

**EDUCATION FOR ALL IN THE CARIBBEAN: ASSESSMENT 2000
MONOGRAPH SERIES**

Series Editor: Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina

MEASURING THE IMPACT

**An Assessment of the Progress Made in Achieving the Objectives of the Education For All:
Assessment 2000 Process as Related to Early Childhood Education, Care And Development
in the Caribbean**

Leon Charles

This monograph was requested and funded by UNICEF (Jamaica and Caribbean Area Offices), with technical support and coordination from Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC), School of Continuing Studies, The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. The production of the EFA in the Caribbean Monograph Series was in part facilitated by a financial contribution from the UNFPA Regional Office.

UNESCO
1999

The ideas and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of UNESCO. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

© UNESCO and UNICEF

Published in 1999 by the Office of the
UNESCO Representative in the Caribbean
The Towers
3rd Floor, 25 Dominica Drive
Kingston 5, Jamaica

Printed in Trinidad by F.A.S.T.E.R. Publishing Services
Victory Street, Arima

Cover design by: Carole Maison-Bishop

ISBN: 976-95036-5-7

SERIES INTRODUCTION

At Jomtien in 1990, member states of the United Nations adopted the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* and created the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (EFA Forum). One decade later, the EFA Forum embarked on an assessment of this initiative, intended to assist member states in examining their education provisions to inform the formulation of policy.

Once the Caribbean EFA Regional Advisory Group had embarked seriously on the assessment, it was quickly realised that it would be difficult to capture, in any one place, an assessment of all that had transpired in education in the Caribbean during the period 1990-1999. Moreover, the technical guidelines constrained assessors to specifics within quantitative and qualitative frames. However, because it was felt that education in the Caribbean is too dynamic to be circumscribed, the idea of a more wide-ranging monograph series was conceived.

Researchers, education practitioners, and other stakeholders in education were invited to contribute to the series. Our expectations were that the response would be quite moderate, given the short time-frame within which we had to work. Instead, we were overwhelmed by the response, both in terms of the number of enthusiastic contributors and the range of topics represented.

Caribbean governments and peoples have invested in the *hardware* for education—buildings, furniture, equipment; in the *software*, in terms of parent support and counselling services; and they have attended to *inputs* like books and other teaching/learning resources. They have wrestled with ways to evaluate, having gone through rounds of different national examinations, and modifications of ways to assess both primary and secondary education.

But, as the efforts to complete the country reports show, it has been more difficult to assess the impacts, if we take the eventual aim of education as improving the quality of life--we have had mixed successes. That the sub-region has maintained relative peace despite its violent past and contemporary upheavals may be cited as a measure of success; that the environment is threatened in several ways may be one of the indicators of how chequered the success has been.

Writers in the monograph/case study series have been able to document, in descriptive and analytic modes, some of the attempts, and to capture several of the impacts. That this series of monographs on Education for All in the Caribbean has been written, edited, and published in nine months (from first call for papers to issue of the published titles) is itself an indication of the impact of education, in terms of human capability and capacity.

It reflects, too, the interest in education of a number of stakeholders without whom the series would not have been possible. Firstly, the work of the writers is acknowledged. All worked willingly, hard, well, and, in most cases, without material reward. The sterling contribution of the editor, who identified writers and stayed with them to the end of the process, is also recognised, as is the work of the printer, who came through on time despite the severe time constraints. The financial contribution of the following agencies also made the EFA assessment process and the publication of the monograph/case study series possible: Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Department for International Development (DFID), International Labour Organization (ILO), Sub-Regional Headquarters for the Caribbean of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill; and the UN country teams based in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, and Guyana.

We invite you to peruse individual titles or the entire series as, together, we assess Caribbean progress in education to date, and determine strategies to correct imbalances and sustain positive impacts, as we move towards and through the first decade of the new millennium.

Claudia Harvey
UNESCO Representative and Coordinator, Regional Technical Advisory Group (RTAG)
EFA in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This monograph would not have been possible without the contributions made by the coordinators for the early childhood component in the 19 participating countries in the Caribbean sub-region.

The efforts and perseverance of the early childhood coordinators demonstrated in the collective task of sourcing and retrieving data, cannot be adequately reflected in the country reports or in this sub-regional report. The process in which they have all been engaged has been time consuming and exacting, but it has confirmed the need for, and the value in creating, effective data systems for monitoring services and for future decision making.

We would like to thank the following individuals and their teams:

Ellenita Harrigan	Anguilla
Jennifer Thomas	Antigua and Barbuda
Agatha Archer	Bahamas
Catherine Blackman	Barbados
Allana Gillet, Brenda Card-Stuart	Belize
Quincy Lettsome	British Virgin Islands
Marjorie Beckles	Cayman Islands
Eulalie Burton	Commonwealth of Dominica
Ivy Harris	Grenada
Genevieve Whyte-Nedd	Guyana
Euvina Haseley-Allen	Jamaica
Vanta Walters	St Kitts-Nevis
Marguerite Gustave	St. Lucia
Judith Hull-Ballah	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Alrick Taylor	Montserrat
Angela Juliana-Dekker	Netherlands Antilles
Kadi Kartokromo	Suriname
Merle John	Trinidad and Tobago
Sadie Jean Williams	Turks and Caicos Islands

Special mention must be made of the technical support received from Janet Brown and Sian Williams of the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC). Their technical competence, thoroughness, and attention to detail went a long way in ensuring that the process and the analysis were always conducted in a consistent and objective manner.

Our thanks go also to the administrative team at the CCDC, Marva Campbell, Janet De Souza, and Marilyn Brown for supporting what has been a phone, fax, e-mail, and courier enterprise. They have enabled the flow of information and communication to be both clear and timely.

Thanks to the UNICEF officers in the sub region, to Kerida McDonald (Jamaica), Barbara Atherly (Guyana), Heather Stewart (Caribbean Area Office) and Rosie Fieth (Belize) for troubleshooting, support, and technical guidance.

Notwithstanding the contributions from the entire team, the responsibility for any errors of fact, omission, or interpretation rests solely on my shoulders.

Leon Charles
September 1999

CONTENTS

Series Introduction

Acknowledgements

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Preface

Abstract

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Objective
- 1.2. Scope
- 1.3. Methodology
- 1.4. Limitations
- 1.5. Presentation

2. The Early Childhood Context

- 2.1. What is ECECD?
- 2.2. Why Focus on ECECD?

3. The Caribbean Plan of Action

- 3.1. Adoption of Caribbean Plan of Action
- 3.2. Main Provisions

4. Measuring the Progress

- 4.1. Integrated Social Planning
- 4.2. Legislative Framework
- 4.3. Adequacy of Financing
- 4.4. Equitable Access to Quality Provisions
- 4.5. Appropriate Curriculum and Materials Development

5. Conclusion

Notes

References

About the Author

Leon Charles is the founder and manager of Charles and Associates, Inc., a consulting firm based in Grenada. Mr. Charles is the holder of a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Western Ontario in Canada and has worked on consulting assignments for government, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector both within Grenada and regionally.

