

**A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING PROGRAMME IN SELECTED SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN NORTH EASTERN TRINIDAD**

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ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Evaluation of the Guidance and Counselling Programme in Selected Secondary Schools in North Eastern Trinidad

Avinash Jackree

This multi-site qualitative case study used Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product evaluation model to explore how the guidance and counselling programme was meeting the personal/social, career and academic development needs of students. The perspectives of various educational stakeholders from four different school types in the North Eastern Education District of Trinidad and Tobago were sought. In each school a guidance officer, two teachers, two parents and four students were interviewed. A senior guidance and counselling official was also interviewed. The theory of Human Development and the Human Development Paradigm served as the theoretical framework encompassing Youth Development, Social Justice and the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, classroom observations, a reflexive journal, and emails. Data analysis revealed that the programme was meeting the students' needs to a certain extent, however, it was hampered by several challenges, for example, it was not fully integrated into all the schools, classes were not always regularly scheduled, and there was limited stakeholder collaboration. The programme is aligned to international standards and various strategies were employed in its implementation. Minor adaptations were made to its delivery across school types. The programme helped with personal/social, career and academic issues to different extents. Mixed views about the programme's assistance with human and youth development and social justice were expressed. Recommendations include conducting a new national needs assessment, increasing the number of guidance officers, and having a more equitable distribution of resources. The recommendations, however, may only lead to improvements if Trinidad and Tobago's stratified, post-colonial education system is reformed since the programme is part of the larger educational framework.

Keywords: CIPP; guidance; counselling; Caribbean; qualitative research; high schools; youth development; social justice; human development paradigm; West Indies.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASCA	American School Counselor Association
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
CIPP	Context, Input, Process, and Product
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CYDAP	Caribbean Community Youth Development Action Plan
CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
HDI	Human Development Index
HDP	Human Development Paradigm
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
MYDNS	Ministry of Youth Development and National Service
NEED	North Eastern Education District
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
PYD	Positive Youth Development
SEA	Secondary Entrance Assessment
SEMP	Secondary Education Modernization Programme
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SSSD	Student Support Services Division
STARS	Student Transition and Remediation Support Project
TTUTA	Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association
TVET	Technical-Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Plan
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

This study is a qualitative evaluation of the National Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programme (Student Support Services Division [SSSD], 2008) in selected secondary schools in the North Eastern Education District (NEED) of Trinidad and Tobago. In order to conduct this evaluation, I sought the perceptions of various educational stakeholders (guidance officers, teachers, parents and students) in the four schools where the study was conducted, as well as a senior member of the Guidance Unit. This qualitative evaluation was undertaken to determine how the guidance and counselling programme is being implemented, and if it is achieving its objectives from the perspectives of the stakeholders. A major interest of mine lies in nurturing the human development needs of youth and in exploring social justice issues, especially as the NEED is mainly rural, with many underperforming schools.

There is limited research with respect to guidance and counselling programmes in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. I had the choice of conducting an exploratory investigation to better understand the context or an evaluation of what obtains now. After considering both options, I decided on the latter. I felt strongly that as a novice researcher I would not be able to remain finely balanced in the 'exploratory' mode and would continually become more 'evaluative.' I also felt that in conducting an evaluation, I would necessarily have to do some exploratory work. The youth in Trinidad and Tobago face many challenges and I felt that evaluating the programme would provide me with an opportunity to identify recommendations that could be implemented to assist them in the shortest possible time.

Background to the Problem

Globally, guidance and counselling programmes have been implemented in schools to give students support for which they otherwise may be unable to access. Guidance and counselling can be summarised as:

a systematic and organized educational helping service, professionally given by a professionally trained counsellor or therapist to a learner of any age, within or outside the school walls at appropriate levels. The essence is to assist him to understand himself, situation, and environment, discover his interests, potentialities and opportunities in

life and learn how best to effectively utilize his assets as well as minimize his weaknesses, to live a maximum productive life. (Nwachuku, 2007, p. 22)

Guidance and counselling programmes have been implemented in many countries, and they have assisted in improving students' study habits (Ndidibuike & Nwadiuso, 2019) and academic performance (Atsuwe & Albert, 2018; Hrisyov & Kostadinov, 2022). They have also helped students with their career choice (Bassey & Edet, 2018; Kuruku & Ibrahim, 2017) and personal issues (Sackey et al., 2020). Resolving students' psychological problems, reducing their stress levels, and improving their self-confidence are other positive outcomes of guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools (Kurshid et al., 2021).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) article 29, states that all children have a right to an education which takes into consideration their unique talents, abilities, and personalities. Articles 33 and 34 of the Convention indicate that children also have a right to be protected from drug abuse and sexual exploitation.

Even though such perspectives exist which seek to highlight the holistic development of youth, their human rights and grooming them to take their place in a just society, many schools place a great deal of emphasis on the academic achievement of students and this has resulted in somewhat less attention being paid to their social and personal needs (Congo-Poottaren, 2015). This emphasis on academics has resulted in schools moving away from their greater philosophy of producing "productive, fulfilled citizens" (Congo-Poottaren, 2015, p. 79). There is therefore an ever-present tension in the mandate for schools' academic development versus holistic development.

Definitions for the term "youth" vary in different countries and organizations. The United Nations defines the term "youth" as between the ages of 15 and 24 years old (Filmer & Fox, 2014), while the term "adolescence" is subdivided into different stages: "early adolescence (typically ages 10-13 years), middle adolescence (ages 14-17), and late adolescence (18 until the early twenties)" (Smetana & Rote, 2019, p. 43). In secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, the guidance and counselling programme is geared towards students in all three stages of adolescence. Adolescence is "a period of

transition between childhood and maturity” (Newman & Newman, 2020, p. 1). “Significant psychosocial and cognitive changes occur during this time, including increases in orientation towards peers, romantic interests, and identity exploration, as well as more sophisticated cognitive abilities including abstract thought, future planning and goal setting, and career exploration” (Galvan, 2017, p. 3). It is also considered “a turbulent period and is often portrayed as a negative phase of life—a phase of storm and stress to be survived or endured” (Yashvee et al., 2022, p. 25).

During adolescence risky behaviour can increase in frequency. This can occur because of curiosity and peer pressure (Ajisuksmo, 2021), limited sex education at home (Musa, 2017), the negative attitude towards adolescents by family members (Ergene et al., 2019) and intellectual disabilities (Blasingame, 2019). This risky behaviour can also take the form of engaging in violence, driving recklessly, substance abuse, promiscuity, having unprotected sex and engaging in unhealthy activities in cyberspace (Ayu et al., 2019; Smith, 2016).

In the Global School Based Student Health Survey Fact Sheet (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017) a study of 3,869 secondary school students aged 13-17, in Trinidad and Tobago, indicated that alcohol and drug use were prevalent. Before the age of 14, 73.7% of the students consumed alcohol while 33% said that they drank alcohol at least once in the last 30 days. In terms of drug use, 12.1% of students used marijuana at least once in their lifetime, with 68.3% doing so before the age of 14. The survey also indicated that 14.1% of the students used tobacco products in the past 30 days. With reference to mental health, 24.1% of them considered suicide in the past year, with 14.5% attempting it during the same period. Sexual activity was also significant, with 28.8% of the students engaging in sexual activity at a young age, with 55.9% having intercourse for the first time before the age of 14. With respect to violence, 15.1% of the students encountered bullying at school, and 32.7% of them had physical altercations one or more times during the past month.

Schools are important not only in promoting academic achievement but in fostering students’ social and emotional development to allow them to maximize their capabilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Jones & Kahn, 2017). “A high degree of psychological stress and exposure to unusual or highly stressful events clearly increases the risk of depression, anxiety and

related internalizing problems for persons of all ages” (Merrell, 2013, p. 22). Whether depression or anxiety develops because of life stressors depends on other risk factors, the child’s resilience, and the child’s support system (Merrell, 2013). Guidance and counselling programmes can help students to cope with issues which affect their mental health and hamper their ability to achieve their goals (Akram, 2021). Since students may feel more comfortable discussing issues with a guidance counsellor than their parents, guidance and counselling programmes can provide students with the support which they may not get at home (Thamaraserri, 2014).

A study of 335 high school students in Mexico revealed that their major sources of stress were examinations (49%), career choice (12.9%), economic difficulties (11.9%), and family issues (9.5%) (Acosta-Gomez et al., 2018). In a study which examined stress in 63 final year students in an all-girl secondary school in Trinidad, some of the major causes and extent of school related stress for the students, rated as fair to great stress was, “their own pressure to excel (94%), amount of homework (90%), having to do things in addition to regular school work, e.g. extra-curricular activities and chores (90%) and their own high standards (89%)” (Yamin-Ali, 2014a, p. 65). The study revealed that less than 2% of the students experienced stress from home, while 63% of them experienced stress because of factors related to both school and home (Yamin-Ali, 2014a). Other sources of stress include, “worrying about future personal life (89%), worrying about not satisfying the academic expectations of their parents (77%), too much time needed for extracurricular activities (60%) and wanting to excel at an extracurricular activity (58%)” (Yamin-Ali, 2014a, p. 70). Less significant sources of stress included, “transport to and from school (39%), the health condition of a family member (37%) and financial difficulty (32%)” (Yamin-Ali, 2014a, p. 71). This was a high achieving secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago within an education system polarized into high achieving and low achieving secondary schools, and it is being cited because one of the schools sampled in this study, School A, is similarly academically high achieving.

The present polarization of secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago is based on its colonial past where students had to compete for places in first, “the College Exhibition Examination, which was introduced in 1879 for

students 12 years and under” (Cunningham, 2021, p. 14). The College Exhibition Examination had an associated fee which prevented students who were not financially able from obtaining a secondary school education. College Exhibition Awards were also provided to allow a small number of high-performing boys to attend Queens Royal College and St. Mary’s College (Cunningham, 2021). The limited number of school places led to keen competition, and the awards were seen as a means of social and economic mobility (Cunningham, 2021). This examination was replaced in 1961 by the Common Entrance examination, which was based on a similar examination which originated in the United Kingdom in the 20th century (Triggle & Williams, 2015, as cited in Cunningham, 2021). The Common Entrance examination maintained this role in placing students in secondary schools and it continued as a highly competitive examination because of the still limited school places. Currently in Trinidad and Tobago in Standard Five (age, 11), students write the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) which was introduced in 2001 (Cunningham, 2021). “It is considered to be an exam with high stakes because students’ scores derived from the exam are used for selection and placement into prestigious secondary schools and colleges in the country” (Cunningham, 2021, p. 13). Hence, the Common Entrance and the SEA exam “have maintained their historical role of selection and segregation of students by ability and aptitude, to allocate students, to prestigious secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago” (Cunningham, 2021, p. 21).

The process of career decision making can be a particularly stressful time in an adolescent’s life and many students desire career guidance and counselling (Ain et al., 2021). In South Africa, the career choices of many students are a result of “accidental, rush decisions, imposed by external forces or by circumstances. Yet optimal career choices should be a result of a continuous process of conscious decision, self-discovery and aligned to the world of work” (Dabula & Makura, 2013, p. 89). These researchers further state that career guidance is important to help students develop skills for life, work and to help them make decisions. In another study of Form Four and Lower Six students in a secondary school in Trinidad, most of the Form Four students were unhappy with the subjects which they selected (Yamin-Ali, 2014b). There was also a lack of alignment between the subjects which they

chose and their career choices, as well as the fact that most students were advised by their parents with respect to subject choice (Yamin-Ali, 2014b).

The guidance and counselling programme has been implemented in different models of secondary schools in Trinidad. These schools have been categorised differently by researchers because of their complexity and sometimes overlapping nature. There are four types of secondary schools:

- (1) the traditional schools built prior to 1950;
- (2) the Government 5-year schools built after 1959;
- (3) the new sector schools built between 1970-1990; and
- (4) the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP) schools built after 1990 (De Lisle et al., 2017, p. 93).

The SEMP was a programme of secondary education reform in Trinidad and Tobago which began in 1999 and was financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) for approximately US\$150 million. The programme had four components: “improved educational quality; school building and upgrading; institutional strengthening and enhanced sector performance” (Lochan, 2014, The secondary sector, para. 1). These schools have since been referred to as SEMP schools. Chadee (2016) posits that there are five types, namely government traditional, government new sector, government assisted, private and vocational.

The different models of secondary schools were introduced during different periods of educational expansion in Trinidad and Tobago and are based to a large extent on academic achievement. Given the reality of these varying secondary school types, it may be the case that guidance and counselling programmes should be adapted to cater to the varying student needs. This information is not easily forthcoming and probably only research could discover whether this is being done. While the Ministry of Education’s Policy Paper (National Task Force on Education, 1993) acknowledges that students have varying abilities and needs, and emphasizes that schools should adapt all programmes to cater to the varying needs, from my observations as a teacher this does not always occur.

In the NEED there are 15 secondary schools, and this district has been identified as having low academic performance at the primary and secondary levels. In 2018, 261 students who scored less than 30% at the SEA were

assigned to seven government secondary schools and one private secondary school in this district. Five of the government secondary schools are SEMP schools (Student Transition and Remediation Support (STARS) Project Steering Committee, n.d.). This district also had the second highest failure rate in the SEA in 2022, with 76.7% of students scoring below 50% (Ministry of Education, 2022a). With respect to the CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate) examinations, taken on completion of five years of secondary schooling, the NEED was the lowest performing education district in Trinidad in 2016 and 2017, with only 40% of students attaining five or more subjects including Mathematics and English in each year (Education Planning Division, 2018).

I have been a teacher at Pilot School for 17 years. Pilot School is a SEMP school located in a rural area and currently has a population of 676 students. The school is plagued by several issues including low academic performance, learning disabilities, violence, gambling, poverty, staff and student demotivation, and inappropriate sexual activity between students. Students have multiple social and personal issues, some of them related to the period of adolescence described earlier, and this seems to have adversely affected them, the school climate and school culture. The school climate can be characterized as chaotic with high levels of indiscipline. Generally, the school culture does not encourage learning and it has been this way since I started working there. The school has been categorized as one of the 26 high-risk schools in Trinidad and Tobago. It has also been selected as a school for the implementation of a revised curriculum for 2022-2027 (Ministry of Education, 2022b).

While the school's motto and vision and mission statements promote the ideals of virtue, success and the holistic development of students, the reality is very different. In 2022 there were 56 suspensions for a range of issues such as fighting, gambling, theft, gross disrespect to students and staff, and a host of other misdemeanors. Many of the students suspended have been observed to be repeat offenders which suggests that current methods of punishment and guidance are ineffective. These issues are not unique to Pilot School because they are also experienced in other schools in the NEED as discerned from observations and conversations that I have had with staff, students, parents, and

guidance officers over a 17-year period. Schools in the NEED had the highest number of suspensions (407) in all education districts of Trinidad and Tobago for term three of the Academic Year 2021/2022 (Ministry of Education, 2022c). From 2012-2015 there were 5,910 incidents of violent acts in 86 Government Secondary Schools in Trinidad compared to 766 acts in 39 Denominational Secondary Schools (Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-a). Some of the issues plaguing schools in the NEED have been highlighted in the media.

Pilot School has a high number of dropouts as can be seen in the following table:

Table 1

The Total Number of Students who Dropped Out of Pilot School in 2021

Total Number of Dropouts	Boys	Girls
65	44	21

In Trinidad and Tobago most secondary school dropouts are from government secondary schools (new sector, assisted and traditional), with the majority from new sector schools (84%) (Chadee, 2016). With the exception of private schools where financial reasons played a primary role in dropping out, for all other types of schools, curricular issues were the most common (Chadee, 2016). Dropping out of school was also due to student indiscipline, family issues, health problems, pregnancy, and other issues (Chadee, 2016). Both formal and informal conversations with educational stakeholders, and my own observations, have led me to believe that these issues are quite similar to what obtains at the Pilot School and other secondary schools in the NEED.

While some efforts are being made to help the students, I feel this is inadequate. One of these efforts consists of the STARS Project which is a collaborative effort by the Curriculum Planning and Development, School Supervision and Management, and Student Support Services Divisions of the Ministry of Education. “In the 2018-2019 academic year, the project is intended to facilitate the design, development, and implementation of instructional and behavioural interventions for students at the Standard 5 and

Form 1 levels” (STARS Project Steering Committee, n.d. p. 1). The programme is expected to help the students academically, socially, emotionally, and in terms of literacy and numeracy. One of the target groups is students who have scored less than 30% in SEA (STARS Project Steering Committee, n.d.).

Many students in Pilot School have problems with literacy and in 2022 it received the second highest number of students (175) scoring less than 30% in the SEA in the NEED (Ministry of Education, 2022b). The poor SEA results of 2022, mostly attributed to the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in stakeholder collaboration between the principals of government secondary schools, the recognized majority union for teachers, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers’ Association (TTUTA), the National Parent-Teachers’ Association (NPTA), principals’ associations (including public, private, and special schools) denominational boards, and the Ministry of Education. These consultations led to another initiative to improve school and student achievement, that is, the creation of a “Revised Operational Plan for Selected Secondary Schools for Academic Years 2022-2027, to provide equity in educational opportunity along with increased student achievement” (p. 6). These recommendations include improving leadership, school discipline, teacher training and development and curriculum adaptations (Ministry of Education, 2022b).

Although Pilot School is not performing well academically, it has received a measure of success in sports, mostly noticeable in football. Apart from sporting activities, there is very little to keep students occupied. There are no functioning clubs at the school. Contact time with the students has been reduced to a large extent because of the high levels of student absenteeism and poor student and teacher punctuality. The school has not had a functioning library for more than a year and there are insufficient computers. This places an additional burden on the students since many of them come from a lower socioeconomic background and cannot afford to buy books or computers for research purposes. The relationship between the school’s administration and teachers is sometimes adversarial. Many teachers feel that the administration does not adequately address challenges which are encountered.

The guidance and counselling programme has been implemented in all

secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago to different extents. In each school the programme is facilitated by a guidance officer. The guidance officer provides both individual and group guidance and counselling to students. Students can make self-referrals to the guidance officer, or they can be referred by teachers. Guidance officers collate data on all their referrals at the end of every month. One of the forms that they use to record data is the Individual Presenting Concern Guidance and Counselling and Social Work Monthly Statistical Report. This form has broad categories, which include career guidance, academic guidance, social/personal development, home and family, health (physical, mental emotional), at risk behaviour, substance abuse, child maltreatment/sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, abandonment, and neglect and “not classified.” An example of some of the categories can be found in Appendix A. Each category has subheadings with specific issues faced by the children. For 2016/2017 at Pilot School, students were mostly referred for career guidance, academic guidance, and personal/social development. Informal talks with the guidance officer, however, have revealed that the official referrals do not give a true representation of how much guidance and counselling occurs in the school. Many of the sessions with students who have not been officially referred are categorized as “consultations,” and although these consultations are supposed to be officially recorded, sometimes they are not. The guidance officer also indicated that although many teachers have identified students with problems, the teachers do not refer the students to the guidance officer in most cases. This is possibly because the teachers are unwilling to take the time to complete the students’ referral forms.

The rationale for embarking on this qualitative evaluation is grounded in the concerns expressed by many teachers, students, parents, and guidance officers about the guidance and counselling programmes at their schools and its role in supporting youth development. While the guidance and counselling programme is just one mechanism to help the students, I am intrigued by its role and how it is attempting to fulfil it. From personal experience, I have observed that the role of the programme in schools may not be fully understood by educational stakeholders, and this is possibly so because they may have unrealistic expectations about it.

