monograph No. 10

This document, published within the framework of the IIEP research project on 'Collaborating for educational change', describes the pre-school and adolescent training programmes of Servol, a non-governmental community development organization founded in Trinidad and Tobago in 1972.

Servol provides pre-school teacher training, curriculum development, supervision of classroom management, assistance with furniture and facilities, and on-going teacher development for some 154 pre-schools in Trinidad and Tobago, covering an estimated 4,500 children annually up until the age of five. At the other end of the scale, and again in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Servol provides the teacher training, the curricula, and supervision for 41 adolescent Life Centres spread all over the country in which some 3,000 young people between the ages of 17-23 are trained in life skills and vocational skills.

The document outlines the nature and objectives of the programmes, examines the extent and management of the collaboration, discusses the educational and institutional achievements, and provides some recommendations for future action.

The author

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