LIST OF TABLES

1. Public Expenditures
2. Gross Enrolment Ratios – Day Care Sector
3. Gross Enrolment Ratios – Pre-Primary Sector
4. Gross Enrolment Ratios – Birth to Age 5
5. Provision of Pre-Primary Facilities
6. Pupil-Teacher Ratios

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Provision of Day Care Services
2. Provision of Pre-Primary Facilities

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCDC	Caribbean Child Development Centre
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECECD	Early Childhood Education, Care, and Development
EFA	Education for All
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MDCs	More Developed Countries
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
POA	Caribbean Plan of Action
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UWI	The University of the West Indies

PREFACE

The Caribbean Plan of Action (POA) for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development was endorsed at the Second Regional Conference on Early Childhood Education in Barbados in April 1997, adopted by CARICOM Ministers of Education in May 1997, and adopted by the CARICOM Heads of Government in July 1997 as part of the CARICOM Human Resource Development Strategy.

In the aftermath of the adoption of the POA, most Caribbean islands have initiated some form of action on some of the issues addressed by the POA. Most of this work is being approached on an individual country basis, and the processes and achievements are largely unrecorded, due, in part, to lack of formal systems for recording same and, in part, to the lack of attention being paid to the need for recording such information in a systematic manner.

Early childhood operators at the regional level have described the energy and movement flowing from the POA as a “sea change.” Part of this change has also been the introduction of more funders in the mix.

This monograph represents an initial effort at identifying what exists, and reflecting on the information that it provides with respect to measuring the progress already made. It will be supported by more detailed analyses of the different components of the POA in preparation for the Third Caribbean Conference on ECECD, scheduled to be held in Jamaica in April 2000.

This analysis will, therefore, not capture the dynamism currently characterising the sector in many countries. However, by identifying what is currently recorded of what exists, it will lay the basis for identifying and addressing the gaps, so that the necessary corrective action can be taken.

Leon Charles
September 1999

ABSTRACT

This monograph assesses the progress made in achieving the objectives of the Education for All (EFA): Assessment 2000 process, as related to Early Childhood Education, Care and Development (ECECD) in the Caribbean. The information was generated using a literature search and a survey of the early childhood sector in 19 countries. It was found that: (a) there is a lack of systematic data collection and analysis--only seven countries submitted usable data; (b) systematic sectoral management is new to the region; many countries are moving in that direction with participation from stakeholders; (c) formal legal frameworks are new and exist in six countries; and (d) Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs) are low, with the maximum for day care being 33%. Pre-school GERs are short of their 100% target, except in the Turks and Caicos Islands. It is recommended that governments should pay more attention to the sector, and that planners should give urgent consideration to establishing data collection systems that would assist management of the sector.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This monograph was written as a contribution to the *EFA in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000 Series*, and was guided by the technical framework defined in the *Caribbean Specific Guidelines* prepared by the Technical Sub-committee of the Caribbean Regional Advisory Group.

1.1. Objective

The purpose of the monograph is to assess the progress made in achieving the objectives of the Education For All (EFA): Assessment 2000 process as related to Early Childhood Education, Care and Development (ECECD) in the Caribbean. It does this by assessing the implementation of the components of the Caribbean Plan of Action (POA) for ECECD which are directly related to the EFA objectives.

The selected components of the POA are derived from the core indicators required by the EFA Assessment 2000 process, as defined in the *Document #7 - Suggested Outline For Country Reports* which was issued to guide the EFA in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000 process. Within this framework, the EFA process addressed six of the nine objectives of the POA, namely:

- Integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives. The relevant EFA indicators are:
 - EFA goals and targets
 - EFA strategy and/or plan of action
 - EFA decision-making and management
 - Co-operation in EFA.
- Legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring of standards in sector.
- Adequate financing. The relevant EFA indicators are:
 - Investment in EFA since 1990
 - Public expenditure.
- Equitable access to quality provisions. The relevant EFA indicators are:
 - Gross enrolment
 - Provision of facilities
 - Pupil-teacher ratio.
- Appropriate curriculum and materials development.
- Education and training for all providers of early childhood education and development.

The monograph addresses five of these six objectives of the POA. The objective related to “education and training for early childhood providers” was omitted because of the difficulties involved in establishing criteria and indicators for measuring this, with any level of consistency, across the countries surveyed.

1.2. Scope

1.2.1. Country coverage

The monograph sets out to present an analysis of the situation in 19 countries--Anguilla, Antigua-Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, Turks & Caicos Islands, Trinidad & Tobago. These 19 have been recently linked within an ECECD information network established by the UWI Child Focus project.¹

1.2.2. Analytical coverage

The prime focus of the analysis was on the indicators required by the EFA Assessment 2000 process as defined in the *Suggested Outline For Country Reports* issued to guide the EFA in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000 process.

1.3 Methodology

The information contained in the monograph was generated by the use of a variety of techniques:

- Literature search – Information on the early childhood context and the rationale for focusing and investing in ECECD was generated through a literature search and review of relevant documentation.
- Questionnaire - The information on the status of the various components in each island was collected using a questionnaire specifically developed for this purpose and circulated to the 19 participating countries on May 25, 1999. This questionnaire was developed by a subregional consultant, with technical support from the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC) in Jamaica, based on the requirements and guidelines contained in the *Caribbean Specific Guidelines* and in the *Suggested Outline for Country Reports*. The data requirements were discussed in a teleconference with senior ECECD representatives from 9 of the participating countries, prior to the design of the questionnaire, to ascertain the general availability of the required data. This was followed by a second teleconference, involving 12 countries, which was convened two weeks after the questionnaire had been circulated, to discuss progress made in completing the questionnaire and to address any problems which may have developed.
- Data analysis - The returned questionnaires were analysed by the sub-regional consultant and used as the basis for the preparation of this sub-regional report.

1.4. Limitations

The report does not include information and data from all 22 of the countries originally targeted. Responses were received from 16 countries—Anguilla, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, Turks and Caicos Islands, Trinidad and

Tobago--and of these, only 7—Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Kitts-Nevis-- provided data which could be used to compute some of the indicators required by the EFA Assessment 2000 process. One country, Suriname, indicated that it could not provide the data at that time due to the political problems which the country was experiencing.