An important component of youth development is the nurturing of 21st century skills, which refers to “an overarching description of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions seen as prerequisites for success in the global workplace of the future” (Germaine et al., 2016, p. 19). Present changes to the global and economic environment indicate that youth in Trinidad and Tobago need to adapt and “strive for continuous self-development,” (p. 6) as well as learn new skills such as problem solving, adaptability and creativity (SSSD, 2008).

Youth development can be defined as, “a combination of biological and psychological changes” which are, “aided by activities and experiences that develop social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. It helps youth prepare for the trials of puberty and adulthood while allowing them to reach their best potential” (Clarke, 2022, pp. 83-83). Youth empowerment is an important aspect of youth development, and it is a “process where people gain the ability and authority to make informed decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people” (Olusola, 2019, para. 1).

Guidance and counselling empowers youth by providing them with career guidance, exposing them to sources of career information and encouraging them to participate in clubs/societies to nurture their political interests (Umezulike, 2020). Several strategies which can be used in empowering the youth engagement process in schools are, prioritizing their basic needs, actively engaging the most vulnerable students and by raising the level of historical and cultural awareness (Next Generation Coalition, 2021). Facilitating “student-led opportunities for social and emotional learning,” (p. 14), making virtual spaces fun and inclusive, and increased collaboration between all educational stakeholders, can also help improve youth engagement processes (Next Generation Coalition, 2021).

A great deal of focus has been given to youth development internationally, regionally, and locally. The CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD, 2010) states that there are three major challenges facing the education system in the Caribbean. The first is a high attrition rate “due to poverty, unemployment, adolescent pregnancy and male lack of motivation, notwithstanding relatively high rates of expenditure on education and the policy of universal secondary education already achieved by some Member States” (pp. xiii-xiv). The second is a steep decrease in the CSEC passes in

Mathematics and English over the last 13 years, and, thirdly the gender disparity between males and females at the tertiary level since currently there are more women than men enrolled in tertiary education programmes. The CCYD (2010) report also says that Caribbean youth expressed concerns about these issues indicating that they felt there was inadequate access to educational institutions because of poverty and an insufficient number of spaces especially at the post-secondary level. The youth also felt the education system was not meeting their needs, the curriculum did not stimulate their interests, they were concerned about the lack of employment opportunities after graduation, and they were worried about the level of indiscipline and crime in their schools.

In terms of governance, politics and participation, Caribbean youth feel a sense of disenchantment with the governance they experience (CCYD, 2010). They realize that they are not part of the political system and processes which have an impact on their daily lives, and they are just "...the beneficiaries of services and products rather than as strategic partners in policy development and implementation" (p. xviii). A plan for youth development in the Caribbean has been outlined in the Draft CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan (CYDAP) (CARICOM Secretariat, 2012).

According to Trinidad and Tobago's National Youth Policy (2020-2025), mid-year estimates from the Central Statistical Office, (CSO), as of 2019, Trinidad and Tobago has an estimated youth population of 435,585 (ages 10-35) and this comprises of 40% of the total population (Ministry of Youth Development and National Service [MYDNS], n.d.). Further, the national youth policy helps to determine the path for youth development in the country, especially as it relates to regional and international organizations to which the country belongs, and in relation to its own national developmental objectives which are in congruence with the goals of those organizations. Although youth development has been prominent in terms of political rhetoric in Trinidad and Tobago, the allocation of resources has been miniscule. From 2012-2018, the total allocation as a percentage of the national budget, the allocation to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, was less than 1%, except for 2014 when it was 1.01%. The lowest it has been for this period was 0.51% in 2017 (Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-b).

Trinidad and Tobago has a youth development agenda guided by

international agreements and frameworks (MYDNS, n.d.). The Ministry partners with many international organizations, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization, to help develop the youth. According to the website of the MYDNS, Trinidad and Tobago also has many different programmes geared towards the youth such as the Specialised Youth Service Programme, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Retiree-Adolescent Partnership Programme. However, there is an absence of information about how successful these programmes are in fostering youth development.

Despite these initiatives, the youth in Trinidad and Tobago encounter several challenges such as alcohol and drug use (Johnson & Mendoza, 2019), a high dropout rate from secondary schools (Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-c), HIV risk and sexual abuse (Reddock et al., 2020), and being the perpetrators and victims of violent crimes (Campbell-Phillips, 2020). Trinidad and Tobago has a high youth unemployment rate of 9.8% with the total unemployment rate being 4.5% (CSO, 2022). Some of the reasons for high youth unemployment in the Caribbean include the youth not possessing the skills needed for jobs, a low quality of education in the region, insufficient work experience, the inability of employers to find skilled workers, and a lack of information about finding jobs (Parra-Torrado, 2014). This can have negative consequences since youth unemployment can lead to the youth engaging in dangerous behaviour and crime (Parra-Torrado, 2014). Recently, "The labour force participation rate and employment to-population ratio of Latin America and the Caribbean experienced contractions that are unprecedented in the recent history of the region" (p. 28) because of measures implemented to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020).

In Trinidad and Tobago, despite the expansion of the secondary school system students still have serious literacy and numeracy problems and they are largely disinterested in the curriculum. "Some 5,000 students out of 17,000 students writing the SEA each year do not make it to the CSEC level" (Ryan et al., 2013, p. 56). There is also a high failure rate at the CSEC level and many of the schools which perform the worst are situated in "disadvantaged communities" (Ryan et al., 2013, p. 56). These failures occur despite the large

amount of money allocated to the education system. From 2012-2018 the total allocation of money to the Ministry of Education fluctuated between 3.6 and 6.2 billion TT dollars, this accounted for 6% to 11% of our national budget (Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-d).

The need for guidance and counselling in schools in Trinidad and Tobago was recognized decades ago. “In 1969, Cabinet agreed to establish a “Vocational Guidance Unit” in the Ministry of Education with a proposal that a Comprehensive Guidance Service be established. The service would have included educational guidance, vocational guidance, and counseling” (SSSD, 2008, p. 3). The three services provided served as a theoretical basis for the formation of the Guidance Unit, until its development and expansion in the 1980s, when Donald Super’s Career Development Theory (SSSD, 2008) was included. This theory stressed that career development was a stage process which began in childhood and continued throughout life. The programme further states that, “the Central Guidance Unit and the Special Education Unit joined with a new field to the education system, School Social Work, to become the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education” (SSSD, 2008, pp. 4-5).

The major goal of the programme is “to impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive and preventative manner which ensures that all students can achieve school success through academic, career and personal/social development experiences” (SSSD, 2008, p. 42). There are also the following broad-based objectives:

- a. Assisting in the all-round development of the students.
- b. Increasing the accuracy of the students’ perceptions of self and the world in which he/she lives.
- c. Providing a bridge between school and home and community.
- d. Preparing the students for the world of work. (SSSD, 2008, p. 4)

The revised guidance and counselling programme is based on the Process Model by Gysbers (1981) and not the Services model that was previously used. Some of the features include the addition of different “Components, Elements and Processes” (SSSD, 2008, p. 9), to its structure, developed to deal with the holistic development of students and their related

issues. The programme has not been created for implementation solely by the guidance officer, but different educational stakeholders have their role to play in making it a part of the school's thrust for educating students.

The programme is also built on the tenets that:

- (a) The teacher, the most critical agent of change for the child in the school has the best opportunity for affecting positively the learning of the child.
- (b) All students should benefit from a guidance programme on an equal basis regardless of race, creed, sex or handicapping condition.
- (c) Education is a vital and evolving process rather than a static, fixed one.
- (d) All individuals involved in the educational process are responsible for the effectiveness of their roles in the process. (SSSD, 2008, pp. 11-12)

The programme states that the “core” of the guidance curriculum is to develop attitudes, skills, and knowledge to:

- (a) manage change successfully.
- (b) accept and take responsibility for feelings
- (c) understand career development (including preparation for subject choice and transition to the world of work or post-secondary training or education.
- (d) develop essential learning skills.
- (e) ensure personal safety.
- (f) enhance relationship skills. (SSSD, 2008, p. 42)

Other features include that it has a “Preventative and Responsive focus” (SSSD, 2008, p. 9), with a mandate to help meet the needs of all students and it should be integrated with other services and programmes in the schools. It is focused on the students’ “competencies and not just their deficiencies” (p. 10).

The guidance and counselling programme is implemented through four major **elements** adapted from Gysbers (1990): the guidance curriculum; individual student planning; responsive services/ case management/ coordinating services; programme management/ evaluation and supporting educational systems.

a. **Guidance Curriculum:** The purpose of the guidance curriculum is “to provide all students at all levels with knowledge and assistance in acquiring

and using life skills. The major processes utilised in this area are Group Guidance and Information Dissemination” (p. 18).

b. **Individual Planning:** “Consists of planned and individually structured activities that help students monitor and manage their own learning as well as their personal and career development” (p. 18). It includes guidance officers individually appraising students, advising them on their goals and helping them adjust during transitions, for example, when changing schools.

c. **Responsive Services:** The responsive services used for the programme consist of activities to, “meet the immediate needs and concerns of students” (p. 19). They include guidance officers consulting with educational stakeholders to help students, individual, group, and crises counselling, as well as referral to other agencies for serious issues such as, “suicide, violence, abuse and terminal illness” (p. 19).

d. **System Support:** This consists of “management activities that establish, maintain and enhance the total guidance programme” (p. 19). These include professional development for guidance officers and guidance officers and familiarising other educational stakeholders and the school community about the guidance programme. It also entails guidance officers advising stakeholders and having consultations with teachers about the students. System support also includes guidance officers networking with the school community to educate them about the resources and institutions available to help students and guidance officers organizing and managing activities which are needed for the programme. Guidance officers are also responsible for, “programme evaluation, data collection and analysis, follow-up studies and the updating of learning activities and resources” (SSSD, 2008, p. 20). Technical support comes from the Ministry of Education, and the Student Support Services Division liaises with this institution to help them conceptualize plans and policies.

The seven major processes through which the programme is delivered in secondary schools include counselling, consultation, provision of information, referral, assessment, group guidance and accountability (SSSD, 2008). Data collection and analysis were used in this study to determine if these processes were really occurring when the programme is implemented.

The guidance and counselling programme states that *counselling* is

done by qualified individuals who use different methods to assist students with their academic, career and personal/social problems who may either be self-referred or referred by other individuals. The *consultation* process entails guidance officers helping other educational stakeholders to provide students with an improved learning environment sometimes through collaboration with others. Consultation also assists in improving communication, changing the students' behaviour, and helping other stakeholders learn about student behaviour. The guidance officers assist students by *providing information* to help them and other stakeholders such as parents, in three major areas; "Life Roles (Learning to Work), Personal Effectiveness (Learning to Live) and Lifelong Learning (Learning to Learn)" (SSSD, 2008, p. 22).

Guidance officers receive *referrals* from other stakeholders or help students who are self-referred. They may then refer students who they are unable to assist to specialists. The guidance officers also *assess* students using standardized or non-standardized instruments which are, "psychosocial or educational in nature" (SSSD, 2008, p. 22). These assessments aim to help students in decision-making and problem-solving. Guidance officers conduct *group guidance* sessions which are developmental and preventative in nature and include the use of lesson plans, classroom discussions, and instructional materials to facilitate the process. In order to ensure *accountability*, the guidance officers engage in assessing the students' needs and in evaluating the implementation of the programme (SSSD, 2008).

The programme has national standards for all students from the infants, year one (primary) to Form Six (secondary), based on the personal/social, career and academic domains (SSSD, 2008). The programme is "results based" and is directed to all students and not just those that are "motivated, supported and ready to learn" (p. 42). The programme's domains and standards can be seen in Appendix B. Each standard has specific themes, objectives, skills, and outcomes. For example, for Standard B of academic development, a theme is, "student roles and responsibilities," and a related objective is, "students will understand the relationship between performance and placement goals" (SSSD, p. 74). Skills aligned to this objective include problem solving and managing change and an outcome understand the relationship between performance and placement" (SSSD, p. 74).

Statement of the Problem

Adolescents worldwide encounter many issues which threaten their well-being and some of these issues have also been observed in students in Trinidad and Tobago. Students between the ages of 13-17 years, are exposed to and may be actively dealing with alcohol consumption, drug use, contemplation and attempting of suicide, sexual activity before the age of 14, tobacco use and involvement in violent activities in Trinidad and Tobago (WHO, 2017). The guidance and counselling programme has been established in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago to assist with some of these problems as well as students' career, academic and personal/social development needs.

Informal conversations with students, teachers, and parents where I work, and from other schools in the NEED, together with my own observations, have led me to conclude that although students are the recipients of guidance and counselling, many of them still have issues. They appear to be largely indecisive about career choice, they are performing poorly academically, and they seem to be unable to adequately deal with their personal and social problems. My conversations with other educational stakeholders and observations have also led me to believe that some students appear to have low levels of what have been termed "21st century skills," such as ICT literacy, critical thinking, communication, and social and cultural awareness. This gives the impression that the programme is not adequately fulfilling its role. My observations and conversations have also made me question whether the programme is meeting the youth development needs of students in the NEED. Trinidad and Tobago ranks 101 out of 181 countries surveyed in the Global Youth Development Index (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2021). This signifies a medium level of youth development (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2021) and while the guidance and counselling programme is not the only avenue for youth development in schools, I am curious as to how it is helping meet the youth development needs of students.

There is an absence of research locally and regionally about guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools, particularly evaluative research, although such programmes are directed at addressing some of the more deep-seated problems of youth. It is hoped that this qualitative

evaluation of the programme, from stakeholders' perspectives, can help fill this research gap.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this multi-site qualitative case study is to conduct an evaluation of the guidance and counselling programme using Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). This study aims to investigate the context, input, implementation, and outcomes of the guidance and counselling programme from the perspectives of educational stakeholders (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students) to determine if, and how, it is meeting the personal/social, career, and academic development needs of the students in different school types in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago. This study hopes to find out if and how the guidance and counselling programme is helping the youth achieve the 21st century skills needed to live and compete in the global environment, become assets to society and contribute to national development. The purpose of this study is also to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, and its implementation, and to make recommendations for its improvement.

Significance of the study

The guidance and counselling programme is one mechanism which supports youth development in Trinidad and Tobago, however, very little information is available to determine the extent to which it is succeeding. A large amount of financial and human resources, time and energy have been put into the conceptualization, administration, and implementation of the guidance and counselling programme in schools, but research has not uncovered any evaluations of how the programme is helping the youth, or if it is doing so at all in Trinidad and Tobago. This study is significant since the programme has not been evaluated before in this context. This study can provide an avenue for educational stakeholders in secondary schools in the NEED to share their experiences of the programme, to explore how it supports youth development, to gain insights about their expectations from such a programme, and to find out how they think it can be improved.

The social and economic problems experienced by the youth of Trinidad and Tobago such as high levels of serious crime, illiteracy, abuse, and

unemployment justify the need for programmes such as guidance and counselling in schools. The youth are expected to be future leaders and they need to be given the requisite 21st century skills so that when they assume the mantle of leadership, they can help ensure the social and economic development of the country. This study is significant since it can provide deeper insights about how key stakeholders feel about the workings of the programme, and its role so far in providing the youth with the necessary competencies and skills for them to thrive.

This study is important also because no evidence has been uncovered by me thus far to show that its focus has been previously evaluated in Trinidad and Tobago. Despite the programme being in existence for many years, there is an absence of literature on its implementation in government secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, and it is expected that this study, although limited in scope, can add to the body of knowledge available. It is hoped that this investigation may uncover important information not previously available which can then be used as the basis for further research. Recommendations made can also be implemented to modify the programme to ensure it fulfils its mandate.

Methodological Framework

In this study all four aspects of Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model were utilised. The CIPP evaluation and criteria checklists (Stufflebeam, 2001), and the evaluation model checklist (Stufflebeam, 2007), were also used as a guide for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of human development and the Human Development Paradigm (HDP) were used as the basis for this investigation. Human development can be defined as:

the expansion of people's freedoms to live long, healthy, and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups. (UNDP, Human Development Report, 2010, p. 22)

There are some aspects of the HDP on which there is generally broad agreement:

- Development must put people at the centre of its concerns.
- The purpose of development is to enlarge all human choices, not just income.
- The HDP is concerned both with building human capabilities (through investment in people) and with using those capabilities fully (through an enabling framework for growth and employment).
- Human development has four essential pillars: equity, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment. It regards economic growth as essential but emphasizes the need to pay attention to its quality and distribution, analyses at length its link with human lives and questions its long-term sustainability.
- The HDP defines the ends of development and analyses sensible options for achieving them. (ul Haq, 1995, pp. 20-21)

The HDP is the overarching framework, and it is fleshed out through concepts and theories related to social justice, youth development and the 5Cs of positive youth development (PYD). These ideas, concepts and theories were used to explore, describe, and evaluate the present guidance and counselling programme for students.

Research Questions

Over-arching question

What are the perceptions of educational stakeholders (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students) in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago, regarding the ways in which the guidance and counselling programme is addressing the needs of students in secondary schools?

Sub questions

1. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is aligned to the needs of the students? (context)
2. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of the strategies and activities which have been planned to meet the needs of the students? (input)
3. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is implemented in schools? (process)

4. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is:

- (a) meeting the personal/social, career and academic needs of students?
(product)
- (b) supportive of other dimensions of youth development such as 21st century skills? (product)
- (c) adapted to cater for the variation in youth development needs across the different types of secondary schools in North Eastern Trinidad?
(product)
- (d) fostering social justice? (product)

This chapter served as an introduction to the research problem and the conceptualisation of the study. The following chapter takes a critical look at the literature available on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Apart from the guidance and counselling curriculum (Student Support Services Division [SSSD], 2008) the only literature unearthed on guidance and counselling programmes in Trinidad and Tobago was a doctoral thesis focusing on the role perceptions and job satisfaction of secondary school counselors (St. Brice, 2001); a master's thesis investigating the perceptions of education stakeholders (Collins, 2012); and, a journal article about the outcomes of consultations regarding the programme (Watkins et al., 2014). This amplifies the need for research to be conducted to explore and evaluate what is presently occurring with guidance and counselling in Trinidad and Tobago. Similarly, literature on such programmes in the wider Caribbean is limited to mostly studies from Jamaica (Palmer et al., 2012), and Barbados (Griffin, 2019; Griffin & Bryan, 2021; Maynard, 2014). The dearth of information available has resulted in my use of research, which although not directly related to guidance and counselling are relevant, for example, Antoine and Ali (2016) and Wihby and Joseph (2018).

Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies have been conducted globally, but few have looked at guidance and counselling solely from a qualitative research perspective, and how it supports youth development. I conducted a qualitative study because I wanted to hear the stakeholders' voices and to narrate their experiences with the programme. Literature from other developing countries was referenced since they may have similar issues to developing countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, however, in some cases, studies were used from developed countries. While qualitative studies were sought, in some cases quantitative and mixed method studies were also included because of their relevance. This literature review discusses the status of youth development in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean and how guidance and counselling can serve as a mechanism for youth development in secondary schools. It also seeks to show educational stakeholders' perceptions of the programme, its benefits, and challenges to its implementation.

SECTION I

Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model

Figure 1

Key Components of the CIPP Evaluation Model and Associated Relationship with Programs



Note. From “The CIPP model for evaluation.” by D. L. Stufflebeam, and T. Kellaghan, In D. L. Stufflebeam & T. Kellaghan (Eds.), *The international handbook of educational evaluation* (p. 33), 2003, Kluwer Academic Publishers. Copyright 2003 by Kluwer Academic Publishers.