The problems encountered at the country level fell into one of the following categories:

- Unavailability of data – In some countries there were no data available. This was especially prevalent with respect to:
 - Data on the numbers of children of early childhood age in the population. Only 5 of the 16 reporting countries provided this data for 1990 and 8 provided it for 1998. *The problem here seemed to be that the relevant countries did not categorise their census data within these parameters.*
 - Data on the enrolment of children in the day care sector. Only three countries provided data for 1990 and four for 1998. *The main problem here seemed to be that there were no systems in place for the collection of that data.*
 - Data that would provide insights into the question of equity of access and quality of services. This includes data on the gender composition of the population and the children enrolled in the early childhood services, data on rural-urban distribution of population and services, data on the numbers of “at-risk” children (poverty, disabled) and their access to services, and the like.
- Collation of data – In some countries, *the data were available, but not in the form required.* Presentation in the form requested would require the relevant personnel to collect and collate the data from the individual files in which they were stored. Some countries made the effort--although this resulted in delays in the submission of the completed questionnaire.
- Access to data – There were also cases where the data were clearly available, but could not be accessed by the relevant officers. This occurred in the case of public expenditures on the early childhood sector, where the data would be available as part of the national budgeting process. However, the relevant officers could not access the data at the level of disaggregation required by the questionnaire.

The data analysis that is presented in Chapter 4 is, therefore, based on the data from the seven countries which reported, using them as a sample of the entire region. As a sample, these seven countries capture the diversity of the region, in terms of physical size, economic development, and socio-political organisation. They include two of the four former More Developed Countries (MDCs)², three members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)--Grenada, Dominica, St. Kitts-Nevis--one Central American country, Belize, and one British dependency, the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The data present a macro-level generalised picture of the situation in the region without carrying the analysis to more disaggregated levels like gender, rural-urban disparities, and at-risk groupings within the countries. It is important to note that *the data from Jamaica skew the overall results significantly*, as the size of the Jamaican population and economy is much larger than that of the other reporting countries. This will be noted in the discussion. The analysis of the other sections in the report is based on the information submitted by the various islands, with the relevant islands being identified where necessary.

1.5. Presentation

The monograph is presented in five chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides the conceptual framework of the monograph, and discusses the scope of the analysis, the methodology used and the limitations encountered.
- Chapter 2 discusses the early childhood context, positioning the analysis of the progress made in the Caribbean within the international experience of the contribution of early childhood interventions to individual, family, and societal development.
- Chapter 3 contains a synopsis of the POA and highlights its main objectives, goals, and targets.
- Chapter 4 presents the results of the analysis of the progress made in the achievement of the respective objectives.
- Chapter 5 summarises the results of the analysis and highlights issues of relevance to policy makers and ECECD practitioners, as the Caribbean region and the rest of the world move into the new millennium.

CHAPTER 2

The Early Childhood Context³

Children do not just grow in size. They develop, evolve, and mature, mastering ever more complex understandings of the people, objects, and challenges in their environment. There is a general pattern or sequence for development that is true of all children. However, the rate, character, and quality of development vary from child to child. Culture influences development in different ways, and the goals for children differ from culture to culture.

2.1. What is ECECD?

Early Childhood Education, Care and Development (ECECD) refers not only to what is happening within the child, but also to the care that the child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food, and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery.

ECECD activities are those that support young children appropriately and seek to strengthen the environments in which they live. ECECD includes working with parents to strengthen parenting skills, working with siblings and other family members to recognise the specific developmental needs of younger children, working to provide or strengthen day care options, developing pre-schools and other early childhood education programmes that address the child's needs in holistic ways, as well as striving to bolster the community in its economic, physical, and moral support of families and young children.

When discussing ECECD, it is important to have a common understanding of what is meant by the term. There are four parts to the phrase: *early childhood--education--care--and development*.

Early childhood

As it is currently used internationally, *early childhood* is defined as the period of a child's life from conception to age eight. There are two reasons for including this age range within a definition of ECECD, namely:

- First, this time frame is consistent with developmental psychology's view of the continuum of children's development. Children below the age of eight learn best when they have objects they can manipulate; when they have chances to explore the world around them; when they can experiment and learn from trial-and-error within a safe and stimulating environment. At about the age of nine they begin to view the world differently. They can manipulate ideas and learn concepts mentally, and are less dependent on objects. Thus, in terms of learning theory, the birth through age eight time period presents a developmental continuum.
- Second, the international definition of early childhood includes the early primary years (ages six-eight), because of the importance of the transition for children either from home or

from a pre-school programme into the primary school. If pre-school programmes for children are to be effective, there needs to be some interface between what happens in the pre-school and lower primary school. This does not mean that early childhood programmes should become formal experiences for young children. Rather, there is a need for early primary teachers to become more aware of the experiences, skills, and knowledge that children bring with them into the primary school if they have had an early childhood programme experience.

Education

To be considered an ECECD programme, the offerings of the programme operators should include, at least in theory, conscious attention to enhancing a child's learning through early stimulation, instruction, or other developmental activities that go beyond simple provision of health, food, and security. In placing this restriction, we are attempting to make a distinction between organised *custodial child care* and organised *early childhood care and development*, a distinction that is often difficult to make (Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, 1999).

Care

In the 1980s, the term *care* was added to the phrase *early childhood development*. This was in recognition of the fact that young children need care and nurturing. They need attention to their health and nutrition, their evolving emotional and social abilities, as well as their minds. The term *care* was chosen to move policy makers and programme providers away from thinking exclusively in terms of pre-schooling.

Development

In the definition of ECECD being used throughout this monograph, *development* is defined as the process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling, and interacting with people and objects in the environment. Development involves both a gradual unfolding of biologically determined characteristics and the learning process.

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, habits, and values through experience and experimentation, observation, reflection, and/or study and instruction. Both the child's physical growth (the child's health and nutrition history and current health and nutritional status) are crucial in the child's overall development. The child's current developmental status either facilitates or inhibits future learning. Thus learning is part of the development process (Myers, 1995).

In many cases, the terms *care* and *development* also refer to the physical arrangements people make for their children, whether through day care centres, community-based programming, or some other form of developmental experience.

It should be noted that the definition of an ECECD programme is not linked to several other criteria that are often consciously or unconsciously applied, namely:

- Location - The definition of an ECECD programme is not limited to one that is school- or centre-based. It includes the various forms of home- and community-based programmes that meet the above criteria. This puts it at odds with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) definition which does take as a "main criteria [for] pre-primary education" that a programme be "school or centre based" (Consultative Group, 1999, p. 13).

- Auspices - Programmes should be included if they meet the basic criteria, whether or not they are under the administration of the health sector, a social security or a welfare agency, or the education sector. Both public and private programmes should be included.

2.2. Why focus on ECECD?

The scientific literature is clear on the benefits that early childhood programmes can offer to individual children, to families, to communities, and to society. This is supported by the experience of practitioners in the field from diverse cultures, including the Far East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United States. The scientific findings from a variety of fields have demonstrated that support of early development yields rich benefits, not only in immediate ways for the child and its parents, but also over time in terms of the child's ability to contribute to the community. Interventions in the early years of childhood offer an extraordinary opportunity to avoid or moderate learning problems, and to bring lasting benefits to individuals, families and society (Consultative Group, n.d.).

Individual Children

For individual children, areas where early intervention can have an impact include:

- Brain development - The scientific research demonstrates forcefully that the first years are critical in the formation of intelligence, personality, and social behaviour throughout life (Myers, 1999). There is "... a growing body of evidence from a diverse array of disciplines that continues to confirm that the period of early childhood through at least age 3, is critical to a child's development. Research and clinical work have found that the experience of the infant and young child provides the foundation for long-term physical and mental health as well as cognitive development" (Karol, 1998, as cited in Urrutia, 1999). During the first two years, critical brain structures develop that affect children's ability to learn. If the brain develops well, learning potential is increased and the chances of failure in school and life are decreased. Programmes that provide proper nutrition and support stimulation of a child's senses enhance the structure and organization of the brain (Consultative Group, n.d., p. 2).
- Nutrition, health and the ability to learn - Children with consistent, caring attention are better nourished, less apt to be sick, and learn better than children who do not receive such care. Neglected children are more prone to sickness and malnutrition and are less equipped and motivated to learn. Programmes that support families and teach them how to provide consistent, healthy care are helping children develop the readiness to participate in school and the community.

Family

For the family, the involvement of the children in early childhood programmes is beneficial in a number of ways, namely:

- Parents and caregivers are freed to seek employment and improve their economic conditions. This results in a reduction in poverty, with consequent improvement in the parents' ability to care for the child in all aspects of its development--health, nutrition, education, and the like. The entire family is, therefore, better off as a result.

- Parents and caregivers also get the opportunity--by participating in activities for and with their children--to learn more about appropriate parenting and how children learn, thus improving their abilities to be better parents and caregivers.
- Older children are now freed to go to school instead of having to stay at home to care for their younger siblings.

Society

For society, the involvement of children in early childhood programmes is beneficial in a number of ways, namely:

- Increased economic productivity – Economic productivity is enhanced in two ways:
 - The freeing up of the parents and caregivers results in an increase in the productive labour force and, hence, an increase in overall economic productivity.
 - Interventions that support young children's physical and mental capacities lead to increased enrollment and improved progress and performance in school. School performance in turn is linked to increased economic productivity in later years.
- Cost savings - Early childhood investment can reduce costs in a number of ways:
 - It improves the efficiency of primary schooling, in that children who are better prepared physically, mentally, and socially for school have an easier transition from home to school. Therefore, drop-out and repetition rates are lower and the need for remedial programmes is reduced, thereby cutting costs.
 - It can also bring cost savings in areas other than education--health care costs can be cut through preventive measures in programmes which help reduce disease and accidents (Evans & Shah, 1994); the social costs of delinquency and related problems are cut as children stay in school longer (Schweinhart et al., 1992); and absenteeism is reduced when parents, assured of proper care for their children, can devote their time to the job (Galinsky, 1986) (Consultative Group, n.d., p. 3).
- Reductions in social and economic inequalities - Investments in early childhood development have been shown to modify inequalities rooted in poverty and social discrimination, by giving children from disadvantaged backgrounds a fair start in school and in life. Studies suggest that these children benefit more from early intervention programmes than their more privileged peers.
- Reductions in gender inequalities - There is evidence that early attention to gender can produce changes in the development of the girl child, and in the way families perceive the abilities and future of that child. Furthermore, early childhood programmes can also benefit women and older siblings by freeing them from constant child care responsibility, so they can learn and seek better employment and earnings.
- Strengthened values - Transmission of the social and moral values that will guide all of us in the future begins in the earliest months of life. In societies where there is a concern that

crucial values are being eroded, a strong incentive exists to find ways in which those values can be strengthened. Early childhood programmes can assist in that effort by strengthening parenting skills, and by providing environments within which children can play and give attention to culturally desirable values.

- Social mobilisation - In many locations, lack of experience in the political process makes it extremely difficult to mobilise people for actions that will be to their own benefit. In such circumstances, focusing a programme on young children as a point of common interest can be an effective rallying strategy, and can serve as an entry point for broader community development.
- Community and family benefits - Community improvements in health, sanitation, and nutrition that benefit children are also likely to benefit parents, families, and the community at large. These community and family benefits are evidenced by parents' improved self-confidence, the emergence of leaders, and by increased organisation and social action in communities.
- Promotion of human rights - Children have a right to live and to develop to their full potential. This is enshrined in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most universally accepted human rights instrument, which became binding international law on September 02, 1990 and has been ratified by all countries except the United States and Somalia. Among other relevant provisions, the CRC states in Article 29.1 (a) that "... the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their *fullest potential*" [italics added]. In light of the scientific evidence referred to above, participation in early childhood programmes is essential to the child's ability to develop to "... their fullest potential."

In summary, therefore, the survey of the literature indicates that the benefits of focusing on early childhood care and development can be extraordinarily high. There is not a great deal of quantitative data on the benefit/cost relationship of investing in early childhood programmes, but Nancy Birdsall (1999) cites the well known High/Scope longitudinal study in the United States which followed pre-school children for 27 years and concluded that "...every \$1 spent on child interventions yields \$7 saved" (p. 5).

Miguel Urrutia (1999) argues that such benefits may be less for developing countries, and cites an evaluation of a specific programme of early childhood development in Bolivia which estimates the "... benefit/cost ratios of between 2.38 and 3.10" (p.5).

Taken together, the available information and data provide a compelling case for focusing on and making a heavy investment in programmes to improve care and enhance development in the early years. Both knowledge of the child development process and examples of concrete programme experience are available to be drawn upon to create and operate such programmes.

CHAPTER 3

The Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care, and Development 1997 - 2002

The earliest reference to programmes for ECECD in the Caribbean was found in Barbados. In 1837, an organisation called Mico Charity erected the first infant school in the suburbs of Bridgetown (the capital) to accommodate 200 children in the two to four years age range. This was followed by the introduction in Anguilla in the early 1900s, in St. Kitts in 1918, Guyana in 1933, Trinidad and Tobago in 1934, Jamaica in 1938, St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the 1940s and Grenada in 1958⁴.

In the majority of the islands, ECECD services were initiated by charitable groups, non-governmental organisations, churches, and private operators, as governments, pressured by rising social and economic problems, were reluctant to include early childhood care and education in the budgetary provisions for social services. The governments became involved much later--in the post 1950 era, with the exception of Guyana (1933)--but have been slow to invest significant public funds "... towards increasing and improving provisions for early childhood care and education" (UNICEF, 1997, p. 64).

At the same time, however, the experience of educators in the region on the importance of ECECD to children's development has been consistent with that of the developed countries. Sian Williams has indicated that "... despite high primary school enrolment in the English Speaking Caribbean, much more could be achieved to reduce primary repetition and drop out rates by ensuring that children have developed sufficiently to make the transition to school in the first place" (UNICEF, 1997, p. 70). UNICEF has reported that another key factor is inadequate nutrition--poor academic achievers weigh less, have a poor history of breakfast, have low haemoglobin levels, and visit a clinic for illness several more times than higher achievers (UNICEF, p. 70).