According to Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017) **context evaluations**, “assess needs, problems, assets and opportunities, as well as relevant contextual conditions and dynamics” (p. 23). **Input evaluations**, “assess a program’s strategy, action plan, staffing arrangements and budget for feasibility and potential cost-effectiveness and to meet targeted needs and achieve goals” (p. 23). **Process evaluations**, “monitor, document, assess and report on the implementation of plans” (p. 23) and **product evaluations**, “identify and assess costs and outcomes-intended and unintended, short term and long term. These evaluations provide feedback during a program’s implementation on the extent that program goals are being addressed and achieved” (p. 23).

In this study, the CIPP model was used because I felt that its structure was aligned to what I wanted to investigate, namely the context for which the programme was developed, its inputs, the processes involved in its

implementation, and whether the stakeholders felt that the programme was meeting the students' needs. I also chose the CIPP model because of its versatility and ease of use.

The CIPP Model is not an obscure, highly technical approach accessible only to highly skilled research methodologists but a common sense approach that can even be understood and applied by a wide range of evaluation clients, program staffs and program constituents as well as evaluation specialists. (Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2017, p. 6)

It has been used in over 500 publications in academic journals and doctoral dissertations for evaluations in varying fields such as agriculture, music, education and even sports (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017), and for counselling programmes (Astramovich & Coker, 2007; Kooyman, 2004, as cited in Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Such studies employed mixed methods, as well as either, only, quantitative or qualitative approaches (Bodur et al., 2022; Pujiastuti et al., 2021; Vo & Pang, 2022). Quantitative studies using the CIPP model to evaluate the guidance and counselling programme include Natesan, Hutagalung et al., (2016) and Natesan, Poh Li et al., (2016). But no qualitative studies specifically using the CIPP model to evaluate guidance and counselling programmes were found. My decision to utilise it in this study was because of its focus on accountability and improvement, issues which are of interest to me.

Other models of evaluation do not focus directly on accountability and improvement, for example, the Responsive Evaluation Model where the intention is to “Respond usefully to the evaluative questions of the program’s stakeholders” (Stake, 1976, as cited in Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 4). The purpose of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model is to, “Foster use of findings” (Patton, 2008, as cited in Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 4). The focus of the CIPP model is collecting data on, “Needs, plans, processes, outcomes,” (p. 4), while that of the Responsive Evaluation model is on, “Program background, transactions and outcomes” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 4). Data collection for the Utilization-Focused Evaluation model is focused on the “Intended uses of findings” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 4). The CIPP model was used because I felt it gave a more holistic view of the guidance and counselling programme than the other models.

SECTION II

Human Development and Guidance and Counselling

This section explores guidance and counselling programmes in relation to a range of issues and challenges emanating from the socio-historical context of Trinidad and Tobago. The central idea, however, is that such programmes must result in some measure of human and sustainable development. For example, this section looks at the differences between a traditional and a social justice approach to counselling, which is at the heart of whether such a programme can promote human development, youth development and sustainable development in relation to the needs of Trinidad and Tobago. The post-colonial education system in Trinidad and Tobago, has to a large extent retained a traditional or ‘colonial’ ethos which is echoed in how we regard youth (Mohammed, 2018). Youth need to be seen as partners in their development, however “there is a kind of malaise and inertia on the part of the state that eschews a serious and unrelenting focus on improving the educational, social and economic status of youth” (Mohammed, 2018, p. 312). Looking at the history of youth development in the Caribbean and youth development policy in Trinidad and Tobago will help in exploring such issues. As an antidote to traditional mindsets, the 5Cs of positive youth development, (PYD), are offered to complement the conceptual framework for this study.

The terms *human development* and *sustainable human development* are central tenets to this investigation. The Brundtland Report (1987) played an important role in changing the concept of *development* to sustainable development by defining it as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Ihuoma, 2017, p. 335). Sustainable human development takes into consideration the factor of time since it considers the inheritance of future generations (Edewor, 2014). The first human development report, now published annually, was put forward by Mahbub ul Haq in conjunction with Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, and other economists in 1990, and commissioned by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (Iqbal, 2018). This “landmark publication changed the way people thought about economics. Instead of focusing exclusively on economic growth ul Haq and his colleagues argued that development should focus on improving the lives of real people”

(Quinn, 2017, p. 10). The Human Development Paradigm (HDP), which ul Haq devised, continues to be used today to gauge the ‘real’ state of development of a region or country.

The four components of the HDP equity, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment, “distinguish the human development paradigm from the more traditional economic growth models” (ul Haq, 1995, p. 16).

Consideration of these four components when creating national policies can result in the provision of equal access to employment opportunities and resources as well as enhance the education and health care systems in Trinidad and Tobago. People’s lives can be improved if development focuses on overcoming poverty and societal problems such as poor health, a lack of employment opportunities and unequal access to goods, services, and opportunities (ul Haq, 1976). A core idea of this stance on development is that “people are both the ends and means of development” (ul Haq, 1995, p. 16). It stands to reason then that education has a major part to play as it is the *means* by which we develop members into citizens, and, guidance, counselling and the pastoral programmes of a school are perhaps the best “*means*” we have in formal schooling to address the human development of students.

The HDP is concerned “both with building human capabilities (through investment in people) and with using those human capabilities fully, (through an enabling framework for growth and employment)” (ul Haq, 1995, p. 21). The capability approach, as described by Sen (1999), encompasses the concepts of functioning, capability, and agency. A *functioning* is “the beings and doings a person has achieved through realization of their capabilities” while a *capability* is “what a person has the ability to do and be across a wide range of areas” (Lambe et al., 2022, p. 221). *Agency* refers to “a person’s ability to pursue and realize goals she values and has reason to value” (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009, p. 22). Guidance and counselling programmes are seemingly well-placed to develop the functionings and capabilities of students by helping them to discover their natural talents. A case in point is that students from socio-economic backgrounds that have limited interaction with persons involved in academic and vocational work would benefit from career guidance opportunities, and a fundamental aim of any guidance and counselling programme is to enhance a student’s self-efficacy and confidence, hence

boosting their sense of agency.

Guidance and counselling can advance sustainable and human development since it concentrates on the educational/academic, vocational/career and personal/social domains of students' lives (Osaro, 2018). However, such programmes are often relegated to the background of the education system in developing countries, for example, in Nigeria (Ihuoma, 2017). I have also observed this in Trinidad and Tobago where the programme is perceived to be supplemental to the academic curriculum instead of being integrated into it.

In order for development to occur people must have an increased number of choices and they must have "equitable access to opportunities" (ul Haq, 1995, p. 17). Removing or reducing inequities can only occur if there is a "fundamental restructuring of power in many societies" (ul Haq, 1995, p. 17). In Chapter 1 the point was made that the stratified education system in Trinidad and Tobago maintains inequities related to the power differentials between the denominational bodies and the state, based largely on the legitimacy that such schools (the former) have in the society. However, this continued inequity has resulted in too many students (many thousands) ending their secondary school life without acquiring much in terms of added value (Mohammed, 2019). ul Haq (1995) speaks of sustainability as "...a matter of distributional equity - of sharing developmental opportunities between present and future generations and ensuring intragenerational and intergenerational equity in access to opportunities" (p. 18). Reducing educational inequities will allow more students, from all types of schools, to have greater opportunities to reach their full potential, create wealth, and improve society for future generations.

The HDP also puts forward an expanded idea about 'productivity,' seeing persons as only able to come into their own if their schools were places where they experienced equity. This relates again to the prestige and state sectors in schooling, where the latter is plagued by underperformance and disciplinary problems and are not seen as legitimate places of learning in the society (Mohammed, 2016). Students in such schools know of this stigma and are not likely to think that they are being given an education equal to that in the prestige sector, hence productivity suffers. Equity leads to productivity, and if

one is productive, one can be empowered. The result is sustainability because people are in a state of empowerment. Therefore, sustainability is the pinnacle of the HDP. Interestingly, guidance and counselling programmes can better help students to increase their productivity, developing sustainable practices in their own daily lives that can also assist in national development, resulting in feelings of being empowered, but the initial pillar of the HDP, equity, poses a likely challenge to conventional guidance and counselling programmes.

Encapsulating the ideas expressed above related to human and sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been adopted by Trinidad and Tobago, and much of the rest of the world to improve people's lives.

The Agenda strives for a world that is just, rights-based, equitable and inclusive. It commits stakeholders to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, and environmental protection and to benefit all, including women, children, youth, and future generations. (United Nations Development Group [UNDG], 2017, p. 9)

This Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals to achieve these targets, with goals three and four being to, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,” and to, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2017, pp. 4-5).

I sought to evaluate the guidance and counselling programme, using stakeholders' perspectives, to explore how it assisted in improving the good health and well-being of students, as well as its role in ensuring that students receive a quality education in Trinidad and Tobago. The level of human development in a country is greatly impacted by the health and education levels of its citizens. Trinidad and Tobago's Human Development Index (HDI) has increased from 0.784 (UNDP, 2018) to 0.810 which now places it in the very high human development category (UNDP, 2022). Of the 189 countries and territories surveyed, Trinidad and Tobago has improved from 69th position (UNDP, 2018) to 57th position in 2021 (UNDP, 2022). This fairly high position indicates that the country is well-placed to achieve better living conditions for all since we do not have the major problem of poverty that other countries

experience. In 2020 Trinidad and Tobago's position was 56, a marginal drop, possibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted globally in millions of deaths, and "long-term damage to economies and communities" (UNDP, 2022, p. 166). In fact, because of the pandemic for "the first time on record, the global HDI value declined" and "90 percent of countries saw their HDI value drop in either 2020 or 2021" (UNDP, 2022, p. 11). Improvements to HDI in 2021, were mostly centred around the very high HDI countries while "most of the rest experienced ongoing declines" (UNDP, 2022, p. 11).

While Trinidad and Tobago is battling to retain its high standing in human development, mainly due to the adverse effects of the pandemic, one of the ways of doing just that is to develop better mechanisms to provide the youth with the knowledge and skills needed for a changing economy. I witness the guidance and counselling programme as it is presently implemented in my school, and I believe that it can help students find a career best suited to their interests and abilities and develop their potential. This research took me to several schools in the North Eastern Education District (NEED), and I have come to the same opinion about the significance of the programme in fostering youth development across different types of schools.

A country's development is largely dependent on its human resource capital, so it is important that its citizens, especially the youth, receive vocational guidance to help them to contribute to society (Oyinloye, 2016). Empowerment is a state of being that can guide youth to create employment instead of settling for being "consumers of labour" (Oyinloye, 2016, pp. 2872-2873). In this study, I have aimed to explore, describe, and evaluate how the guidance and counselling programme, through its different domains (personal/social, career and academic), may be serving to enhance youth empowerment, development, and social justice, thereby impacting on equalizing opportunities for them.

The foregoing ideas rooted in human and sustainable development, see the guidance and counselling programme of a school as a necessary component for youth empowerment. Such programmes cater to a fuller understanding of students' own personal/social, career and academic goals. While this may be the potential of a guidance and counselling programme, what is actually delivered may leave a lot to be desired. "The focus on human development is

foundational to the field of counseling, with its importance codified in guiding documents and frameworks, such as the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (2014)” (Lee & Kelley-Peterson, 2018, p. 146).

Many developmental theories are based on research done on dominant groups in society that may be of a single-sex and culture, and while counsellors need to know these theories, using a social justice approach would be more relevant in that such an approach can be applied to plural societies (Lee & Kelley-Peterson, 2018).

The HDP and social justice constructs are both based on a people-centred philosophy which espouses education as the key to human development, and race, gender and social class should not be barriers to it (Akala, 2019). The social justice emphasis to guidance and counselling is related to the HDP since it assists in reducing inequities and it helps students to take advantage of opportunities to become more productive and improve the well-being of future generations. It also nurtures people to become more empowered to be active participants in life and “exercise choices of their own freewill” (ul Haq, 1995, p. 20). Table 2 gives some idea of how guidance and counselling programmes could vary based on their philosophical outlook.

Table 2

Traditional Versus the Social Justice Approach in School Counseling

Traditional School Counseling	Social Justice Approach to School Counseling
Dependence on counseling theories and approaches with little to no regard for cultural background of students.	Major focus of counseling is highlighting the strengths of students (empowerment-based counseling).
Emphasis on individual student factors (e.g., unmotivated, depressed, angry).	Emphasis on sociocultural and environmental factors (poverty, discrimination) that influence student’s behavior and performance.
Little to no emphasis on oppression and its influence on students.	Major goal of school counseling program is to challenge oppression and oppressive practices at school.
Emphasis on equality.	Emphasis on equality and equity.
School counseling activities typically implemented during the school day.	School counseling activities promoted during the day and after school hours (e.g., advocating policies, resources) in the community.

Traditional School Counseling	Social Justice Approach to School Counseling
Reliance on labels to identify students (e.g., “defiant,” “aggressive”).	Avoidance of labeling. Students are described by their strengths and positive characteristics.
Little to no use of data to guide programming or to evaluate services.	Dependence on data to guide counseling services and to evaluate existing interventions.
Focus on maintaining the status quo.	Focus on changing existing policies and strategies so that all students are successful.
Focus on enrolling the students in “comfortable” courses.	Focus on enrolling students in more rigorous courses.

Note. Adapted from *School counseling to close the achievement gap: A social justice framework for success* (p. 19), by, C. Holcomb-McCoy, 2007, Corwin Press. Copyright 2007 by Cheryl, Holcomb-McCoy.

From my observations the approach to guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Trinidad appears to have aspects of both approaches (Table 2). Elements of the social justice approach include taking into consideration the students’ cultural backgrounds and making efforts to nurture their strengths. However, some characteristics of the traditional approach which continue to be prominent are an emphasis on equality rather than equity, inadequate attention to helping students deal with oppressive practices at the school, and the promotion of school counselling activities mostly during school hours. A social justice approach would be more advantageous to the students, especially since it highlights the students’ strengths, considers their sociocultural backgrounds, and uses data to inform the programme. School counsellors have an integral role in the success of this approach since it is their responsibility to assist students in identifying inequities and to help them, where possible, to overcome barriers to their holistic development (Reese, 2021).

Trinidad and Tobago’s guidance and counselling programme is based on development theory, “specifically life career development” (SSSD, 2008, p. 11), and its philosophical framework is Donald Super’s Life-Span, Life-Space Theory of Career Development (SSSD, 2008). However, this theory has been criticized because it “does not include modern terminology (e.g., *social justice*, *intersectionalities*, *contextual factors*) that would suggest that it is

multiculturally sensitive and broadly applicable” (Robitschek & Hardin, 2017, p. 360). Super’s research:

scarcely mentions systemic racism, how this shapes developmental stages, and how people navigate image norms and the life space. This model does not fully capture the lived experiences of Black students and how different aspects of their identities intersect to shape persistence and retention in academic spaces. (Hunt & Rhodes, 2021, p. 102)

Since Super’s theory is not multiculturally sensitive, it is likely that it will not be up to the task of meeting the needs of the students in Trinidad and Tobago. While the written guidance and counselling programme addresses three domains, it only mentions the theoretical and philosophical foundations related to career development, and not academic or personal/social guidance. This provides an opportunity for programme improvement.

Another way the present programme can be enhanced is to utilise ideas and concepts informed by theories of social justice for the career guidance component. A social justice approach is based on certain beliefs such as the perception that people’s “...careers are shaped by the contexts and communities within which they live, study and work” (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 59); and, that societal inequalities result from people not having the same opportunities to develop their careers. This approach to career guidance places value on addressing societal inequalities to help individuals reach their full potential (Hooley et al., 2021). If schools value social justice, then they have an important role to play in building critical consciousness, naming oppression, questioning what is normal, and encouraging people to work together (Hooley et al., 2021). A social justice approach then is valuable, not only for the schools housing large numbers of students from the lower socio-economic enclaves, but also for those in the prestige sector where a certain critical awareness needs to be built about the education system and the society in which they live.

The above research and commentaries are situated mainly in developed countries such as the United States and within the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). It is important to realize when speaking of implementing guidance and counselling programmes in the Trinidad and Tobago context, that it is a postcolonial one.

In Trinidad's origins as a colonial society, a system of stratification based on a class-race-colour hierarchy-beginning with slavery and continuing through emancipation and indenture-laid the foundations for a post-colonial society whose hallmark has been ethnic groups and competition fostered by class inequalities and state control of certain resources. (Scher, 2010, p. 63)

Education in the Caribbean continues to be marked by the implementation of stratified systems inherited from British, French, Spanish, and Dutch colonizers (Hickling-Hudson, 2015). Trinidad and Tobago's education system was inherited from Britain, and it is "divided into a small, high achieving, traditional grammar school sector, mostly denominational and a much larger state secondary sector, consisting of newer schools, with many innovations, but plagued by underachievement and indiscipline" (Mohammed, 2018, p. 297). Since there are strong differences between the different types of secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, it stands to reason that each school type may need a customized guidance and counselling approach. It is important that guidance officers recognize these differences in an explicit and problematic way - as the base from which to build their offerings.

These differences in the educational system manifest at the regional level or that of educational districts. In 2022, the North Eastern Educational District (NEED), where Pilot School is situated, had the second highest failure rate at the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA), with 76.7% of the students scoring below 50% (Ministry of Education, 2022a). North East Trinidad "is generally characterized as low-income agricultural communities situated within forested areas," with many people engaged in farming (Ramlachan et al., 2019, p. 280). This district has sub-standard and minimal infrastructural development stemming directly from a colonial model of development that focused services and infrastructure in urban and port areas resulting in widespread rural neglect. While national governments since independence (1962) have sought to redress this situation, it has nevertheless persisted. This is described as a pernicious problem in postcolonial societies where native governments have now replaced the colonial agenda of the past with a capitalist and neoliberal one, favouring the developed areas of the country (De Lisle et al., 2010 as cited in Noreiga, 2020).

The National HDI (2008/2009) ranks 15 administrative areas in Trinidad and Tobago (CSO, 2012). Table 3 illustrates the national human development indices for major administrative areas in Trinidad and Tobago. This index takes into consideration three dimensions of human development (health and longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living). The two main towns in the NEED (Towns X and Y), were ranked amongst the lowest in the country in terms of HDI. Most of the students who attend schools in this district reside in and around these towns, including the Pilot School.

Table 3

National Human Development Indicators in Administrative Areas of Trinidad and Tobago

Town	HDI		Household income per capita		Primary and secondary attainment rates (ages 6-16)		Secondary and higher attainment rates (ages 17 and above)	
	HDI	Rank	\$ per capita	Rank	Attainment	Rank	Attainment	Rank
					Rate %		Rate %	
S	0.728	3	28,653.00	5	99.4	2	78.1	2
T	0.734	2	33,083.00	3	100	1	72.3	4
U	0.736	1	33,662.00	2	100	1	70.5	5
V	0.727	4	34,367.00	1	95.7	6	78.4	1
X	0.640	13	27,635.00	10	71.1	14	73.6	3
Y	0.616	14	23,742.00	13	79.9	12	53.0	15

Note. Adapted from *Trinidad and Tobago human development atlas* (pp. 4-9), by CSO, 2012, Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development. Copyright 2012, Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development.

The north east region of Trinidad has been noted by Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley, as having a great deal of potential, however, “residents were in fact at the bottom of the economic barrel of Trinidad and Tobago” (Boynes, 2019, para. 4), because of the lack of infrastructure in the area. Dr. Rowley highlighted major plans for the area to increase economic activity such as the building of a highway and a port, which together with public/private partnership, would stimulate economic activity (Boynes, 2019). These plans have not materialized despite Town Y being identified since 1984 as a growth centre in the National Physical Development Plan (Boynes, 2019). The region thus continues to suffer from political rhetoric and rural neglect.

I am concerned about the socioeconomic context of the students in my school and the NEED. I have observed that many of them live in single parent households with parents who have low paying jobs. Students therefore have insufficient funds to attend school and purchase resources such as books and computers for online work, which were especially needed during the COVID-19 pandemic. They tend to have problems with literacy and numeracy and their inability to cope with the curriculum has, to a large extent, resulted in them being apathetic and undisciplined. Their career aspirations are diverse with some identifying traditional careers such as teaching, law, and medicine, while others indicate they want to pursue careers in information technology, nursing, tourism, and the protective services. Many students seem to not make any effort in their academics, but they have lofty goals, which show a tenuous connection to the realities of their secondary school life. Overall, these issues, stemming largely from a mismatch between their academic capabilities and the official curriculum, tend to impact negatively on youth and human development. The elitist nature of our post-colonial education system has historically contributed to institutionalise these inequities, and inequity continues because elitism has become legitimised - the rhetoric of reform is ever present whilst the system remains unchanged (Mohammed, 2018).

One way that such complex inequalities and inequities in society can be dealt with is by fostering more meaningful educational and career opportunities.

Careers education and guidance is a profoundly political process. It operates at the interface between the individual and society, between

self and opportunity, between aspiration and realism. It facilitates the allocation of life chances. Within a society in which such life chances are unequally distributed, it faces the issue of whether it serves to reinforce such inequalities or to reduce them. (Watts, 1996, p. 225)

The potential of careers education to lead to greater socio-political awareness has been downplayed by national government agencies such as the Ministry of Education in the local context. Theoretical underpinnings have been largely based on psychological theories as opposed to theories which are “sociological or economic in nature” (Watts, 1996, p. 226). A common view in guidance and counselling therefore is that “the focus of attention is the individual. But it means that the social context of the intervention, and the socio-political nature of the intervention itself, tend to be neglected and implicitly regarded as unproblematic” (p. 226), which is apolitical and does not suggest any hint of a social reform agenda. However, “the socio-political nature of guidance is highly problematic. Guidance can be a form of social reform; it can also be a form of social control” (p. 226). Table 4 outlines four different ways in which a socio-political approach to career education and guidance can be conceptualized.

Table 4

Four Socio-Political Approaches to Career Education and Guidance

	Core focus on society	Core focus on individuals
Change	Radical (social change)	Progressive (individual change)
Status quo	Conservative (social control)	Liberal (non-directive)

Note. Adapted from *Socio-political ideologies in guidance* (p. 227), by Watts and Herr, 1976, as cited in A.G. Watts, 1996, In B, Law., J, Killeen., J. M. Kidd., and R, Hawthorn. (Eds). *Rethinking careers education and guidance: Theory, policy, and practice* (pp. 225-233). Routledge. Copyright 1996, by Anthony Gordon Watts.

The conservative approach maintains the status quo and makes no changes to inequalities which exist, the liberal approach while acknowledging the challenges of inequalities, does not make any effort to deal with them (Watts, 1996). The progressive approach focuses “on individual change, seeks to alter the distribution of opportunities but not the opportunity structure itself,” (p. 231), and the radical approach, “addresses the social causes of inequality and

seeks to remedy them through social change” (Watts, 1996, p. 232). The radical approach appears to be the one that would help to combat social inequalities as outlined above, especially in relation to economically depressed areas in the NEED. The existing guidance and counselling programme seems aligned to the progressive approach since efforts are made to provide students with the knowledge and skills to change their attitudes and behaviour. It helps them to enhance their knowledge and skills, not only in cognitive and intellectual spheres, however, these efforts are hindered because the programme is unable to alter the opportunity structure itself.

This section highlighted the postcolonial nature of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago where elitist schools are regarded as ‘excellent’ and state schools for the most part underachieve. In the NEED, where economic livelihoods are below par, (and where all the schools surveyed cannot be described as ‘elitist’), I discussed the potential of a careers education programme to make a meaningful impact on students’ lives by heightening their awareness of their social positioning, and what may be needed in the society to equalize opportunity for them. This focus, however, is almost non-existent in present programming which centres on the individual and his/her needs.

Youth Development in the Caribbean

While the term “youth development” may seem to be of recent origin, its emergence in the Caribbean occurred decades ago. Youth played a major role in the revolutionary and reformist movements which were historically significant in the conceptualization of the Commonwealth Caribbean youth development agenda (Charles & Jameson-Charles, 2014). The energy of the youth was noticed by the church and trade unions, which subsequently made efforts to include them in their organizational structure. After this, political parties began including youth in their organizations in the 1960s and 1970s (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development [CCYD], 2010).

Youth development in the Caribbean was also influenced by global events such as the World Youth Conference in 1945 which resulted in the creation of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the Black Power Movement (CCYD, 2010). Following this more active stance by the youth, The Commonwealth Youth Programme was established in 1974. In 1987 the

Caribbean Federation of Youth was instituted to serve as a body for National Youth Councils to allow the youth to have a greater voice both regionally and internationally (CCYD, 2010).

In 2007, the CARICOM Heads of Government established a Commission on Youth Development. The Draft CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan (CYDAP) 2012-2017, states that from 2001-2009 the Regional Strategy for Youth Development “provided a regional focus for reorienting national youth portfolios, coordinating the work of regional development partners and fostering youth participation in regional development and integration” (p. 2). The CYDAP would also be helpful in the success of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy since it provides a plan that can allow the youth greater access and increased and improved qualities of opportunities at the school, community, national and regional levels. It would also help them holistically and allow them to participate economically, socially, and politically to facilitate national development.

The CCYD (2010) report acknowledges the importance of social justice since it recommends that all youth be accepted regardless of race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Its recommendations include seeing youth as assets not problems, as participants in the decision-making process and being able to contribute at the local, regional, and national levels. The report also states that youth policies in place are largely unsuitable, not correctly implemented, have limited focus, and generally result in a lack of investment in youth.

Several factors are listed in the report which inhibit youth participation such as the youth being treated with little respect, perpetuating negative attitudes towards them, manipulating them, tokenism, and not providing them with resources and a supportive environment. I have observed that there are inadequate resources in many schools which largely prevent students from becoming equipped with the necessary 21st century skills.

The ideal Caribbean youth, as outlined in CCYD (2010), should be hardworking, possess excellent communication skills and exhibit characteristics such as leadership, adaptability to the global environment, tolerance to cultural differences and be knowledgeable of local, regional, and international affairs. It would be interesting to see in this research, if the

current guidance and counselling programme has the potential and the necessary wherewithal, to assist in the development of such ideals.

Youth Development in Trinidad and Tobago

This section examines how youth development in Trinidad and Tobago fits into our wider national development framework and addresses the major problems associated with young people. The youth's concerns highlight societal inequities negatively impacting the level of social justice and therefore hinder Trinidad and Tobago's human development potential.

Trinidad and Tobago has a youth development agenda guided by international agreements and frameworks such as The Lisbon Declaration on Youth Programmes and Policies, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and The CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan (CYDAP) (Ministry of Youth Development and National Service [MYDNS], n.d.). These agreements emphasize the importance of having policies regarding youth development and they have identified goals by which such development can be achieved. Sometimes these agreements require new legislation to be introduced to protect the youth, and their objectives are influenced by philosophies that focus on helping the youth to reach their full potential, for example, the HDP and the capabilities approach. Some of their methods of improving youth development include agreements pertaining to youth rights, ensuring a higher quality of education, employment opportunities, preparation for the 21st century and gender equality. Youth rights, for instance, is a basic tenet of all these policies and serve to protect the youth from harm and ensure that they can access educational services.

Despite the above, it is clear to me that youth development policies seem to be overlooked in the national landscape. Perhaps because of limited funds, priorities lie elsewhere, mainly in health and national security. Schools are largely perceived to be solely responsible for youth development, however, the extent to which they can assist is limited because of their focus on academic performance. This leaves little avenue for holistic youth development and indicates that there is a void to be filled. In the NEED, for example, there are inadequate recreational facilities for the youth. While there are government institutions that provide youth training in the NEED, limited employment opportunities hinder their participation.

Youth development in Trinidad and Tobago has also been guided by national youth policies such as the current National Youth Policy (2020-2025) (MYDNS, n.d.). This policy is aligned to theories such as Positive Youth Development (PYD), has a human rights-based approach to youth development, and is geared towards the needs of people ages 10-35 years (MYDNS, n.d.). The policy core principles are, “gender equality and equity, respect for diversity, social inclusion, youth heterogeneity and intersectionality as well as inclusive and active participation” (MYDNS, n.d. p. 9). It also articulates eight interconnected youth “Pillars:”

1. Prioritising youth economic participation and empowerment.
2. Harnessing youth social and intellectual capital.
3. Facilitating inclusive and active youth participation in the civic and democratic life of Trinidad Tobago.
4. Creating safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments.
5. Accentuating holistic youth health and well-being.
6. Emphasising youth contributions to rural transformation, agricultural production, and food security.
7. Supporting youth action on climate change, environmental sustainability, and climate justice and
8. Creating an enabling environment for positive youth development in Trinidad and Tobago. (MYDNS, n.d, pp. 9-10)

The overarching goal of the national policy is, “Youth Empowerment,” and it aims to “mainstream youth priorities” across Trinidad and Tobago, “promote social inclusion,” “enhance youth policy environments” and “facilitate active citizenship” by engaging the youth in Trinidad and Tobago (MYDNS, n.d. p. 9). Youth empowerment is an important aspect of youth development, and it can also have significant implications in our political process whereby youth involvement can improve the lives of citizens through the introduction of new ideas and strategies. While the policy outlines a monitoring and evaluation framework, a monitoring and evaluation strategy still has to be developed to accompany it (MYDNS, n.d.).

Ideas of “formal empowerment,” in previous national youth policies have been called “politically empty” (Sanatan, 2018, p. 3), largely because of the practice of reiterating policy as rhetoric for political mileage, thus undermining “the potential and purpose of policy implementation” (p. 4). Other

issues with policies include the sometimes “incoherent manner” by which they are implemented, and inadequate emphasis being placed on helping the youth to deal with “poverty and social inclusion” (p. 4). A more “intersectional approach” is required to help improve social justice (Sanatan, 2018, p. 5).

Although the policy has an assets-based approach to youth development in contrast to previous problem-based approaches (MYDNS, n.d.), I have noticed that in Trinidad and Tobago youth are not always viewed as assets whose skills can be developed to reduce societal inequities and improve social justice, instead, their negative attributes become the focus. The policy espouses youth as partners in development (MYDNS, n.d.) however, from my observations of how they are treated in the NEED, and in Trinidad and Tobago, this is not evident. This may not be only a symptom of our post-colonial condition, but may be an affliction found in even the most developed societies i.e. prejudices against youth (youthism).

Consultations with the youth, educators, and members of civil society during the creation of the National Youth Policy (2020-2025) brought to the forefront many of the personal and social issues encountered by young people. “Youth Economic Participation and Empowerment” (MYDNS, n.d., p. 18), which refers to their need for apprenticeship programmes, entrepreneurship opportunities and employment (MYDNS, n.d.) is a major concern, as well as being unable to participate economically, which can lead to wealth inequalities and pose a hindrance to educational and social mobility (Braga et al., 2017).

Despite universal primary and secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago, concerns about “Education and Training” arose in the consultations as the youth felt they lacked access to educational opportunities. They indicated that too much focus was placed on the academic curriculum rather than a much desired “competency-based education and training...” (MYDNS, n.d., p. 19), denoting that educational reform is required. Another drawback highlighted by stakeholders was the tokenistic nature associated with “Youth Active Participation in Civic Activities and Governance” (p. 19), and they felt the government should create opportunities to make it more meaningful (MYDNS, n.d.) An improvement in “Youth Health and Wellbeing” (p. 19) was also needed since there was inadequate access to mental, sexual, and reproductive health services (MYDNS, n.d.). Unfortunately, inequity in the public health

care system “largely affects the low socio-economic group negatively because of their need to use out-of-pocket money” (Bahall, 2018, p. 91). Additionally, a need for “Creating Safe Spaces and Peaceful Environments” (p. 19) arose as youths were concerned about the level of criminal activity and its impact on their communities, and well-being (MYDNS, n.d.). In Trinidad and Tobago, a large socio-economic gap exists, with some communities being marginalised and stigmatised as having a high percentage of occupants being involved in criminal activities (Watson et al., 2021).

“Under-represented and Marginalised Youth” (MYDNS, n.d., p. 20) was another issue. Persons with disabilities were sometimes unable to participate in decision-making, they were discriminated against and therefore, increased efforts for inclusiveness are required (MYDNS, n.d.). Examples of this marginalisation are common in the NEED. For example, my school was constructed without ramps, and this negatively affected the mobility of a wheelchair bound student, an issue which has never been addressed. It is important that “youth mainstreaming” (p. 20) occurs because many youth programmes are duplicated, resulting in extra costs, with no benefit to the youth (MYDNS, n.d.). Finally, the need for “Institutional Strengthening, Including Capacity Building Support for Youth Workers” (p. 20) emerged, as stakeholders believe that a bureaucratic environment affects the implementation of youth policies. It is also critical that policies be monitored and evaluated to ensure their success (MYDNS, n.d.). This bureaucracy was previously highlighted by Sanatan (2018), and it is left to be seen how the new 2020-2025 youth policy addresses this matter.

Based on the above discussion, I argue that one of the mechanisms which can assist with youth empowerment and youth development in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago is the guidance and counselling programme. Such a programme necessarily should focus on holistic student development targeting personal/social, academic and career guidance needs. This approach would assist in providing students with the knowledge and skills which they will need to be transformative agents in society, and hopefully nurture a level of social consciousness which can assist in the removal of social inequities.

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development (PYD)

The theory of PYD was used as part of the conceptual framework for this study.

PYD transitions away from traditional approaches of responding to young people in a risk or problem frame and toward proactively building skills, fostering healthy relationships, and supporting youth to be active partners in development efforts. It suggests that if young people have the knowledge, skills, and support they need, they will thrive as adults, enjoy good health, succeed economically, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. (Alvarado et al., 2017, p. 1)

There are many studies (empirical and review) showing that the principles of PYD are helpful in promoting adolescent well-being (Zhou et al., 2020). For example:

1. All youth have the inherent capacity for positive growth and development.
2. A positive developmental trajectory is enabled when youth are embedded in relationships, contexts and ecologies that nurture their development.
3. The promotion of positive development is further enabled when youth participate in multiple, nutrient rich, relationships, contexts, and ecologies.
4. All youth benefit from these relationships, contexts, and ecologies. Support, empowerment, and engagement are, for example, important developmental assets for all youth, generalizing across race, ethnicity, gender, and family income. However, the strategies and tactics for promoting these developmental assets can vary considerably as a function of social location.
5. Community is a viable and critical “delivery system” for positive youth development.
6. Youth are major actors in their own development and are significant (and underutilized) resources for creating the kinds of relationships, contexts, ecologies, and communities that enable positive youth development. (Benson et al., 2006, p. 896)

However, PYD has been criticized for not considering how “power, privilege and oppressive forces shape a young person's identity and how that young person engages with society” (McDaniel, 2017, p. 136). PYD was used as part of my framework because I wanted to determine if the guidance and counselling programme was focused on nurturing the youths’ strengths,

helping them to manage their relationships, and if it was part of the community of support that they needed. McDaniel (2017) articulates certain shortfalls of PYD as it relates to improving social justice and to compensate for these deficiencies, I included a social justice approach to counselling.

One of the frameworks of PYD is the 5Cs of positive youth development which is a:

strength-based framework to assess optimal functioning of young people. The model postulates that the 5Cs (e.g., confidence, competence, character, connection, caring) mediate the relation between emerging adults' strengths (e.g., hopeful expectations for the future) and optimal well-being (e.g., life satisfaction). (Fernandes et al., 2021, p. 237)

These characteristics help the youth to develop in a positive manner and when they begin to thrive, a 6th C, *contribution* would be the outcome (Pittman, et al., 2001).

While there are many youth development frameworks, the 5Cs of PYD is supported by empirical research (Kozina et al., 2021), and represent characteristics which I believe all youth should possess. This framework was taken into consideration when creating the National Youth Policy, 2020-2025 (MYDNS, n.d.), and I felt it was relevant to my study in terms of youth development. When reviewing the literature, I found quantitative and mixed method studies utilising the 5Cs of PYD, however, none using the 5Cs of PYD in a qualitative evaluation of guidance and counselling programmes. The 5Cs of PYD, however, were used as part of the theoretical framework of qualitative studies on youth with developmental disabilities (Zurawski, 2015), and the use of nature as an intervention to promote positive youth development (Brandes, 2017). The use of the 5Cs in this study will be further discussed in chapter three.

21st Century Skills

“The skills needed for education and the workplace in the current economy have been labeled 21st-century skills” (van Laar et al., para. 4, 2020). In this study, a list of 21st century skills compiled by the World Economic Forum (2015) was used to better understand how the guidance and counselling

programme could aid in their development. Sixteen of these skills were grouped under three major categories: foundational literacies, competencies, and character qualities. Foundational literacies related to - “How students apply core skills to everyday tasks” and include literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial and cultural literacy (p. 3). Competencies related to - “How students approach complex challenges,” include critical thinking/problem solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration (p. 3). Character qualities related to - “How students approach their changing environment,” and include curiosity, initiative, persistence/grit, adaptability, leadership, and social and cultural awareness (p. 3).

While there is an absence of school programmes in Trinidad and Tobago which specifically teach 21st century skills, these may be learnt during the normal delivery of the school’s curriculum via different academic disciplines. The guidance and counselling programme is another avenue through which critical thinking, problem solving, communication and interpersonal skills are taught. These skills are associated with increased employability. However, it has been found that there is large gap between the teaching of these skills at educational institutions and the requirements for the workplace (Mahmud & Wong, 2022).

Schools in Trinidad and Tobago focus mainly on academic subjects and a wide range of technical and vocational skills are not taught. Efforts to infuse Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the curriculum, a valuable tool for the 21st century, have not yielded the desired results. The now discontinued eCAL programme instituted from 2010-2015, where students were given laptops on entry into secondary schools, did not meet the objectives of integrating the laptops in the classroom (Briggs & Blair, 2016). There does not appear to be an alignment between the needs of the job market and the curriculum offered in schools in Trinidad and Tobago, resulting in an oversaturation of people qualified in certain areas and insufficient jobs to absorb them. This has been noted especially with the advent of the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses Programme, a free tertiary education programme instituted in 2006. One outcome of this programme is that many graduates are unable to find employment and they are forced to accept lower-level jobs to gain job security (Streete, 2016).

In Trinidad and Tobago, there seems to be emphasis on learning by rote, regurgitating facts to pass examinations and acquiring academic qualifications. However, changing societal demands require an education system which develops problem-solving skills, and this can be done by integrating them into the curriculum (Rahman, 2019), since 21st century skills are not specifically taught. There is also the need for teachers to improve their 21st century skills to manage their learning environments. It would also be beneficial if leadership at all levels of the education system is developed to support the learning of these skills (Petrie et al., 2021).

More emphasis on the development of 21st century skills came to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic which had major social and economic implications. New methods of teaching and doing business, especially online, resulted in people having to learn new skills rapidly. Proficiency in 21st century skills is essential since these skills can have a significant economic impact, especially as it relates to innovation, and to ensure that people are able to meet the demands of the 21st century (Petrie et al., 2021). In the Caribbean and Latin America, “To compete, innovate, and prosper, the region needs today: (i) to modernize its industries, (ii) to upgrade the tasks that people perform and (iii) to “robot-proof” people by training them with the skills they need to perform those tasks” (Petrie et al., 2021). This retraining can occur by teaching people 21st century skills.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework refers to the HDP as an overarching theoretical frame. Human development is fleshed out through concepts and theories related to social justice, positive youth development and the 5Cs of PYD. These ideas, concepts and theories were used to explore, describe, and evaluate the present guidance and counselling programme.