Williams concludes that "... based on the scientific research ... remedial education if undertaken at age three or four may be far more effective than at a later stage. If it is not undertaken, the research seems to support the Caribbean experience that "eight is too late" -- half of our children graduating from primary school will have repeated at least one year, and a quarter will have dropped out" (UNICEF, p.70)

3.1. Adoption of Caribbean Plan of Action

The Caribbean Plan of Action (POA), therefore, emerged in a context of neglect of early childhood education by governments--especially in terms of policy direction, administrative coordination, and concrete programmes which take into account the importance of integrated provision of services for the sector (UNICEF, 1997).

The POA was prepared, in draft, by Sian Williams, a consultant from the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC), contracted by the UNICEF Caribbean Area Office in preparation for the Second Regional Conference on Early Childhood Education, held in Barbados in April 1997. At the Conference, the draft was reviewed and amended by heads of delegations (in most cases senior government representatives) of 20 countries, namely: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Netherlands Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

The Plan was adopted by CARICOM Ministers of Education in May 1997, who concluded their deliberations by stating “Research evidence has indicated the crucial importance of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) to the success of any initiative in human resource development. It is therefore imperative that ECED be urgently addressed” (1997, p. 19). The Plan was presented to the CARICOM Heads of Government in July 1997 and adopted by the Heads as part of the region’s Human Resource Development Strategy. Endorsing the recommendations and action plan for ECED, the Heads of Government agreed that by 1998, a target date would be set for full enrollment of the pre-primary age cohort in ECED programmes. (1997: para. 7:6(v)-7(iii)).

3.2. Main Provisions

The POA focused on the need for mechanisms and strategies to achieve 9 specified objectives within the 1997-2002 time frame (UNICEF, 1997, pp. 22-23):

1. Legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring of standards in the sector;
2. Integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives;
3. Adequate financing;
4. Equitable access to quality provisions to minimise the plight of the large percentage of children in high risk situations;
5. Education and training for all providers of early childhood education and development;
6. Appropriate curriculum development and materials development towards improving quality of ECECD provisions;
7. Increased parent, community, and media awareness and involvement;
8. Coordinated action at both national and regional levels and multi-sectoral participation (government, NGO, and private sectors);
9. Increased research to inform development of the sector.

These objectives are addressed through strategies aimed at responding to 10 issues in 3 phases, with specific goals established for each issue, namely:

1. Legislate for services to children from birth to school entry, within national legislation for child as a legal entity. The goals to be achieved were stated as:
 - Draft legislation for the legal status of the child in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - Development of a sound policy for investment in ECED in each country, including the construction of local processes for implementation of legislative requirements;
 - Development of ECED policy defining the intended beneficiaries for each pre-primary level and setting, and rationalising the system of provisions for children from birth to eight years old, inclusive of training, curriculum, standards, monitoring, and evaluation.
2. Entitle the child from birth to school entry living in at-risk situations to targeted resources. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Draw a country poverty map to include data and indicators on young children;
 - Devise data systems to support planning for the young child in at-risk situations within the overall planning for social and human development;
 - Deliver safe water and shelter for families with very young children in poor areas;
 - Develop community infrastructures and support systems for ECED services.

3. Ground public and parenting education and children's programmes in local cultures. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Create an informed public through a concerted campaign strategy at all levels for ECED programs;
 - Open dialogue with the media on their role in nation building starting with children from birth to school entry;
4. Educate for parenthood before adulthood. The goal to be achieved here was:
 - Disseminate critical parenting and ECED knowledge to impact on behavior of young persons.
5. Support the parent and child in the year after a child's birth. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Encourage governments to create provision for the extension of the time available for breast-feeding and parental bonding;
 - Promote awareness of value of breast-feeding for child and mother relationship;
 - Build on existing delivery of child health services to families to incorporate ECED.
6. Develop the child within the family in the years before pre-school. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Improve access to and coverage of ECED services;
 - Develop networks of support amongst parents in need;
 - Initiate and enhance the development of early childhood centres.
7. Promote the child's learning and development in all pre-school settings. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Provide clear pedagogical guidance for quality in pre-school settings;
 - Support process of developing child-centered curricula with practical support tools and materials;
 - Devise model for sustainable production of culturally adequate and appropriate learning materials;
 - Refocus pre-school settings to be developmentally and culturally appropriate;
 - Establish principle of partnership among ECED provider, parent and community.
8. Implement integrated approaches for ECED for children from birth to school entry. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Coordinate provision of supports and services at the level of the family of the young child;
 - Design approaches to integration of ECED services appropriate to local conditions.
9. Designate budget allocation for ECED services and plan investment. The goals to be achieved were:
 - Promote more equitable funding ratios from pre-primary to tertiary level;
 - Construct an ECED budget review position statement with investment objectives for all partners.

10. Improve quality in monitoring, evaluation, and training support for ECED. The goals to be achieved were:

- Extend central monitoring and data collection systems to include young child and ECED provision;
- Integrate training based on vocational routes to qualifications, and on paths that can achieve teacher status.

The POA also contains detailed descriptions of the current situation, constraints, and opportunities related to each major issue, recommendations for strategies and actions, and suggestions for the organisations that should take responsibility. It was intended as a general guideline, and each country was expected to revise and adapt the detailed components to suit local priorities, needs, and circumstances and to fully implement it by the year 2002.

CHAPTER 4

Measuring the Progress

The indicators specified for the EFA process and analysed by this monograph addressed five of the nine objectives of the POA, namely:

- Integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives;
- Legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring of standards in sector;
- Adequate financing;
- Equitable access to quality provisions;
- Appropriate curriculum and materials development.

This chapter assesses the progress made on each of these five objectives, *within the data constraints identified in earlier sections.*

4.1. Integrated Social Planning

The relevant EFA indicators for monitoring progress in this area are:

- EFA goals and targets;
- EFA strategy and/or plan of action;
- EFA decision-making and management; and
- Co-operation in EFA.

Taken together, these indicators are expected to provide an appreciation of the extent to which the planning and implementation of policies and plans for the early childhood sector are addressed in a systematic manner, with participation from all relevant stakeholders.

4.1.1. EFA goals and targets

The specification of early childhood goals and targets is a relatively recent development. Only six countries reported that they had developed specific goals and targets--St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Kitts-Nevis, Grenada, and Jamaica. Barbados reported that it was in the process of developing specific goals and objectives. The specific goals varied among the different countries, but the focus was on increasing the quality of services provided, on increasing access, and on human resource development through training and certification.

4.1.2. EFA strategy and/or plan of action

Eleven countries reported having developed early childhood action plans--the six with specific goals and targets--and another five--Belize, Anguilla, Dominica, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The former six submitted detailed outlines of their action plans and strategies for implementation. The latter four did not provide details of their action plans, but all indicated that their action plans were based on the POA.

4.1.3. EFA decision-making and management

In all countries reporting, the early childhood sector is divided into two segments for management and decision-making purposes--day care services and pre-school services.

(a) Day care services⁵

In all countries, with the exception of Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, and the Turks and Caicos islands, day care services are managed by a different Ministry from the one responsible for managing pre-primary services. The Ministry to which day care services are assigned is usually the one dealing with social services or health issues. In Barbados, it is managed by a specially established Child Care Board.

(b) Pre-primary⁶ services

In all of the reporting countries, pre-primary services are managed by the Ministry of Education.

4.1.4. Co-operation in EFA

The information submitted indicates that there is cooperation between the various stakeholders in most countries, with governments providing a monitoring function that is accepted by all parties concerned in most of the countries. There are also references to the government assisting in meeting all, or a portion, of the operating costs of early childhood services in some cases, and to governments involving stakeholders in policy development processes, training, and the like.

It was not possible, however, to generate information on the specific mechanisms through which this collaboration is being effected, for example, appointments to specific committees, Early Childhood Councils, and the like.

4.1.5. Summary

The information submitted indicates that the systematic management of the entire early childhood sector is a new phenomenon in the region. The issue of intersectoral integration of a broader range of services for young children and their families is even newer. There is, as yet, too little documentation on these processes to be able to provide illustrative cases. It would seem, however, that many countries are moving in that direction, and that efforts are being made in some countries to involve relevant stakeholders in the development of policy. This is a process which has to be encouraged and strengthened.

There is, however, in most countries, a separation between the management of day care and pre-school services which could compromise the need for a smooth transition from one stage to the other. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that as systematic management processes are being developed, the necessary mechanisms are put in place to ensure that the strategies and approaches used at the day care stage are complementary to those used at the pre-school stage, and vice versa. The questionnaire did not probe the related issue of transition management to primary education, a concern of the POA.

4.2. Legislative Framework

The formalisation of legislative frameworks for coordinating services and monitoring of standards in the sector is also being approached on a sub-sectoral basis and is in the process of

evolution. In at least two countries, Dominica and St. Lucia, the draft OECS Education Act is being used as the context for the inclusion of early childhood in the new legislative framework.

4.2.1. Day care

Legislative frameworks requiring licenses are in place for the operation of day care centres in five countries--the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Turks and Caicos Islands, and St. Kitts-Nevis. All of the remaining countries⁷--with the exception of St. Lucia, Anguilla, Guyana, and Dominica--have a system of regulations in place which must be adhered to by the operators, but do not have formal legislative frameworks in place. All the countries, with the exception of Dominica and Belize, reported having systems in place to monitor⁸ the quality of service delivered.

4.2.2. Pre-primary

Legislative frameworks requiring licenses are in place for the operation of pre-schools in six countries--Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Anguilla, Turks and Caicos Islands, and St. Kitts-Nevis. All the other islands have a system of regulations in place with the exception of St. Lucia and Dominica⁹. This system must be adhered to by the operators. All the countries reported that governments were responsible for monitoring the quality of service delivered. As with day care services, it is not clear in what context monitoring takes place in the countries in which there are no official standards.

4.2.3. Summary

The formalisation of legislative frameworks is a relatively recent development and has been completed in only six countries in the region. A large number of countries indicated that they either had plans to begin developing legislation, or were in the process of developing same. The development of legislation for the sector was being done in the context of the development of an overall policy framework, which included the establishment of formal standards for the operation of the sector.

4.3. Adequacy of Financing

The data on public expenditure are incomplete and inconsistent (for example, the data submitted from Dominica appeared inconsistent, but have been used since they were submitted and ratified by Dominican officials), with very little data available on the day care sector. It was, therefore, impossible to analyse within the required parameters--investment and public expenditure. The data are, therefore, presented as public expenditure, but may include some aspects of investment. The available data are presented in Table 1 and show that in 1998, the expenditure on early childhood education was a very small proportion of the national budgets, with the highest reported expenditure being in Barbados (1.52%) and the lowest in Dominica (0.01%).

Table 1. Public Expenditures

	BARBADOS	BELIZE	DOM	TCI	SKN	GND	JAMAICA
1990							
- National Budget	1,215,010,000	0	310,000,000	28,847,000	93,235,242	231,630,153	11,461,200,000
- Education Expenditure	258,206,000	0	25,350,000	4,367,000	14,540,881	30,565,396	1,577,000,000
- Other Ministry Expenditure	8,716,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Total ECD Ministry Expenditure	266,922,999	0	25,350,000	4,367,000	14,540,881	30,565,396	1,577,000,000
- ECD Ministries as % National	22	0	8	15	16	13	14
- Day Care Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Pre School Expenditure	18,785,035	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Total ECD Expenditure	18,785,035	56,905,000	35,000	0	229,758	0	1,474,186,288
- ECD as % National	1.55	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.25	0.00	12.86
- ECD as % of ECD Ministries	7.04	0.00	0.14	0.00	1.58	0.00	93.48
1998							
- National Budget	1,641,270,000	305,573,930	490,000,000	57,980,000	301,750,981	235,920,925	127,391,400,000
- Education Expenditure	318,387,000	67,456,915	35,600,000	7,619,000	28,198,831	48,159,694	17,255,000,000
- Other Ministry Expenditure	10,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Total ECD Ministry Expenditure	328,387,000	67,456,915	35,600,000	7,619,000	28,198,831	48,159,694	17,255,000,000
- ECD Ministries as % National	20	22	7	13	9	20	14
- Day Care Expenditure							
- Pre School Expenditure	24,946,236	4,452,200	0	0	0	0	0
- Total ECD Expenditure	24,946,236	4,452,200	59,000	0	2,075,853	0	31,368,370
- ECD as % National	1.52	1.46	0.01	0.00	0.69	0.00	0.02
- ECD as % of ECD Ministries	7.60	6.60	0.17	0.00	7.36	0.00	0.18

Source: Responses to questionnaires.

Note: All financial data stated in relevant national currencies.

4.4. Equitable Access to Quality Provisions

The relevant EFA indicators for monitoring progress in this area are:

- Gross enrolment
- Provision of facilities
- Pupil-teacher ratio

The first two of these indicators provide an appreciation of the extent to which the eligible age cohorts have access to early childhood opportunities, while the third one addresses, in a very basic manner, the question of the quality of the services provided.

4.4.1. Gross enrolment

Enrolment and population data were received from four countries for the birth to age three cohort, and from seven countries for the age three to five cohort.

(a) Day care (birth to age three)

The Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs) at the sub-regional level for the birth to age three cohort was 7% in 1990 and declined to 5% in 1998. This GER is heavily influenced by the data from Jamaica, and masks the fact that Jamaica was the only reporting country to report a decline in its GER. The GER in Barbados increased from 23% to 33%, and that for St. Kitts-Nevis increased from 5% to 13% in the same period. The GER for Grenada increased only marginally from 3% to 4% (see Table 2).