Social justice is both a *goal* and a *process*. The *goal* of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. The *process* for attaining the goal of social justice should be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change. (Bell, 2016, p. 3)

Bell (2016) also articulates the vision of social justice:

Our *vision* for social justice is a world in which the distribution of resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized and treated with respect. (p. 3)

“Social justice education aims to help participants develop awareness, knowledge, and processes to examine issues of justice/injustice in their personal lives, communities, institutions and broader society” (Bell, 2016, p. 4).

PYD covers an area of research and practice where different programmes, strategies, concepts, and ideologies are used by people interested in helping youth to reach their full potential (Benson et al., 2006). One of the frameworks used to conceptualize PYD is the 5 Cs of PYD.

In this study, the guidance and counselling programme was viewed as a mechanism for improving social justice and social justice in education. I was interested in exploring how the programme assisted disadvantaged students, who are in the majority in the NEED, and if it promoted a concern for societal inequities.

Discussion

The guidance and counselling programme in Trinidad and Tobago can be viewed as a curricular resource schools have at their disposal to promote human and youth development. Although the programme does not explicitly state this, in my opinion by helping students to develop 21st century skills and by assisting them with their personal/social, career and academic problems, it has the potential to play a role in promoting human development. It may be important to bear in mind that the academic and intellectual purposes of schooling also have human development at their core (Chowdhury, 2019), but to a large extent in formal schooling credentialing and examinations override such considerations (Torrance, 2017). While programmes have been developed with the intention of youth empowerment many Caribbean governments are guilty of tokenism in some cases by the way in which youth participants are selected (Charles & Jameson-Charles, 2014). In some instances, youth representatives appear to be selected because of their political leanings and

nepotism. Some youth representatives have been expected to support plans and policies where they did not make any input (Charles & Jameson-Charles, 2014). The 5Cs of PYD were used as part of the conceptual framework to explore how the programme is assisting with youth development.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the youth are facing many challenges and despite efforts by the Ministries of Education and Youth Development and National Service, our post-colonial education system does not appear to be providing them with the 21st century skills needed to thrive in the global environment. The level of social justice in the NEED has been hindered by our historically constituted Eurocentric model of development which has continued in the post-independence era to reinforce rural neglect and a largely elitist education focusing mainly on academic achievement.

It is therefore reasonable to expect that the present education system should be aligned to the wider goals of youth development and that of developing characteristics of *the ideal Caribbean citizen*, such as, persons who respect life, are emotionally secure and have an appreciation for religious and ethnic diversity and has multiple literacies (CARICOM Secretariat, 2014). The guidance and counselling programme can assist in developing these characteristics as well as serving to improve society by providing students with knowledge and skills to oppose injustice and discriminatory practices. Therefore, I used the theory of social justice as part of my conceptual framework.

SECTION III

The Importance of Guidance and Counselling Programmes in Schools

This section explores the benefits of guidance and counselling programmes, challenges encountered in implementing them and how such programmes can assist students with their personal/social, career and academic problems. It also discusses the role of the guidance officer/counsellor, and the salience of the different types of secondary schools which exist in Trinidad and Tobago, a characteristic of our post-colonial education system. Each type has different characteristics, and this may result in adaptations being made when the programme is delivered.

This study was conducted based on my perception of the advantages of having guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools. A

comprehensive guidance and counselling programme addresses students' developmental needs, provides individual academic and career planning, coordinates and provides responses for students during crises and "coordinates community organizations and service providers for education, mental health, justice, newcomers and health care" (Bragg & Schellenberg, 2011, p. 4). Comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes are developed to include not only students but also school personnel, parents, and community organizations. It involves teamwork and is conveyed in a methodical fashion to all students (Bragg & Schellenberg, 2011).

The first American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model was published in 2003 (ASCA, 2019). The national standards found in the ASCA model (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) are identical to those found in Trinidad and Tobago's guidance and counselling programme. These standards were developed based on research carried out in the United States in 1995, and on discussions with segments of the school counselling community. The information gained was used to determine the purpose and content of the standards. The benefits ascribed to the different stakeholders, and the focus on the personal/social, career and academic domains and competencies for each domain, are found verbatim in Trinidad and Tobago's programme. Since this programme is so heavily based on the ASCA National Model, this calls into question the relevance of the programme since the needs of students in a developing country such as Trinidad and Tobago might be different from those in the United States. It would be beneficial to the students of Trinidad and Tobago if the national standards and objectives are updated to consider emerging issues, such as, rapid changes in technology over the past decade, and its impact on students.

Guidance and counselling has many benefits for all stakeholders. For students, these include preparing them for the 21st century, facilitating their personal/social, career and academic development, assisting them in managing the transition from school to work and in helping them to become more resilient. Parents are provided with support, information about the education system and allows for more parent-child interaction. Teachers benefit since it addresses the educational, career and personal development of the students. Guidance officers are provided with a plan to implement the curriculum,

helping them with job efficiency, and assisting them in ensuring accountability. School administrators also benefit since the guidance programme is aligned to the school's mission (SSSD, 2008).

The Ministry of Education also benefits as it can provide information about the progress of students in attaining targeted competencies. The guidance and counselling programme may also work to the advantage of business and industry by helping develop students who are the potential workforce and allows for establishing some degree of collaboration between the school and the business community. Bridges could also be built between the community and the school as it encourages communication across the different stakeholders (SSSD, 2008).

Despite the programme's benefits, I have observed challenges in its implementation and some of its shortcomings. These issues, however, are not unique to Trinidad and Tobago, for instance, problems identified in Barbados include guidance counsellors not having a clearly defined role (Griffin, 2019; Maynard, 2014), limited communication between Ministry of Education officials and counsellors, and an increased need for counsellor representation at the district, state, and national levels (Griffin, 2019). Other challenges in Barbados include a lack of resources, and limited access to Wifi and printing services, and counsellors not having a private space to counsel students (Griffin, 2019). Challenges such as students not using the guidance and counselling services and a lack of trained counsellors and facilities were also identified in Ethiopia (Arfasa & Weldmeskel, 2020).

An ideal student-counsellor ratio has not been determined in Barbados (Griffin, 2019), however, this is important, for example, in Indiana where a school counsellor ratio of 1:250 students had a significant correlation with lower student absenteeism and higher SAT scores (Parzych et al., 2019). In most secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, there is a lower ratio of guidance officers to students. In Barbados, guidance counsellors felt that their caseloads were too high, and counsellors advocated for a team approach including school psychologists, nurses, and social workers, as well as a holistic approach when working with students (Griffin, 2019). While Trinidad and Tobago does not have school psychologists and nurses, social workers are attached to schools, and students can be referred to the Student Support

Services Division for attention by psychologists.

Personal/ Social Development

As a teacher for the past 19 years, I have observed that students seem to have an increased number of personal/social issues, and I have felt limited in my ability to help due to inadequate training. Some of these issues are common globally and include stress due to academics, which can further result in poor academic achievement, a negative impact on the learning capacity of students, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances and substance abuse (Pascoe et al., 2019). Other common problems include bullying (Swank et al., 2018), depression and anxiety due to divorce (Salahain et al., 2021), suicide (Cavelti & Kaess, 2021) and poverty (Doi et al., 2019). In St. Kitts and Nevis, in a study of 383 students, 40% indicated that they had engaged in at least one form of deliberate self-harm, which was linked to a higher number of depressive symptoms (Jacobs, 2013). Only a low number of students indicated that they would be willing to confide in a guidance counsellor and this underscores the need for “greater marketing and integration of the services guidance counsellors offer in schools” (Jacobs, 2013, p. 41). Guidance officers also have to deal with increased social concerns of students during the COVID-19 pandemic such as a lack of socialization, stress, anxiety, and lack of motivation in attending classes (Al-Maskari et al., 2022).

In Trinidad and Tobago, it was observed that sometimes students who transfer to new schools exhibit negative changes in behaviour, they frequently have academic difficulties, and experience problems such as bullying, which can make the transition period very stressful (Antoine & Ali, 2016). A support system is needed for students, not only for new students, but also for those with disabilities, however, physiotherapists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists are largely absent from schools. The “existing environmental accommodations, law, and policy do not fully support the inclusion of children with disabilities in Trinidad” (Parey, 2020, pp. 571-572), thereby raising the question of whether there is indeed equity in the system.

While measuring the academic achievement of students has usually been used to determine the effectiveness of the education system, the focus is shifting towards students’ well-being in the academic context. The 2015 edition of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA),

evaluated socio-emotional variables related to student well-being, and advocated the need for social-emotional education in schools (Govorova et al., 2020). In Barbados, the education system, is focused on academics and little attention is given to students' social-emotional concerns (Maynard, 2014). I have also observed this in Trinidad and Tobago, and these similarities may exist because both islands have post-colonial education systems.

The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme has an influence on school counselling in Barbados and other Caribbean nations (Griffin & Bryan, 2021). HFLE, which is also taught in Trinidad and Tobago, “is a life-skill based school health program...designed to enable young persons to develop the essential life skills that will help them practice healthy lifestyles, live responsibly and excel academically” (Onuoha et al., 2017, p. 49027). Trinidad and Tobago's HFLE curriculum has four themes; “self and interpersonal relationships, sexuality and sexual health, eating and fitness and managing the environment” (Onuoha et al., 2017, p. 49028).

While school counselors in Barbados deliver the HFLE curriculum, this is not so in Trinidad and Tobago where this is done by teachers. HFLE can complement the delivery of the personal/social guidance and counselling component, since it “promotes psychosocial competence in children and youth, by teaching them life skills which are abilities for adaptive positive behaviour” (Onuoha et al., 2017, p. 49029). In Barbados, delivering HFLE and training teachers to deliver it was a main goal of the counsellors, however, they struggle to balance it with their other counselling duties. School counselling in Barbados “currently has a primarily academic/vocational focus” (Griffin, 2019, p. 30), and this may have some impact on meeting the personal/social needs of students. In contrast, the Trinidad and Tobago guidance and counselling programme has a more holistic approach since it aims to address the personal/social, career and academic domains.

Career Guidance

Career guidance “describes a range of school-based interventions which seek to prepare young people for their transition to their post-secondary school lives and to empower them to be successful in their lives and careers” (Dodd et al., 2022, p. 261). In secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, the guidance and counselling programme to a great extent has been the primary method of

providing students with career advice, however, no studies have been uncovered which evaluate whether the programme is achieving its goals or how it can be improved.

As a measure to improve societal conditions, a social justice approach to career guidance can be used to not only identify barriers to career guidance but also to remove them and to “offer people hope and services that are relevant to their situation” (Arthur, 2014, p. 51). This highlights the importance of “guidance practitioners” having the requisite competencies to help people overcome these obstacles both directly and indirectly in different ways (Arthur, 2014). For this to occur in the school setting, guidance officers must be trained to identify such barriers and to implement strategies to help students overcome them. Although helpful, career guidance should not be seen as the panacea for removing “structural inequalities and oppression,” but it can help people “to become aware of these structures, navigate them and exercise agency on both an individual and collective basis” (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 59). It is also important to understand the limitations of what guidance officers can do to assist in the removal of societal barriers.

If students do not receive adequate career guidance, they may choose careers that are not aligned to their interests and capabilities, which can result in them being unhappy, dissatisfied and stressed (Achim et al., 2019). To ensure that the career guidance provided is at a high standard, its quality can be improved if attention is paid to six features:

1. career learning programmes
2. the career information made available
3. the personalised support offered through career counselling
4. the provision of a well-organised and accessible career resource hub
5. the development of partnership input in career education and
6. the formation of reflective practitioners who make the attainment of high standards a habitual goal. (Sultana, 2018, p. 4)

Currently, in Trinidad and Tobago, students are expected to specialize in certain subjects in Form Three by choosing a specific number depending on their interests, academic performance, and career aspirations. It is really aimed at early selection of the subjects that students will be registered for and

examined in Form Five. This system has been in existence for many years, and it shows how little our post-colonial education system has changed. Later, students voice regret about their subject choice because of the lack of alignment with their career aspirations, and attribute this to the undue influence of their parents in making such choices, as was noted in an all-girls denominational school (Yamin-Ali, 2014b). Career guidance is especially important for youth from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds who may be less likely to have families, friends, and a network of informed persons to rely on for advice (Holt-White et al., 2022).

In Barbados, while there seems to be uncertainty about the roles of the guidance counsellors, their best-known function is assisting students with subject and career choice (Maynard, 2014). My study can provide insights into whether, and how, the programme is helping students to increase their levels of self-awareness and choose careers aligned to their interests and aspirations.

Academic Achievement

Many students in Trinidad and Tobago are underperforming academically especially when compared to students in other countries:

Analyses of primary data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 show that even though the performance of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago has improved since 2009, the number of students falling below the acceptable benchmark in reading, (42.5%) continues to be higher than other countries in Latin America. (OECD 2016a, as cited De Lisle, 2019, p. 92)

The data further indicate that, “For students below the benchmark there is a notable gender gap for males (52%) compared with females (33.2%),” and this gender gap is greater than other Latin American countries (OECD 2016a, as cited in De Lisle, 2019, p. 92). In terms of the Progress in International Reading Study (PIRLS), there has been an improvement, however “low and differential performance has remained an issue,” (OECD 2016a, as cited in De Lisle, 2019, p. 92). These statistics indicate that students need academic guidance, and while this is one domain of the guidance and counselling programme, there is no available data to show the programme’s role in

improving academic performance in Trinidad and Tobago.

In secondary schools in Nigeria, guidance and counselling had a positive impact on the academic performance of science students. Academic counselling strategies included helping parents and students with knowledge about curriculum choices, planning programmes of work and interpreting academic opportunities. However, most of the schools did not have the capacity to effectively deal with the population size, and there was an insufficient number of counsellors and inadequate infrastructure.

Recommendations made include encouraging teachers to refer students to the guidance counsellors and establishing counselling units in schools where they did not exist (Bahago et al., 2021).

In the United States, a study was conducted on the impact of a comprehensive school counselling programme based on the American School Counselor Association's Recognized (ASCA) Model Program known as RAMP, on student achievement and college readiness of high school students. The intervention used curriculum counselling, group, and individual counselling, and further targeted a group of African American students identified under the RAMP process. A mixed method approach was used and indicated that there was an improvement in academic achievement, "for all students regardless of race, ethnicity or gender" (Nava, 2018, p. v). The intervention had a positive impact on the African American targeted group in terms of academic performance and college readiness demonstrating the effectiveness of RAMP in reducing the gap in academic achievement (Nava, 2018). This example shows that guidance and counselling programmes have the potential to help in reducing ethnic inequities, and therefore can assist in improving the levels of social justice.

Roles of the School Counsellor/Guidance Officer

The terms 'guidance officer,' and 'guidance counsellor,' are used interchangeably in Trinidad and Tobago. I was informed by a member of the Guidance Unit that the guidance officers are permanently employed while the guidance counsellors are hired on contract. In Barbados they are known as school counsellors or guidance counsellors (Griffin & Bryan, 2021).

Researchers in the United States examined how the name of a profession influences the perception of competence (Zyromski et al., 2019). In this

investigation, school counsellors were given a measure of school counselling competencies and standards with half the participants completing a survey using the term ‘guidance counsellor’ and half ‘school counsellor’ (Zyromski et al., 2019). Those who completed the survey titled guidance counsellor, “were statistically significantly less likely to believe that school counselors were able to perform the 25 tasks on the survey” (Zyromski et al., 2019, p. 1). It is possible that in Trinidad and Tobago stakeholders may have different perceptions of the competence and roles of the guidance officers based on them being identified as guidance ‘officers’ or ‘counsellors.’

Guidance services in schools include *orientation* to assist students with transitioning to a new school or a new school year; *appraisal*, to collect, process, store and use information to help students and teachers; and, *information and educational services*, to assist students in making informed decisions about health, careers, and friendships (Odeleye, 2017). Other services include *counselling*, to give students a greater understanding of themselves; *planning and placement*, to provide students with appropriate programmes of work; and *follow up*, to help the client adjust to the world of work (Odeleye, 2017) although this may not be all possible in the Trinidad and Tobago context. Guidance officers are also required to *evaluate* the guidance and counselling programme, and to *refer* cases to more qualified individuals if required, such as psychiatrists (Odeleye, 2017).

In Trinidad and Tobago, guidance officers have been assigned ten functions: “(i) Consultation, (ii) Data Collection and Records, (iii) Information Dissemination, (iv) Testing and Appraisal, (v) Counselling, (vi) Curriculum Development, (vii) Orientation and Articulation, (viii) In-Service Training, (ix) Research and Evaluation and (x) Group Guidance” (SSSD, 2008, p. 4). The broad-based objectives for guidance officers include helping students to develop holistically, improving students’ self-perception, helping them to foster greater bonds between home and school, and preparing them for future employment opportunities. Informal discussions with stakeholders give me the impression that they hold different perceptions about the guidance officer’s roles.

Only one study regarding the role of guidance officers in Trinidad and Tobago was unearthed. Using the Counselor Function Inventory and the

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, St. Brice (2001) found that there were significant differences between educational stakeholders' perceptions of the ideal role of the counsellors as opposed to their actual role. Teachers and students had similar views on the role of the counsellors, while counsellors had a different perception of their roles than students and teachers. The difference between the counsellors' perception of what they are supposed to do, as opposed to what they ideally had to do, did not have much impact on how happy they were with their jobs, except for when dealing with placement and follow up services. Secondary school counsellors in Trinidad and Tobago were generally satisfied with their jobs. St Brice (2001) also discovered that the counsellors' functions in secondary schools may not be clear because their roles might have changed with time, and other members of a school's staff did not understand their role. A comparison of the present functions of 'guidance officers' in Trinidad and Tobago, as listed previously, and the functions of 'guidance counsellors' as described in the literature by St. Brice, has found them to be generally similar.

In Barbados, the major role of the guidance counsellors was delivering the HFLE curriculum and coordinating teachers, who sometimes were not trained in its delivery (Griffin & Bryan, 2021). Counselors also had other roles, such as programme planning, counselling, case management, and collaborating with other stakeholders (Griffin & Bryan, 2021). The roles and responsibilities of school counsellors in Barbados were initially defined in 1987, and have since evolved, but many counsellors and principals are unaware of them (Griffin, 2019).

Other conclusions made by St. Brice (2001) include the lack of standardization in terms of how counsellors did their jobs, and the fact that this had an impact on how they were perceived in different schools. The roles of the guidance counsellors were also not clearly defined in Barbados and many teachers saw their roles in terms of "mainly serving a crisis role rather than a proactive and preventative one," for example, disruptive students were referred to them for counselling (Maynard, 2014, para. 15). In Trinidad and Tobago, the high student to counsellor ratio was a hindrance to counselling activities and there was lack of cooperation and communication between the counsellor and other staff members. Counsellors also spent more of their time dealing with

guidance issues, as opposed to counselling issues (St. Brice, 2001).

Many school counsellors were trained in the United States of America so their counselling concepts were heavily influenced by what is done there (St. Brice, 2001). This was noted in Jamaica (Palmer et al., 2012), and Barbados, where counselling was also shaped by the “British approach to pastoral counselling” (Griffin & Bryan, 2021, para. 2). Training of guidance counsellors in the United Kingdom and Canada led to a change in the approach and philosophy of guidance and counselling in Barbados, from a vocational and disciplinarian focus to socio-emotional and behavioural support (Maynard, 2014). The use of foreign counselling techniques may not be culturally relevant to Caribbean states, and this can have a negative impact on the quality of the service, but further research is needed in this regard. There is also the need for ongoing training for counsellors in Barbados to keep them updated with “best practices and standards and culturally appropriate practices to follow with/for their students” (Griffin, 2019).