Table 2. Gross Enrolment Ratios – Day Care Sector

	BDOS	ST. KITTS	GND	JCA	TOTAL
- 1990 Population	10,834	4,731	9,946	269,440	294,951
- 1990 Enrolment	2,457	249	300	16,166	19,172
- 1990 GER	23	5	3	6	7
- 1998 Population	11,279	4,190	8,628	234,322	258,419
- 1998 Enrolment	3,669	534	318	8,209	12,730
- 1998 GER	33	13	4	4	5

Source: Country reports.

(b) Pre-primary (age three to five)

The GER at the sub-regional level remained constant at 95% for the decade of the nineties, but this was again heavily influenced by Jamaica¹⁰ (see Table 3).

Table 3. Gross Enrolment Ratios – Pre-Primary Sector

	BDOS	BELIZE	MRAT	DOM	TCI	GND	JCA	TOTAL
- 1990 Population	7,791	11,675	0	4,810	0	5,649	158,980	188,905
- 1990 Enrolment	4,037	2,936	0	2,119	0	3,931	166,043	179,066
- 1990 GER	52	25	0	44	0	70	104	95
- 1998 Population	7,030	12,570	93	5,329	952	6,720	167,508	200,202
- 1998 Enrolment	5,310	3,275	66	2,863	942	3,169	174,298	189,923
- 1998 GER	76	26	71	54	99	47	104	95

At the individual island level, the GER for Barbados increased from 52% to 76%, and for Dominica, from 44% to 54%, while that for Grenada declined from 70% to 47% (see Table 3).

For the countries which did not report any data for 1990, the 1998 GERs were as follows:

- Turks and Caicos Islands – 99%
- Montserrat – 71%.

(c) Early childhood (birth to age five)

The GERs for the four countries which submitted data on the entire early childhood age cohort increased from 41% in 1990 to 44% in 1998, with increases in Barbados, St. Kitts-Nevis, and Jamaica and a decline in Grenada (see Table 4).

Table 4. Gross Enrolment Ratios – Birth to Age 5

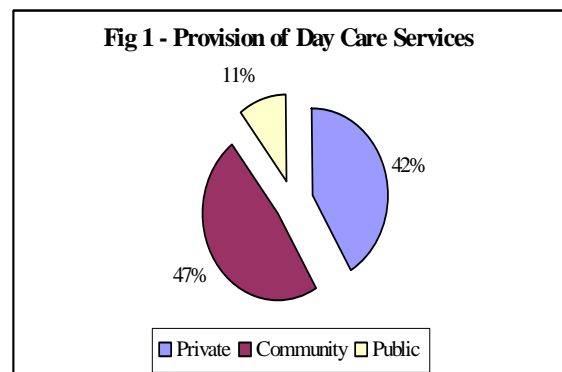
	BDOS	SKN	GND	JCA	TOTAL
- 1990 Population	18,625	4,731	15,595	428,420	467,371
- 1990 Enrolment	6,494	249	4,231	182,209	193,183
- 1990 GER	35	5	27	43	41
- 1998 Population	18,309	4,190	15,348	401,830	439,770
- 1998 Enrolment	8,979	534	3,487	182,507	195,573
- 1998 GER	49	13	23	45	44

Source: Country reports.

4.4.2. Provision of facilities

(a) Day care services

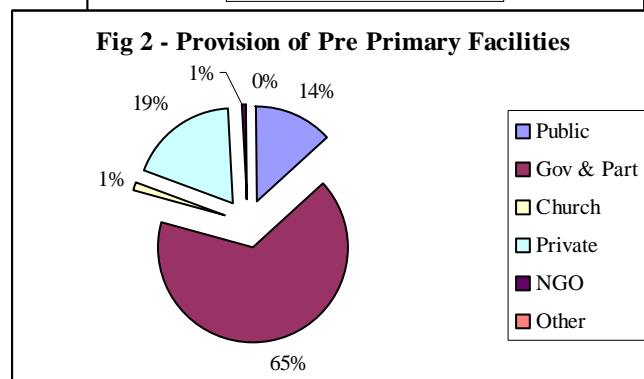
Data in this category were provided by Barbados and Jamaica and show that for 1998, the majority of children were enrolled in day care services provided by private and community operators (see Figure 1).



The government provided facilities for 24% of the children in Barbados and 5% in Jamaica.

(b) Pre-primary services

The data in Figure 2 show that at the sub-regional level for 1998, the majority of children enrolled in pre-primary services were enrolled in facilities provided by the churches (65%), private operators (19%), and the government (14%).



This sub-regional picture is heavily influenced by Jamaica. In Barbados, for example, the government is the predominant provider of pre-primary services, with 82% of the children being enrolled in government facilities. The Turks and Caicos Islands (52%) and Grenada (62%) also have significant proportions of their children enrolled in services provided by the Government (see Table 5).

Table 5. Provision of Pre-Primary Facilities

	BDOS	BELIZE	DOM	TCI	SKN	GND	JCA	TOTAL
TOTAL	5,310	3,275	2,863	942	1,865	3,169	174,298	191,722
- Public	4,363	0	0	493	548	1,959	18,963	26,326
- Public %	82	0	0	52	29	62	11	14
- Gov't and Partners	0	1,398	0	0	0	0	123,951	125,349
- G&P %	0	43	0	0	0	0	71	65
- Church	0	578	673	203	0	1,108	0	2,562
- Church %	0	18	24	22	0	35	0	1
- Private	947	1,011	1,344	93	1,317	0	31,384	36,096
- Private %	18	31	47	10	71	0	18	19
- NGO	0	288	686	133	0	43	0	1,150
- NGO %	0	9	24	14	0	1	0	1
- Other	0		160	20	0	59	0	239
- Other %	0	0	6	2	0	2	0	0

Source: Country reports.

4.4.3. Pupil-teacher ratio

The data on pupil-teacher ratios for 1998 is summarised in Table 6 and shows the following:

- For the two countries which submitted data on the day care sector (Barbados and St. Kitts-Nevis), the actual ratios were better than the ratios stipulated by the national guidelines;
- For the pre-primary sector, four of the six countries which submitted data had ratios that exceeded the ratios set by the national guidelines, which point to an area of possible concern as regards the quality of care being delivered.