Recommendations to improve guidance and counselling include the identification of a range of services to be provided, a job description for the counsellors, identification of goals to be achieved at the end of each term and monitoring and evaluation of the programme (St. Brice, 2001). Making provisions for counsellors to have more time to counsel students, greater effort to increase student and parental awareness of the counsellors’ role and ensuring that counsellors are qualified in counselling will also lead to improvement. Increased interaction between counsellors and their community when organizing educational programmes and improving communication with other school stakeholders to ensure that the roles of the counsellors are fully understood, are other recommendations (St. Brice, 2001).

School Types in Trinidad and Tobago

While there are different school types in Trinidad and Tobago, there are no separate guidance and counselling programmes for each school type, so it stands to reason that guidance and counselling should be adapted to meet the varying student needs. De Lisle et al. (2017) identifies four school types, while Chadee (2016) denotes five. According to James (2010), there are two major school types, and each can be further subdivided. The traditional type can be subdivided into the secondary assisted and government, while the new sector

schools built after the 1970s can be subdivided into: “assisted (which would be schools built after 1970 by religious organizations which are now part funded by the government), secondary; junior secondary; senior secondary; senior comprehensive; composite and secondary comprehensive” (p. 388). In my study, research was conducted in the following school types; “government school built after 1959,” “government assisted,” “new sector” and schools built under the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP). There are no government secondary schools in the NEED which were built prior to 1950 (traditional).

“Government schools are fully funded and operated by the government, while assisted schools are run by private bodies (usually a religious board)” (Beuermann, et al., 2015, p. 5). The Trinidad and Tobago government pays the salaries of all teachers in public schools, however, the assisted schools can tap other sources of funds that the government schools cannot, such as, from the religious bodies which they represent. Assisted schools generally are smaller in size than government schools, and the student-to-faculty ratio is higher. The student-to-teacher ratio is largely similar in both school types and assisted schools have a greater likelihood to be single sex, than government schools (77% to 3%) (Beuermann et al., 2015). “The average student attending an assisted school has incoming test scores that are 1.08 standard deviations higher than those of students at government schools” (Beuermann et al., 2015, p. 7). This has led to the perception by students and parents that the assisted schools are better (Beuermann et al., 2015).

New sector schools such as the junior secondary and senior comprehensive schools were instituted by the government during the 1960s and early 1970s to vary the curriculum from academic to technical-vocational (James, 2014a). The junior secondary schools initially operated on a shift system, but by 2008 they were all de-shifted to become five-year, full day schools (Shurland, 2021). Junior secondary and senior comprehensive schools can also be grouped under the heading “Comprehensive,” and these schools were traditionally seen as vocational in nature, aiming to cater for the students who scored the lowest in the SEA (Jackson, 2010). There is a great deal of competition for places in the assisted schools, which are perceived to be more prestigious, and failure to gain a place in these institutions, “can have a

negative social, psychological, and emotional impact on students” (Cunningham, 2021, p. ix).

Students are allocated to the different types of secondary schools according to their perceived academic abilities based on the SEA results. It is widely reported in educational research that a close correlation exists between socio-economic status and academic achievement, and so it is possible that students in each school type may have different needs something that guidance officers will have to realize as they seek to implement the curriculum.

Discussion

Students across the different school types vary by some of the following characteristics, if not all: academic ability, socio-economic status, location of their residence and school (rural vs. urban), religion, and gender (coeducational vs. single sex schools). Each school type therefore has a clientele with specific needs, and it would be beneficial for guidance officers to adapt their programmes based on these needs. Despite the programme’s advantages, if the students’ needs are not identified and adaptations are not made, they might not reap the full benefits of their schooling experience and will not gain the knowledge and skills which can help improve levels of youth and human development and social justice in the country. Our education system has changed little over the years, and while career guidance is offered today, it may be unsuccessful in helping students to identify a suitable career choice, and therefore it might not be aligned to the changing needs of our economy. Trinidad and Tobago’s economy has traditionally been based on the hydrocarbon industry and it is vulnerable to changing oil and natural gas prices. It is important that the economy is diversified to mitigate these challenges and students should possess knowledge about new job opportunities and skills to capitalize on new labour markets.

The literature does not explore the implementation of the guidance and counselling programme in different school types in Trinidad and Tobago or the results of any adaptations made. Students from lower performing schools (new sector and SEMP) are more likely to be at a disadvantage, so increased attention, resources and adaptations should become a priority for these schools. It is not known whether equal attention is given to all programme domains, and it is possible that different domains are given different degrees of attention

based on the school type. This shows how important it is to identify differences in student needs.

The role of the guidance officer is prominent in the literature in terms of managing the programme and interacting with students. However, the officer's role appears to be unclear to other educational stakeholders. This can have implications since programme success is dependent to a large extent on how the guidance officer may be perceived.

SECTION IV

Educational Stakeholders' Perceptions of Guidance and Counselling Programmes

Guidance Officers Perceptions

Since guidance officers understand the programme's scope, and they work closely with the students, they will have a greater understanding about whether the programme's objectives are being achieved than other stakeholders. In Turkey, school counsellors felt that counselling services improved the students' mental state, helped them to be more positive when engaging in new learning activities, and assisted in their decision-making with respect to tertiary education. School counsellors, however, indicated that the government did not provide the necessary infrastructure to allow students to receive counselling services (Hanimoglu, 2020).

Another Turkish study which examined "school counsellors' awareness of their advocacy responsibilities in relation to distributive, procedural, and interactional justice" (Tarhan, 2022, p. 33), discovered that some counsellors felt their schools were fair and the teachers' and principals' "democratic and communicative attitudes contributed to school justice" (p. 46). Others felt that the rules were applied inconsistently, there was poor communication, as well as "discriminatory practices" (Tarhan, 2022, p. 46). It was also found that, "students were exposed to similar unfair practices in their schools, such as unfair grading and distribution of school/educational materials (distributive justice), dress code and school rules (procedural justice), and lack of communication and favoritism (interactional justice)" (Tarhan, 2018, as cited in Tarhan, 2022, p. 47).

Counsellors advocated for students using a range of strategies which were determined by "the school atmosphere, teachers' communicative attitudes, and

the age and experience of the school counselor” (Tarhan, 2022, p. 47). The counsellors indicated that their efforts were more readily received in schools with democratic climates rather than strict ones and they also felt that students should stand up for their rights when treated unfairly. Assisting economically disadvantaged students, directing students to “appropriate educational opportunities” (p. 48), having parent conferences to prevent students dropping out and promoting academic performance were activities which counsellors felt showed their advocacy (Tarhan, 2022). In Turkey, it was also discovered that in handling ethical issues counsellors respected the students’ privacy and adhered to legal guidelines and their areas of professional competence (Sensoy & Ikiz, 2022).

Challenges encountered by school counsellors in Israel include burnout because of stress caused by their non-counselling roles rather than stress caused by their counselling activities (Maor & Hemi, 2021). The caseload and perceived organizational support were predictive of school counsellor burnout in the United States (Bardhoshi & Um, 2021). Other studies found that school counsellors’ stress and burnout were related to their age and experience, and perceived stress and burnout had a strongly negative correlation with job satisfaction (Mullen et al., 2018). In Barbados, counsellors also felt overwhelmed due to the shortage of counsellors or lack of support staff and the multitude of issues they had to manage (Griffin & Bryan, 2021). Guidance counsellors in Jamaica are also stressed because of having to address many complex issues such as sexual abuse, trauma due to parents being murdered, and exposure to violence, issues that they are not trained to deal with (Wilson-Harris, 2018). However, due to the shortage of trained specialists they sometimes attempt to counsel for such critical issues. Dr. Grace Kelly, a former president of the Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education, felt that the guidance counsellors should stick to their clearly defined roles and children should not be treated as ‘experiments’ (Wilson-Harris, 2018).

In Barbados, students may be hesitant to visit counsellors because of the stigma associated with counselling, and the prevailing cultural mindset that personal and family issues should not be shared outside the household (Griffin, 2019; Griffin & Bryan, 2021). This has also been noted in Jamaica (Palmer et al., 2012), and I too have observed this in Trinidad and Tobago. While this

stigma has decreased within recent times, it is still present, and it can affect the counsellor's ability to assist students (Griffin, 2019). School counsellors are also confronted with how they handle ethical issues involving the limits of confidentiality, uncertainty about their roles, uncooperative behaviour amongst stakeholders, and possible cases of childhood sexual abuse (Sensoy & Ikiz, 2022). Counsellors in Barbados were "concerned about the lack of professional and formal ethical guidelines to guide their practice. They were also concerned about lack of agency follow-up in response to referrals" (Griffin & Bryan, 2021, para. 27).

Counsellors desired ongoing training to ensure that current best practices were followed as well as the need for their roles and responsibilities to be differentiated from that of teachers (Griffin & Bryan, 2021). This is important since ongoing training can improve the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes in schools (Bolu-Steve et al., 2021). The Barbadian education system, like that of Trinidad and Tobago, is perceived as being stratified with the older secondary schools being preferred to the newer ones which are seen in a more negative light. The newer schools have more students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, so counsellors spend more time helping the students source basic resources such as food and uniforms. Counsellors also felt that religion, an important part of Barbadian culture, played a role in their own perspectives and practices, because it influenced them to adopt a more altruistic role (Griffin & Bryan, 2021).

The counsellors lamented the lack of parental support but felt that teachers were very supportive, however, lines were occasionally crossed when teachers tried to address issues that should be referred to the counsellors (Griffin & Bryan, 2021). Counsellors also indicated that teachers had unrealistic expectations of them because they did not fully understand the counsellor role. The relationship with school administrators was important to the counsellors, and unlike in Trinidad and Tobago, the counsellors' responsibilities in Barbados were identified by the principals. Counsellors shared that they were sometimes left out of decision making with reference to 'difficult' students and were therefore unable to implement suitable interventions. All the counsellors collaborated with state agencies and nongovernmental organizations, as well as with other counsellors. Unlike

Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados has an association of guidance officers the Barbados Association of Guidance Counsellors, (Griffin & Bryan, 2021).

Teachers' Perceptions

Since teachers have daily encounters with students, they might be the first to observe the students' problems, as well as any changes that have resulted from their exposure to the guidance and counselling programme. The only study found in Trinidad and Tobago exploring the perceptions of stakeholders of the guidance and counselling programme was a qualitative study by Collins (2012) in secondary schools in the Victoria Educational District. It is possible that the results of this study may be similar to other districts in Trinidad and Tobago such as the NEED where my investigation was undertaken. There are several secondary schools in the Victoria District which are located in rural areas just like that of the NEED.

"The effect of negative social problems of the students" was the first of five themes which emerged from interviews with three teachers (Collins, 2012, p. 43). The teachers felt that they were unable to help students deal with their social problems and the students did not appreciate the help which they received. The second theme was, "Communication, collaboration and feedback of the guidance and counselling programme" (p. 43), where the desire for collaboration between teachers and guidance officers was emphasized. One teacher also felt that the staff should be sensitized about the attributes of the guidance and counselling programme and the guidance officers' roles.

The benefits of the guidance and counselling programme was the third theme, and teachers expressed the view that the programme helped students deal with their immediate needs and when they had problems in school and at home. A teacher felt the programme could help the students solve problems with the help of an adult in an objective manner. The fourth theme was, "Span of control of the guidance counsellor" (p. 43). Three teachers indicated that the ratio of students to guidance officers was too high, especially since the guidance officer had to provide services to other schools in the district. They felt that the guidance officers were overworked and therefore they were unable to address all the students' needs (Collins, 2012). This would consequently have implications about the programme's success in meeting the students' needs.

The final theme was, “Teacher training and development,” and it was discovered that the teachers lacked knowledge about the programme, and they did not possess the expertise to help students deal with school issues. They expressed the view that those in charge of the guidance and counselling programme should institute a teacher training component to provide them with the requisite skills to assist the students.

Recommendations to improve the guidance and counselling programme included modifying it to meet all the students’ needs (Collins, 2012). Staff development and training to deal with student issues is another recommendation that I think will be beneficial, because as a teacher I can attest that such training sessions are held infrequently. While there seems to be a fair amount of collaboration between the guidance officer and other stakeholders where I teach, this may not be the same in all districts. Increased communication and collaboration were the other recommendations made. Most secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago have only one guidance officer which is inadequate for the large number of students that they are expected to help, so it is understandable that Collins (2012) recommends increased support staff for the guidance officer.

A mixed methods study in Ireland was undertaken to examine the “whole school approach” to guidance (Hearne et al., 2018). This approach involves all school stakeholders being responsible for directly delivering the guidance curriculum under the leadership of the school’s guidance counsellor (Hearne & Neary, 2020), and it is meant to be proactive and preventative with the aim of holistic student development (O’ Toole et al., 2022). The stakeholders in the Irish study were the school management, guidance counsellor, teaching and support staff, current and past students, and parents of current students. It was discovered that most teachers and support staff felt that there was a whole school approach at the school, which entailed the entire school community being involved in guidance and counselling (Hearne et al., 2018). The staff was also able to identify guidance and counselling strategies which were used with the students. However, while a guidance plan formulated with input from all stakeholders was an important element of this approach, many staff members were unaware of its existence. This indicates that while there are some aspects of a whole school approach at the school there is room

for greater collaboration. Trinidad and Tobago does not have all stakeholders involved in guidance and counselling and although staff may assist the guidance officers, the annual plans produced by the guidance officers are not created with direct input from them.

In a mixed methods study in the United States, teachers were familiar with the functions of the school counselling programme and believed that its purpose was to assist students with their academic, personal/social, and post-secondary concerns (Kleinman, 2018). The teachers believed that the school counsellors helped students with goal setting and their post-secondary aspirations, however, some students felt that the guidance officers did not know who they were, indicating the need for more frequent meetings. Teachers also shared that the school counsellors gave the impression that all students could achieve, however, they varied in their perceptions that all the students were comfortable meeting the counsellors. They felt the counsellors had different strengths which could be viewed differently by the students (Kleinman, 2018).

Parents' Perceptions

Few studies have been conducted with respect to parents' perceptions and expectations of guidance and counselling programmes from a qualitative approach. While parental involvement is important for the success of guidance and counselling programmes, school counsellors sometimes become frustrated because of their lack of support (Rutter et al., 2018). Counsellors observed that parental support seemed to dwindle as the child progressed from elementary to secondary schools and felt that instituting parent-student projects could improve parental involvement. It was sometimes a challenge for counsellors to contact parents since their contact information was not updated and parental meetings were found to be the least effective method of contacting them. Parents were also observed to feel inadequate or embarrassed because of their lack of knowledge about issues such as tertiary education (Rutter et al., 2018).

Parents generally were satisfied with the counselling which their children received, in the study by Kleinman (2018). They felt the school counsellor was supportive and provided students with the tools and resources to address their academic and personal/social concerns and also assisted them with their post-secondary career goals. A parent indicated that the school

counsellor should be more proactive in reaching out to the junior students since she felt that seniors received more attention. It is possible that since student-counsellor discussions were confidential and students may not have shared that they visited the counsellors, parents may be unaware that counsellors were helping students with their personal issues. While most parents believed that the counsellors were very responsive, one parent felt their caseloads were too high to adequately address all the students' needs. Parents also shared that the counsellors helped the students believe they could succeed, and they acted as advocates for them. Counsellors were perceived to meet the needs of students and parents by responding to emails, addressing their concerns, and ensuring that students were held accountable in class (Kleinman, 2018).

In Namibia, parents knew about the counselling services in schools, but their views and understanding the activities varied (Hako & Bojuwoye, 2019). They felt that providing students with career information at an early age would give them greater opportunities for career planning. Parents were able to recall career guidance activities such as career fairs and field trips. With respect to education services, parents believed teacher-counsellors should provide information to the students on a range of topics, and they were aware that information was disseminated at school assemblies, workshops, and club meetings. Some of these sessions were conducted by "non-government organizations but coordinated by teacher-counsellors or Life skills teachers" (Hako & Bojuwoye, 2019, p. 13). The parents believed that the most important function of school counselling was academic development. Study skills, examination techniques for overcoming test anxiety and time management are strategies which they indicated were used in the programme. Parents were also cognizant that the teacher-counsellors consulted other local service providers such as the Red Cross, Regional Constituency Councillors, and police officers. They also knew of referral services to social workers which assisted them in getting social grants and they were appreciative of this (Hako & Bojuwoye, 2019).

Students' Perceptions

Identifying how the students feel about the guidance and counselling programme can provide information about the programme's strengths, weaknesses, and whether it is meeting their needs, and this information can be

used for programme improvement.

Three major themes emerged from interviews of two focus groups comprising students from Forms Five and Six by Collins (2012). “The value of the guidance and counselling programme to the students” (p. 53), was the first theme. Form Six students felt the programme helped them to communicate freely, and the personal/social, career and academic aspects assisted them in learning. The Form Five students indicated that more information about the programme needed to be disseminated and that teachers were not knowledgeable about it. The students said that they trusted the guidance officer but not the teachers. This shows the importance of having guidance officers, because if students had serious problems, they may be uncomfortable speaking to teachers, and they would not be helped.

“The visibility of the guidance officer and communication of student’s concerns” (p. 53), was the second theme, and both Form Five and Six students expressed the desire to see the guidance officer at assembly. The students indicated that not all their peers were aware of the identity of the officer, and they felt that students might be more willing to approach the officer if she had a more visible presence on the school’s compound.

The third theme, “Educating and training of teachers with regards to students’ concerns” (p. 53) suggests that students have negative perceptions of teachers. The Form Six students felt that some teachers were verbally abusive and unwilling to listen to them, and those teachers needed guidance training to help them deal with students. The Form Five students said that the teachers lacked knowledge about how to help them with their social problems, and the teachers did not spend enough time bonding with them.

Some of the strategies which students felt could help with respect to guidance and counselling include increased marketing of the programme at the school and using strategies to motivate students such as by having previous beneficiaries of guidance and counselling returning to speak to current students. The students also indicated that having weekly meetings with the guidance officer could be beneficial (Collins, 2012).

Collins (2012) did not utilise a theoretical framework in her study and used focus groups to gather data from the students, however, this can raise ethical issues such as the anonymity of the students and the confidentiality of

the data collected. It is possible that during interviews students may divulge sensitive information in front of their peers and this can potentially have a negative impact on them. In my research, to mitigate the anonymity and confidentiality risk, the students were interviewed separately, and efforts were made not to ask any overly intrusive questions.

In Kenya, focus group interviews with 130 students revealed that they had a positive perception of guidance and counselling services, they frequently visited the counsellors when they desired assistance, they were sensitised about the services by teacher and peer counsellors and exposure to the programme resulted in them being inclined to solve their problems. Issues which emerged include the absence of teacher counsellors at some schools and inadequate infrastructure to deliver guidance and counselling services (Kiptala & Kipruto, 2021).

The counsellor's role in the guidance and counselling programme sometimes has an impact on students' perceptions of the programme. It is possible that in Trinidad and Tobago the students may experience similar issues to those in other countries. A phenomenological approach in Nigeria using thematic analysis with high school students found barriers to accessing counselling such as negative beliefs about it, doubt about what to expect from sessions, fear about the counselling process and the belief that counselling could not assist with emotional issues (Bella-Awusah et al., 2022). Other hindrances were the poor interpersonal skills, and the judgemental attitude of the counsellor, fear of a lack of confidentiality and being stigmatized by their friends. Several students also indicated that they preferred to deal with their own issues or preferred finding assistance from friends or family (Bella-Awusah et al., 2022).

Discussion

The guidance officer's role seemed to be at the forefront of educational stakeholders' perceptions of guidance and counselling programmes. The students identified the relationship with the officer, the officers' characteristics, and level of competence as being very important. There was sometimes a stigma attached to the programme because of fears of a lack of confidentiality and for the cultural reason of not sharing personal issues outside the household, especially in developing countries. While a whole-school approach to guidance

and counselling was instituted in other countries, this was not the case in Trinidad and Tobago where there was a lack of collaboration between stakeholders. Stakeholders had differing views on which domains the programme should be placing emphasis on, and this has implications since it is supposed to be holistic. The guidance counsellors served as advocates for the students, emphasizing their roles in ensuring that there is a social justice approach to education, which can lead to societal improvement if students use what was learnt on leaving school. Soliciting the educational stakeholders' views of the programme will allow for insights to be made about how the programme is achieving its objectives, and it can also allow the stakeholders to share their feelings about the programme's priorities, specifically in the NEED. These views can then be explored to determine how the programme is supporting human and youth development and social justice and to provide recommendations for programme improvement.

Summary

This literature review discussed educational stakeholders' perceptions of guidance and counselling programmes and its role in supporting human and youth development in different secondary school types in the NEED. It also explored how such programmes can help improve social justice. The CIPP model, which was used as the methodological framework to qualitatively evaluate the guidance and counselling programme, was also discussed. Different aspects of guidance and counselling were examined in this chapter, such as its importance, the challenges encountered during implementation and the benefits of the programme as it relates to each of its three major domains (personal/social, career and academics). This literature review unearthed the importance of the guidance officer in implementing the programme and discovered that within the last 20 years more efforts have been made to introduce and assess guidance and counselling programmes in schools, especially in developing countries. The literature also revealed that there is a gap in terms of the research done with reference to guidance and counselling programmes in the post-colonial education system in both Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of my overarching research question, the research design and how I used the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model in collecting data for this multi-site qualitative case study. The methods of data collection (semi-structured interviews, observations, document analysis, a reflexive journal, and emails), as well as the instruments developed, are examined. I have identified the research participants, the criteria used to select them, the demographics of the different school types under investigation and my sampling procedure. The pilot study is discussed, as well as the procedures used in data analysis, relevant ethical considerations, and trustworthiness strategies.

Research Questions

Over-arching question

What are the perceptions of educational stakeholders (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students) in the North Eastern Education District (NEED) of Trinidad and Tobago, regarding the ways in which the National Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programme is addressing the needs of students in secondary schools?

This is an evaluation question based on stakeholders' perceptions.

The research sub questions have been previously stated in chapter one (pp. 21-22).

Research Design

While there are different ways to define the term “research design,” these definitions largely have the same underlying tenets.

Research design in the social sciences is a way of organising a research project or programme from its inception in order to maximize the likelihood of generating evidence that provides a convincing answer to the research questions for a given level of resource. (Gorard, 2013, p. 8)

In this study of the guidance and counselling programme, I used a qualitative approach to obtain the perceptions and experiences of educational stakeholders as to how the programme seemed to be meeting the students'

needs in different school types. Qualitative research allows researchers to examine how individuals gain understanding and ascribe value to various issues (Creswell, 2013). I collected data by using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, classroom observations, a reflexive journal, and emails.

In evaluating the guidance and counselling programme I used the CIPP evaluation model (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). This model allowed me to not only focus on the programme itself, but also on larger overarching issues such as human and youth development and social justice, which I felt were foundational to such a programme. The CIPP model was used qualitatively in this study.

While there are different types of evaluations, I decided to use a qualitative approach. Qualitative evaluations:

involve a constant process of reflection, introspection, and decision making. It has a naturalistic character, as it allows studying activities and events as they occur in reality. It is open and sensible to depict processes, but mostly events, concepts, needs, meanings, expectations, feelings, challenges, and problems experienced daily by the stakeholders involved. (Tyabas, Leon and Espino, 2014, para. 16)

A quantitative evaluation could have been used for this study, however, that approach would not have given me the detailed perspectives from stakeholders in their natural settings. I wanted to get descriptions of their experiences which would show how the programme is being implemented in different school types, especially regarding the students' needs, and this allowed for some measure of comparison. Qualitative evaluations differ from quantitative ones by using inductive and holistic approaches and by helping the reader to understand the lived experiences of the stakeholders. In qualitative evaluations the evaluator is the primary research instrument, and this allows for a naturalistic approach to evaluation (McDavid et al., 2018). A qualitative evaluation also allows for flexibility in the research design (Patton, 1990).

Utilisation of the CIPP Model

Development of the CIPP model began in 1965 in response to public schools in the United States having to evaluate federally funded projects, an initiative of President Lyndon Johnson to combat poverty (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Evaluation methods such as experimental design, objectives

based, and standardized testing approaches were found to be deficient in some ways and Stufflebeam decided to create a more flexible method (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). When the CIPP model was first used it was discovered that it “has to be applied flexibly” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 13). The CIPP model uses both formative and summative evaluations and its formative function is aligned to the model’s underlying tenet of “improvement orientation” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 13). This study is summative in nature since interim reports were not generated, but my intention is still directed at programme improvement. Interim reports were not generated because there was insufficient time for the Students’ Support Services Division to use my recommendations to improve one phase of the evaluation before I went on to another. Making major programme adaptations is a complex bureaucratic process involving different political entities and programme managers, so therefore it was more feasible to produce a summative report which contains an evaluation of each aspect of the CIPP model. The CIPP model was chosen in preference to other evaluation models because its purpose is for accountability and improvement as was previously discussed (Chapter 2, p. 25).

The CIPP model allows both qualitative and quantitative approaches to be used in conjunction (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). However, this study was based primarily on the participants’ perceptions and qualitative data. These perceptions were gained via semi-structured interviews and the data were triangulated with observations, my reflexive journal, document analysis, and data from emails. Semi-structured interviews were conducted since, “Interviews can provide valuable information about people’s ideas, experiences, opinions, attitudes, values and thoughts” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 203). Interviews can help to determine how people feel the programme should be working, and whether the outcomes are meaningful (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017), and, as a researcher and a teacher I was also interested in these issues.

A review of the literature uncovered several studies where the participants’ perceptions were used to evaluate programmes qualitatively using the CIPP model and this has strengthened my justification for adopting this approach. For example, to gain the perceptions and experiences of participants

of an Integrated English Learning programme at a Language Center (Agustina & Mukhtaruddin, 2019), and to evaluate educational quality at schools in Pakistan using interviews, observations, and document analysis (Aziz et al., 2018). Online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups were the methods of data collection employed utilising the CIPP model, to qualitatively evaluate teachers' perceptions of the influence and impact of an intervention in a study by Justice (2020).

I wanted to find out about different aspects of the guidance and counselling programme, so I took into consideration the four questions which the CIPP model used in framing evaluations, as a basis for my data collection. These questions are “What needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed?” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 21). Since I collected and analysed data on different aspects of the CIPP model, this can result in a measure of accountability because I am investigating if the programme is being implemented as it should, and its relative level of success. Recommendations which emanate from my data analysis can potentially help to improve the programme since the CIPP model was developed as an evaluation model for improvement and accountability (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). “The model’s main theme is that *evaluation’s most important purpose is not to prove, but to improve*” (Stufflebeam, 2007, p. 2).

After collecting and analysing data with respect to each aspect of the CIPP model (context, input, process, and product), evaluators may hold workshops to report and discuss their findings with stakeholders (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). On completion of this exercise stakeholders can choose to use the recommendations made. This, however, was not possible with my study. As part of the matriculation requirements of a PhD thesis, I could not mount the full-scale iterative evaluation that a company may perform for stakeholders, and, as a result, stakeholders were not asked to participate in workshops. Conducting workshops to discuss findings with stakeholders were also not done in theses by Scollins (2016), Tingley (2017) and Gillam (2019). My emphasis in data collection was to engage stakeholders in interviews, after receiving the requisite permissions, but even so, not all the aspects outlined in Table 5, were relevant or accessible to me. Emanating from the evaluation, recommendations for improving the programme were made for each aspect of

the CIPP model (as outlined above), and on completion of this thesis a copy will be provided to the Ministry of Education so stakeholders could decide if to use the recommendations made.

Table 5

The Objectives of the Four Aspects of The CIPP Model

Context	To define the relevant context, identify the targeted beneficiaries, and assess their needs, identify assets and opportunities for addressing the needs, diagnose problems underlying the needs, and judge whether program goals and priorities are sufficiently and appropriately responsive to the assessment needs.
Input	To identify and assess system capabilities, alternative program strategies, and (as appropriate) alternative external contractors; assess the chosen strategy's procedural design, budget, schedule, staffing and stakeholder involvement plans; and help assure that the selected inputs are responsive to targeted program goals and beneficiary needs.
Process	To identify or predict defects in the procedural design or its implementation, provide information for preprogrammed implementation decisions, affirm activities that are working well and record and judge procedural events and activities.
Product	To identify intended and unintended outcomes; relate them to goals and assessed needs and to context, input, and process information; and to judge accomplishments in such terms as quality, worth, probity, equity, cost, safety, and significance.

Note. Adapted from *The CIPP evaluation model: How to evaluate for improvement and accountability* (p. 44), by D. L. Stufflebeam and G. Zhang, 2017, Guilford Publications. Copyright 2017, by Daniel Leroy Stufflebeam and Guili Zhang.

Context evaluations The CIPP model has a focus on evaluations informing decisions, and Stufflebeam felt that “goal setting was a critically important area of decision making and should be guided by what he termed *context evaluations*” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 13). Context evaluations as noted in Table 5, assess needs, problems, assets, and opportunities. They have sometimes wrongly been referred to as only “needs assessments,” however, concerns about problems, assets and opportunities also should be taken into consideration when conducting such evaluations (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Context evaluations can be done before, during or on completion of a programme and in this case, it was conducted during programme

implementation. For example, information about the guidance and counselling programme was collected from different sources (Table 8) to determine its background, the parameters to be investigated and its setting. I also identified the programme's beneficiaries, their needs and the problems which occurred in trying to meet these needs (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017) by interviewing the different stakeholders and by reviewing the guidance and counselling programme. Information with respect to assets and opportunities to help meet the beneficiaries' needs was also gained (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017) from interviews with the educational stakeholders, and document analysis of the guidance and counselling programme. The context evaluation then served as a "basis for setting improvement-oriented goals" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 43).

There are different types of **input evaluations** and I decided to do a non-comparative input evaluation. "An input evaluation may be comparative as in identifying and assessing optional ways to achieve goals or non-comparative assessment as in assessing a single plan and its components" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 23). "Input evaluations assist program planning by identifying and assessing alternative program strategies, the management plan and budget, possible program performance measures and alternative service providers" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 23). In this input evaluation, interviews with the educational stakeholders and information from the guidance and counselling programme, and the lesson and workplans of the guidance officers, assisted me in identifying the plans and strategies which the guidance officers use. An important underlying tenet of input evaluations is that it helps "decision-makers" make plans on how to meet the needs of those that the programme is geared towards (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The **process evaluation** was conducted by periodically monitoring and documenting how the programme was implemented in each school. This was done by interviewing stakeholders and making observations of classroom sessions, using criteria outlined in my observations protocol (Appendix C). Process evaluations are important to determine if the programme is being enacted as it should be and it is therefore important for accountability (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). I observed if the plans and strategies implemented were those outlined in the guidance officers' workplans and

lesson plans. I also noted how the strategies were aligned to the programme's goals. Process evaluations take into consideration the efficiency of staff, the progress they make as well as how adjustments are made to issues that occur during implementation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). I monitored these aspects of the implementation process by doing the three classroom observations for each school and by comparing my data with information provided from the interviews with the participants and the guidance and counselling programme. There are certain things which process evaluations involve which were outside the scope of my study such as to periodically look at the extent that staff accept and undertake their functions (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

During the **product evaluation** phase I looked at the relative success of the programme since, "The purpose of a product evaluation is to measure, interpret and judge an enterprise's outcomes" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 50). In this study the outcomes were not measured quantitatively but were based on themes which emerged from the qualitative data analysis. To ensure that the data collected reflected what was happening with the programme and to get a clearer idea of the achievement of its objectives, I used multiple data sources for triangulation (interviews, classroom observations, document analysis, a reflexive journal, and emails). The major goals of a product evaluation are to determine the extent to which the needs of the targeted beneficiaries are met, as well as the extent to which the objectives of the programme were achieved (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Product evaluation processes do not occur according to a specific formula and several methods can be used depending on applicability (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The product evaluation is also applicable to my study since it helped to assess those overarching goals which were not specifically stated in the programme (the fostering of social justice and human development). It allows for this since, "To assess performance beyond goals, evaluators need to search for unanticipated outcomes, both positive and negative" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 50). I felt that on completion of all phases of the CIPP model I could then extend the results I obtained to determine how the programme was helping with the overarching goals of social justice and human development.

Criteria Development

In using the CIPP model, evaluation criteria were developed, and indicators were established (Table 6). The criteria were established to set a standard to evaluate the programme and to inform my decision making with respect to each aspect of the CIPP model. Then, sources of data were identified, based on the identified criteria and instruments developed to collect data. Data was then analysed using the criteria and indicators for each aspect of the CIPP model. The relationship between the four aspects of the CIPP model were then analysed since the results from each element of the CIPP model can be used to improve both the corresponding element and the relationship between them (Lee et al., 2019). To clarify, the different aspects can have impacts on each other, for example, if the plans made are not congruent with the programme goals, then the goals may not be achieved, or if the programme is not implemented as it should with respect to the process aspect then this may affect the product.

Important elements necessary for a good evaluation are the establishment of “...clear and appropriate **values** (principles, attributes, or qualities held to be intrinsically good, desirable, important, and of general worth) and **criteria** (standards on which to base judgments)” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 1). Since evaluations are value driven, they need to consider the values of all stakeholders in the same way, it is not up to the evaluator or one group of stakeholders to decide on the criteria. Values and criteria relevant to my study were chosen from The Evaluation Values and Criteria Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2001). Aspects of societal values used included *equity*, *effectiveness*, *excellence*, and *citizenship* (Stufflebeam, 2001). Criteria inherent in the definition of evaluation used were *worth* and *merit*. Criteria relevant to the CIPP model adopted for this study were, *defensible purpose*, *needs*, *supportable plan*, *responsible implementation*, and *laudable outcomes* (Stufflebeam, 2001). The *mission*, programme *goals* and *priorities* are examples of institutional values. Criteria such as *duties of personnel* used, include, the professional competence and job performance (Stufflebeam, 2001) of the guidance officers. Definitions of the aforementioned values and criteria can be seen in Appendix D.

Generally, the criteria were developed from literature about guidance

and counselling programmes, Trinidad and Tobago's guidance and counselling programme, the description of the use of the CIPP model from Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017), and the theories which underpin this study, namely: - Human Development, Positive Youth Development and Social Justice. Discussions with all stakeholders were also conducted during my pilot study and the information gained from this exercise helped me to streamline my criteria and assisted in aligning them with each research question.

The following table shows the criteria which were used to conduct this qualitative evaluation.

Table 6

The Criteria Used for Each Aspect of the CIPP Model

Aspect of CIPP	Criteria	Indicator
CONTEXT	Needs	The programme has been developed to meet the students' needs.
	Assets	The identification of programme assets.
	Opportunities	The identification of opportunities for programme improvement.
	Problems	The identification of programme problems.
	Human and Youth Development	The programme takes into consideration the promotion of human and youth development.
	Social justice	The programme's goals/context take into consideration social justice e.g. equality of treatment.
	Stakeholder expectations	Stakeholder expectations are aligned to the programme's goals.
	Institutional Values:	
	Programme goals	The programme's goals are aligned to the students' needs.
	Mission	The programme has a clearly stated mission.
Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model.	Priorities	The programme has priorities.
	Defensible purpose	The programme has "a purpose that is ethical, socially responsible, tractable, and beneficial to society or

Aspect of CIPP	Criteria	Indicator
CONTEXT	Defensible purpose	individuals” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 2.).
INPUT	Development of workplans	Needs assessments are used in developing workplans.
	Strategies	Strategies are developed based on the needs assessment.
	Strategies	Strategies are aligned to the programme goals.
		Strategies are varied to meet the students’ needs.
	Adequacy of resources	The guidance officers have adequate resources to implement the programme.
	Programme funding	The programme is adequately funded.
	International standards	The programme is aligned to international standards.
	Duties of personnel:	
	Professional competence	The guidance officers are adequately trained to implement the strategies.
	Job performance	The guidance officers adequately perform their jobs.
	Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model:	
	Supportable plan	The programme has, “A sound, targeted, feasible set of arrangements for fulfilling a defensible purpose; must be responsive to beneficiaries’ needs” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 2).
PROCESS	Programme implementation	The implementation process is aligned to the seven delivery processes in the guidance and counselling programme.
		Challenges to programme implementation.
	Lesson delivery	The strategies implemented are aligned to what was stated in the lesson plan and workplans.
		Students are engaged in the lesson.
		Adaptations were made to the lessons to cater to different learning styles during implementation.
		Lesson adaptations are made according to school type (See chapter 1).

Aspect of CIPP	Criteria	Indicator
PROCESS	Lesson delivery	Lessons takes into consideration all three domains.
		Attention is given equally to all three domains.
	Lesson evaluation	Identification of methods of lesson evaluations.
		All lessons are evaluated on completion.
	Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model:	
	Responsible plan	Alignment between activities and plans.
PRODUCT	Programme domains	The programme is helping students with their: - personal/social issues. - career issues. - academic issues.
		The programme has achieved its objectives.
	21 st century skills	Aspects of 21 st century skills that the programme helped/did not help.
	Human development	-The programme promotes good health and well-being. - The programme promotes inclusiveness, the provision of an equitable quality education, and it promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.
	Youth development	The programme has been adapted to cater to youth development needs in different school types.
		Identification of adaptations made.
		Success of adaptations.
		Success of the programme with helping students with the 5Cs of PYD (confidence, competence, connection, character, compassion, and contribution).
		Success of the programme in helping with youth development.
	Social justice	The programme helps nurture student strengths.
		The programme adequately helps students deal with social and cultural issues.
		The programme promotes equality.

Aspect of CIPP	Criteria	Indicator
PRODUCT	Social justice	The programme is data driven.
		The data is used to change school policy.
		The programme is used to change oppressive practices at the school.
		The programme helps students bring about change in society.
		The programme helps students to be more respectful of diversity.
	Societal values:	
	Equity	The programme is fair to all.
	Excellence	The programme meets its objectives.
	Effectiveness	The programme has a high standard.
	Citizenship	The programme contributes to society.
	Criteria inherent in the definition of evaluation:	
	Merit	The intrinsic value or quality of the programme.
	Worth	The extrinsic value or usefulness of the programme in meeting needs of the beneficiaries.
	Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model:	
	Defensible purpose	The programme has, “a purpose that is ethical, socially responsible, tractable, and beneficial to society or individuals” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 2).
	Laudable outcomes	The programme “outcomes are high in quality, service to all rightful beneficiaries, significance, safety, and cost-effectiveness” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 2).