Table 6. Pupil-Teacher Ratios

	BDOS	BELIZE	DOM	SKN	GND	JCA	TOTAL
DAY CARE							
- # Teachers	381	0	0	82	0	0	463
- # Pupils	3,669	0	0	534	0	0	4,203
- Stipulated Ratio (pupils/teacher)	12	0	0	10	0	0	
- Actual Ratio (pupils/teacher)	10	0	0	7	0	0	9
PRE SCHOOL							
- # Teachers	387	200	139	120	156	5,230	6,232

- # Pupils	5,310	3,275	2,863	1,865	3,169	174,298	190,780
- Stipulated Ratio	18	15	15	20	15	30	
- Actual Ratio (pupils/teacher)	14	16	21	16	20	33	31

4.4.4. Summary

It is clear from the data, that the region still has a long way to go in terms of increasing enrolment of children in early childhood programmes. The low GERs for the day care sector is cause for extreme concern, given the importance of the first three years of a child's development. Although there are a few parenting outreach programmes (e.g., Jamaica, Trinidad) targeting this age group, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that these efforts are extensive enough to mitigate these low figures. The GERs for the pre-school sector, although much higher than that for the day care, is still cause for concern as, with the exception of the Turks and Caicos Islands, they fall far short of the 100% primary enrolment that most countries are striving to achieve.

This means, in effect, that significant proportions of children enter the formal education system without any preparation for formal education (26% in Barbados and higher in the other countries) or, under the most optimistic scenarios, at a disadvantage to the others who have had the benefits of pre-primary education. This concern is further heightened by the pupil-teacher ratios which indicate that the quality of attention at many pre-schools may not be up to the desired standards.

4.5. Appropriate Curriculum and Materials Development

The objectives here are to ensure that culturally appropriate and relevant curricula and materials are used in the early childhood development process. The reports indicated that the situation differed in the day care sector from that in the pre-primary sector.

4.5.1. Day care

Five countries--Belize, Netherlands Antilles, Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Kitts-Nevis, Grenada--reported having national curricula, which were developed locally.

4.5.2. Pre-primary

Nine countries--Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Kitts-Nevis, Grenada--reported having national curricula, which were developed locally.

4.6. Support for ECECD Activities

UNICEF offices have played an important assistance role in their host nations (Belize, Guyana, and Jamaica) and sub-regionally, in the case of the Caribbean Area Office, in support of advancing aspects of the POA.

CCDC, The University of the West Indies (UWI) was provided with a consultant's post in 1999 to offer direct technical assistance to several Eastern Caribbean countries, and this post will be extended for the duration of the POA. The UWI's Child Focus project, operating with World Bank funds, will have established a regional website to promote information sharing among this ECECD network by the end of 1999. Other international and local donors are committing support in this area.

It is beyond the scope of this monograph to capture the impact of these latest developments. It should be noted, however, that the regional ECECD Conference in April 2000 in Jamaica will have POA updates as a central programme focus.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

The analysis has shown that some of the countries within the region are making progress in implementing the provisions of the POA, and that there is activity within the region on all of the indicators of relevance to the EFA process that were addressed by this monograph.

In this context, there are three main conclusions that can be drawn from the foregoing analysis:

- The governments of the region have begun to pay attention to the development of the early childhood sector, as evidenced by the efforts being made to develop policy and legislative frameworks and set standards of performance. There is, however, a great deal of work that remains to be done and it has to be supported by the provision of adequate financing for the sector.
- There is serious cause for concern over the lack of opportunities that are available for children to develop to their fullest potential. The low GERs for the day care and pre-school sectors, indicate that the majority of the region's children may not have access to appropriate opportunities for interaction, stimulation, and learning through exploration and discovery, in the earliest years of their life--the time at which it is most critical.
- There is a need to address the unavailability of data that can be accessed and analysed within the region. The availability of data is critical to assessing and monitoring the progress being made in the implementation of the POA. In fact, the POA sets specific goals related to the strengthening of data collection systems. These goals should be accorded top priority as they determine, to a large extent, the ability to assess the progress being made on the other goals and targets, and provide the basis for decisions related to the most effective programmes possible with available resources.

Future planning for the early childhood sector will have to give urgent consideration to actions in four areas that are aimed at responding to this reality:

- The design and institutionalisation of systems for data collection, collation, analysis, and dissemination;
- Increasing the awareness of the benefits of using data to guide decision making and daily operations;
- Technical training in data collection, collation, and analysis techniques;
- Training for decision-makers in the analysis and use of data for decision-making purposes.

Implementation of the above actions would go a long way in ensuring that the Caribbean's EFA 2010 Report will accurately reflect the dynamism of national efforts, and sub-regional collaboration in planning and delivering effective, high quality early childhood services throughout the Caribbean.

Notes

¹Institute of Education and Caribbean Child Development Centre, supported by World Bank.

² The islands of Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, and Guyana were once referred to as the More Developed Countries (MDCs) of the Caribbean.

³Adapted from publications by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development.

⁴Based on responses to questionnaire.

⁵Defined as developmental services targeted at children in the age range six months to three years (four years in some cases).

⁶Defined as education targeted at children in the age range three to five years old.

⁷Montserrat did not submit any information on this subject.

⁸Monitoring is used here to mean supervision, whether or not it is done in a context of established standards. In the countries where there are no standards, the relevant government officers still visit the centres to “supervise” their activities.

⁹Netherlands Antilles and Montserrat did not submit any information on this subject.

¹⁰For the independent schools, the divide between the pre-primary and primary school is not made in most cases therefore putting the figure in any of the ECECD division we have will be giving an overstated effect.

References

- Birdsall, N. (1999, March). *Investing in children: The role of the state in unequal societies*. Paper presented at the Inter-American Development Bank Seminar: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Investing in Early Childhood, Paris, France.
- Consultative Group On Early Childhood Care And Development. (1999). *In search of early childhood care and development indicators: A contribution to the EFA Year 2000 Assessment*. (Document 2, Technical Guidelines for Country Studies)
- Consultative Group On Early Childhood Care And Development. (n.d.). *Arguments in support of ECCD* [On-line]. Available: <http://ecdgroup.harvard.net/argu.html>
- Consultative Group On Early Childhood Care And Development. (n.d.). *Child development theory* [On-line]. Available: <http://ecdgroup.harvard.net/cdt.html>.
- Consultative Group On Early Childhood Care And Development . (n.d.). *Overview of early childhood care and development* [On-line]. Available: <http://ecdgroup.harvard.net/eccd.html>.
- Evans, J., & Shah, P. M. (1994). *Child care programmes as an entry point for maternal and child health components of primary health care*. Geneva: WHO.
- Galinsky, E. (1986). *Investing in quality child care. A report for AT&T*. New York: Bank Street College of Education.
- Myers, R. G. (1995). *The twelve who survive*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- Myers, R. G. (1999, March). *Early childhood care and development: Some thoughts on how to invest*. Paper presented at the Inter-American Development Bank Seminar: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Investing in Early Childhood, Paris, France.
- Schweinhart, L., Barnes, H., & Weikart, D. P., et al. (1993). *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- UNICEF Caribbean Area Office. (1997). *Report of Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education*.
- United Nations. General Assembly. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. New York: Author. (UNGA Doc A/RES/44/25)
- Urrutia, M. (1999, March). *The impact of early childhood intervention programs on economic growth and equity*. Paper presented at the Inter-American Development Bank Seminar: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Investing in Early Childhood, Paris, France.