Conducting the actual evaluation included, “...the process of delineating, obtaining, reporting, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about some object’s value...” (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 22). For each facet of the CIPP model I delineated the criteria I was looking at, I obtained data from multiple sources, and the data were then analysed, and reported. The evaluation using the CIPP model is based on three steps:

...the **delineating** of questions to be answered and information to be obtained, the **obtaining** of relevant information, and the **providing** of information to decision makers so that they can use it to make decisions and thereby to improve ongoing programs. (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 3)

Context evaluations

Delineating - In this study the programme's major goals were identified as well as some of the programme's future plans. Delineation includes identification of "on-file records of operational specifications and goals of the major program at the institution and projections of the "planning" decisions that must be made with respect to each of these programs during both the immediate and the longer-range future" (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 6). In this case, the guidance and counselling programme outlined programme goals, objectives, competencies as well as learning outcomes and skills. These aspects of the programme were used during the process of delineation to help develop the criteria. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with decision makers such as the senior official from the Guidance and Counselling Unit and the guidance officers to identify and clarify such concerns and to help in delineation of criteria (Stufflebeam, 1971).

Obtaining information - Data were collected via the semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders. "To aid planning decisions, information must be obtained which identifies unmet needs, unused opportunities, and problems" (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 7). It was recommended that data collection be continuous and aligned to the achievement of institution objectives at all levels of the programme and this was followed, but another recommendation that this information should be stored to allow retrieval of information to determine how the institution is achieving its goals (Stufflebeam, 1971), was not operationalised. This study was conceived as a PhD research project and as such was not an iterative process requesting stakeholders' input on a regular basis using the data which I collected. Thus, this information was not stored by the Guidance and Counselling Unit. However, the analysed data was collated on completion of the study, as, "It cannot be overemphasized that in collecting context evaluation information, the perceptions of the institutional constituencies should be surveyed and analysed" (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 8).

Providing- While context evaluation reports should be provided

annually to relevant stakeholders at the institution where the evaluation is taking place in the form of written and face to face presentations (Stufflebeam, 1971), this was not done as has been outlined before because of the limitations of my being a lone researcher undertaking a PhD study. A final evaluation report will be provided on completion of the study to the Ministry of Education (Appendix E). The methods of delineation, obtaining and producing information for the other aspects of the CIPP model can be seen in Appendix F.

A checklist by Stufflebeam (2007) was also used as a guide for this evaluation. A copy of this checklist highlighting the sections which were used in this study can be found in Appendix G. The CIPP model and the checklist are based on the fact that evaluations:

should assess and identify an entity's *merit* (i.e., its quality), *worth* (in meeting needs of targeted beneficiaries), *probity* (its integrity, honesty, and freedom from graft, fraud, and abuse), and *significance* (its importance beyond the entity's setting or time frame) and should also present *lessons learned*. (Stufflebeam, 2007, p. 2)

This checklist was developed to plan and assess the CIPP model evaluations, and its different aspects can be used according to their applicability to a study (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The checklist was also used in conceptualizing questions for my interview protocols. Table 7 shows a section of the CIPP checklist relevant to process evaluations, with the aspects which I used being highlighted.

Table 7

An Example of How the Checklist Was Used

4. PROCESS EVALUATION: Process evaluations monitor, document, and assess program activities.

Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Managing and Documenting
1. Engage an evaluation team member to monitor, observe, maintain a photographic record of, and provide periodic progress reports on program implementation.	Use the process evaluation findings to coordinate and strengthen staff activities.
2. In collaboration with the program's staff, maintain a record of program events, problems, costs, and allocations.	Use the process evaluation findings to strengthen the program design.
3. Periodically interview beneficiaries, program leaders, and staff to obtain their assessments of the program's progress.	Use the process evaluation findings to maintain a record of the program's progress.
4. Maintain an up-to-date profile of the program.	Use the process evaluation findings to help maintain a record of the program's costs.
5. Periodically draft written reports on process evaluation findings and provide the draft reports to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	Use the process evaluation findings to report on the program's progress to the program's financial sponsor, policy board, community members, other developers, etc.
6. Present and discuss process evaluation findings in feedback workshops.	
7. Finalize each process evaluation report (possibly incorporated into a larger report) and associated visual aids and provide them to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	

Note. From the *CIPP evaluation model checklist. A tool for applying the CIPP model to assess long term enterprises* (2nd ed., p. 6), by D.L. Stufflebeam, 2007.

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I used aspects of the highlighted portions of Table 7 in my process evaluation. For example, I monitored and observed how the programme was implemented but there was no need for a photographic record as the students were minors and their privacy needed to be protected. This study did not use periodic reports as I was not contracted by a client to do it. It was also not possible to do workshops with stakeholders to provide feedback. I did not have a client per say in the study, but verbal guidance and written permission were given to me by officials from the Ministry of Education.

Table 8 shows how the different components of CIPP were used as a framework to collect data for this investigation:

Table 8

Data Collection for Each Aspect of the CIPP Model

	Interviews	Observations	Document Analysis	Reflexive Journal
Context	✓ All stakeholders.		✓	✓
Input	✓ All stakeholders.		✓	✓
Process	✓ Guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students.	✓	✓	✓
Product	✓ Guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students.	✓	✓	✓

1. Follow-up questions were also emailed to two teachers, a parent, and the senior guidance and counselling official with respect to all aspects of the CIPP model.

In table 8, the context evaluation was used to find out how the programme originated, its goals, and the students' needs. The input evaluation was used to find out about programme's plans, strategies, training, staffing, and resources required. For the process evaluation the seven delivery methods or processes "group guidance, referral, information services, consultation, counselling, appraisal and accountability" (SSSD, 2008, p. 17) were used as a lens to show how the programme was implemented. The product evaluation determined if stakeholders felt the programme was achieving its major goals in terms of personal/social, career and academic development, development of

21st century skills, programme adaptations and the promotion of human and youth development and social justice.

The CIPP Model is based on organizing the evaluation according to the weight given to the types of decision making made at the different junctures. For example, there are four types of decisions made, each corresponding to the four dimensions of CIPP: planning, structuring, implementing, and recycling (DIANE Publishing Company, 1995). Planning decisions based on the *context* phase determine the choice of programme goals and objectives. Structuring decisions based on *input* evaluations identify the “strategies and procedural designs for achieving the objectives that have been derived from the planning decisions” (DIANE Publishing Company, 1995, p. 28). Implementing decisions emanate from *process* evaluations and offer ways by which strategies and designs that have already been identified are implemented and enhanced (DIANE Publishing Company, 1995). Recycling decisions “...served by *product* evaluations, are decisions that determine whether an activity should be continued, changed or terminated” (DIANE Publishing Company, 1995, p. 28). The analysis was done in accordance with the evaluation criteria, and I then identified the programme’s strengths, weaknesses and made decisions about how the programme could be improved. The results of the evaluation were then summarized and reported.

The CIPP model is flexible in use and during this study, the evaluation was framed by using all four aspects (context, input, process, and product) when collecting and analysing data. Important tenets of the model also used were developing and aligning criteria to each aspect, using the Evaluation Values and Criteria Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2001) and the CIPP model checklist (Stufflebeam, 2007). The model was used to determine how the guidance and counselling programme can be improved and how there can be greater accountability.

Case studies

There are many ways that qualitative evaluations can be conducted including the use of case studies.

Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time,

through detailed in-depth data collection involving **multiple sources of information** (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material and documents and reports), and reports a **case description** and **case themes**. The unit of analysis in the case study might be multiple cases (a **multisite** study) or a single case (a **within-site** study). (Creswell & Poth, 2016, pp. 96-97)

This study evaluated the case of the implementation of the guidance and counselling programme in four different secondary school types in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago and each school was considered a separate case.

This study was a multi-site case study as four different secondary schools in the NEED were sampled. A multi-site case study “investigates a defined, contemporary phenomenon that is common to two or more real world or naturalistic settings” (Mills et al., 2009, p. 588). When using multiple cases, “Each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (*a literal replication*) or (b) predicts contrasting results for anticipatable reasons (*a theoretical replication*)” (Yin, 2009, p. 54). In this study even though there were different school types, they largely do the same curriculum, and I was unsure whether there would be variations in how the guidance and counselling programme was being implemented. This was of interest to me because I was curious as to what adaptations were made, if any, when implementing the programme across the different types of secondary schools.

I used a multi-site case study because such studies allow for greater understanding about phenomena and the circumstances under which they occur (Mills et al., 2009). It also allowed me to make comparisons in how the programme was enacted in different school types. Researchers conduct case studies for the purpose of making a detailed description of a phenomenon, and to develop possible explanations and evaluations of it (Gall et al., 2003). In addition, this multi-site case study has a multiple case embedded design. A multiple embedded design can be advantageous:

It is optimal to develop a research study that involves an embedded design, because the presence of several subunits means that the entire case study does not rest on one overall finding or analysis, but instead allows for specific findings to be made about specific subunits. (Andrew et al., 2011, p. 139)

There are several units of analysis in each school, that is, the perceptions of the senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students. The unit of analysis refers to the stakeholders' perceptions at each school (or within each case). This data was then used to see whether the programme was being adapted across the different school types or across cases.

The emergent nature of case studies helped to focus my research since as data was collected it resulted in adaptations being made to how the investigation was conceptualized and conducted (Gall et al., 2003). I think that an emergent design helped me to adapt my study as I gained more knowledge about the issue under investigation.

Data Collection

Interviews

Data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with the senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students. I decided to do interviews because I wanted to obtain details about the participants' experiences with the guidance and counselling programme and their perceptions of it. My interview questions were open-ended, thereby allowing the participants to freely give their views and this helped me to gain a greater understanding of the programme, its implementation, and outcomes. This exploratory aspect of interviews allowed me to ask further questions and get "clarification of answers" (Crossman, 2021, p. 276), and this solidified my justification for using them.

I conducted interviews with 37 participants, and this proved to be a very time-consuming exercise, this is a common disadvantage of using open-ended interviews (Rentala, 2018). Interviews were conducted face to face since this granted me the opportunity to read the non-verbal cues of the participants and allowed flexibility in terms of questioning. I used interviews in preference to other forms of data collection such as questionnaires because some students, and possibly some parents, had problems with literacy. Interviews allowed me to clarify and re-word questions. I also decided to use interviews because of the sensitive nature of issues that students may have, especially as it relates to the personal/social domain of the guidance and counselling programme. Interviews are usually used in circumstances when confidential or detailed information is

required (Hennink et al., 2020). To maintain confidentiality the interviews were conducted in the privacy of the offices of the guidance officers.

Conducting interviews with the students was also challenging because sometimes they appeared cautious when speaking, they at times had problems expressing themselves clearly, and they seemed bored with answering too many questions. This problem seemed to be rectified to a great extent when the students were interviewed individually since this helped them to remain focused. Efforts were also made to reduce the number of questions in subsequent interviews to prevent boredom, however, this was not always possible as a few participants indicated that they could not recall much information about their experiences in the programme. This resulted in me having to ask them more direct questions.

A focus group was initially used for the pilot study; however, it was recommended by The University of the West Indies' Ethics Committee that I should interview the students separately to minimize the risk to participants. Such risks involved the potential for personal issues to be brought to the fore which the child may not have wanted his/her peers to hear about. Table 9 shows the participants interviewed in each school.

Table 9

Participants Interviewed in Each School

	Pilot Study	Actual Study
School	Pilot School	A-D
Participants		A senior guidance and counselling official
	Guidance Officer	Guidance Officer
	Two teachers	Two teachers
	Two Parents	Two Parents
	Eight Students -Form Four.	Four Students -Forms Four & Five.
Interview Types	Individual interviews with guidance officer, teachers, and parents. Focus groups with students.	Individual interviews with all participants.

At School D there were two guidance officers, however, only one consented to participate in the study.

The Interview Protocol

An interview protocol was developed to collect data to answer the research questions. The interview protocol provided for a semi-structured method of conducting interviews since there was the possibility of asking additional questions based on the participants' answers and this method allowed for a deeper understanding of the issues being studied. The protocol consisted of 30 questions which were aligned to the CIPP model and divided into five sections: A- Context, B- Inputs, C- Process, D- Product and E - General Questions (Appendix H). The questions in the protocol were developed using the research questions, the literature review, the theoretical framework, and the evaluative criteria. After thinking about the purpose of my study and the research questions, I created questions to answer them. For example, for the context evaluation, interview questions were asked about the students' needs. The literature review was scrutinized when creating questions to help provide me with information about different concepts which my study encompassed, such as social justice. Literature pertaining to the Human Development Paradigm (HDP) was also researched since my theoretical framework was based on this, and questions had to be asked to evaluate how the guidance and counselling programme was facilitating human development. In order to evaluate the programme I created criteria and therefore I had to ask specific questions to meet this criteria, for example, 'assets' were a criterion for the context evaluation so questions were asked to specifically identify programme assets.

The 5 Cs of positive youth development (PYD) (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring/compassion, and contribution) were used as a lens to find out how the educational stakeholders felt the guidance and counselling programme was helping students. Interview questions were developed based on each of the 5Cs and were aligned as well to each of the domains of the guidance and counselling programme. For example, the guidance officer was asked, "*How do you feel the guidance and counselling programme is helping students to develop the student's character?*" Character is one of the 5Cs found under the personal/social domain of the programme. A

table of how the 5 Cs of PYD were used in this study can be seen in Appendix I.

The interview protocol was scrutinized by my thesis supervisor to ensure that the questions were correctly worded and aligned to the research questions and the theoretical framework. It was also subject to peer review by a fellow PhD student. After this, modifications were made to the questions and the structure of the protocol. Interviews were subsequently conducted at Pilot School. On completion of data collection for the pilot study, the data was analysed to determine the extent to which it answered the research questions.

Not all participants were asked questions from all sections, for example, the senior guidance and counselling official was asked questions only from Sections A and B of the protocol because she had the most knowledge about the original contexts for which the programme was written and its inputs. The guidance officers were asked questions from all categories. The teachers, parents and students were asked few questions about the context and inputs because they were not expected to have knowledge about how the programme was conceptualized or how plans and strategies were developed. However, the limited data from section B for the teachers, parents and students resulted in me deciding not to use it in my analysis.

Administration of Interviews

Once permission for the study was granted by The UWI's Ethics Committee, the Ministry of Education, and the principals, all the participants were informed of the nature of the study and interviews were scheduled. Written permission was obtained from all participants before the interviews were conducted. Parental permission was also granted for the students.

On commencement of each interview the participants were assured that their responses would be confidential, and their identities would not be disclosed. In each school the interviews were all held in the privacy of the guidance officer's office. Participants were asked a series of questions which were adapted as the interview progressed, allowing a discussion to take place about the guidance and counselling programme at their school. The interviews were audio recorded. On completion of the interviews the participants were thanked for their time. After I transcribed the interviews, copies were emailed to the participants for member checking.

When analysing my data, I noticed that there were information gaps so I sent some questions via email to a few participants, not including students, from whom I needed additional information. I also had to do follow-up interviews with all but the guidance officer from School D, to fill the gaps in data collection. I was unsuccessful in getting a second interview with the senior guidance and counselling official some of the data from the sections on human development and social justice were obtained from her via email. My procedure for analysing data from the interviews can be found on page 110.

Role of the Researcher in the Interview Process. I used my journal to deliberate on my role in the interview process. I reflected about aspects outlined by Roberts (2020) such as important moments which occurred during the interview process, the non-verbal cues of participants and ideas about themes and connections which I made within and across schools. I reflected on potential biases, for example, I used the school where I work for my pilot study, and my role as a teacher could have influenced the interactions between the participants and myself, and therefore the data collected. I noted challenges which occurred during the interview, for example, I had to be gentle, patient and provide reassurance to a student who was not very forthcoming during the interview. I was also very careful when interviewing the students since there is a power differential. I did not ask invasive questions which had the potential to make them uncomfortable or even potentially traumatize them. After conducting and transcribing the interviews I read them repeatedly to immerse myself in the data and to see if I collected the information that was relevant to my research questions. As I reflected, I realised that there were sometimes gaps in the data and I had to ask some more questions to get the information that I needed.

As I interviewed more participants, I noticed that my listening and questioning skills improved. The way that I constructed questions, my use of probes, how I adapted the interview as it progressed. I began to pay more attention to subtle changes in the expressions and body language of the participants. I noticed personal growth in myself since as I interviewed more individuals my self-confidence in talking to strangers grew and I was more easily able to build rapport with people. The participants were of various genders, ages, ethnicities, educational and socio-economic backgrounds so this

led me to make adaptations, for example, the way I would question an adult in comparison to a child. I became grateful for the trust which the participants placed in me and realised the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

Observations

Observations of group guidance sessions were conducted in each school to see how the programme was being implemented, any issues that occurred during the implementation, and to triangulate data. One observation was done for each of the following domains: personal/social, career and academic in each school. In total 12 observation sessions were completed.

The guidance officers follow a workplan, so they chose the classes where the observations were to be conducted. Observations were also made to see if the guidance officers were implementing the programme as they stated they were doing in the interviews, and to get a good sense of whether students were learning the concepts taught. During the observation sessions I arrived prior to the commencement of the class and sat on a chair at the back of the classroom. I was very quiet during the sessions, and I did not interfere in the delivery of the curriculum by, for example, asking questions or making comments. I made notes during my observations. I developed and used an observation protocol to collect data during these sessions. The data were then integrated with the other types of data collected according to the different aspects of CIPP to evaluate the programme. My procedure for doing observation analysis can be found on page 113.

The Observation Protocol

The observation protocol was used to collect data such as the topic of the lesson as well as its objectives. These facilitated comparison with the workplans produced by the guidance officers, as well as with the guidance and counselling programme, to check for alignment. I also noted the strategies used by the guidance officers and adaptations which were made during the lesson. I took note of the student's behaviour in relation to what was being taught to gauge their level of engagement. The evaluations which the students did at the end of each class were of interest to me since they provided information about how the students grasped the concepts taught. In the protocol I recorded comments and questions made by both the guidance officer and students as this also gave an indication of how learning was taking place and if objectives were

being achieved.

I also observed the general classroom setting to see how conducive it was to learning. The students' rapport with the guidance officer was also taken into consideration since this has an important role to play in the programme's success. I believe that students need to feel comfortable with the guidance officer in order to seek her assistance if they have a problem. I also recorded challenges which occurred during the lesson's delivery since this would likely have a negative impact on the programme's success. My observation protocol also made allowances for unexpected events that happened during the session, in case something important happened that could add to my understanding of how guidance and counselling programme sessions were conducted. Brief discussions were held with the guidance officers before each classroom session to find out about the lesson's objectives and the strategies to be used and after the session where we discussed the implementation of the lesson and its outcomes.

Use of Documents

Documents were used to obtain information about the guidance and counselling programme, as well as to triangulate data. The information from the documents allowed me to acquire other sources of evidence to gain a better understanding of the issue being investigated. The documents that were believed to be important in this study were the guidance and counselling programme (SSSD, 2008), which is implemented in all secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, the termly workplans and lesson plans used by the guidance officers, and referral forms. The guidance and counselling programme is the written guidance and counselling curriculum as well as the only written document I have come across outlining the history of the guidance and counselling programme in Trinidad and Tobago. It therefore provided me with valuable background information about the context for which the programme was developed. This document also has information such as the programme's national standards and objectives. Comparing the results of my study to the overarching goals in the guidance and counselling programme provided me with information with respect to its current relevance. Information from this document was used to answer all research questions.

The termly workplans were used in document analysis because they

provided data with respect to the plans which the guidance officers used for the term. They were developed by the guidance officers and were based on the objectives and standards found in the guidance and counselling programme. They contained information such as the programme domains, standards, and objectives from that were being addressed as well as which topics and themes were being taught. They also contained the “baseline,” which was the percentage of students that needed assistance with respect to the stated topic and theme, their success criteria and how the lessons were to be evaluated. The information from the workplans was used to answer my second and third research questions.

Teachers submitted referral forms containing student information to the guidance officers. These forms captured students’ background data as well as strategies that teachers tried before referring them to the guidance officer. I did not use the forms to obtain student information since this was confidential, but a blank form was used in this analysis to gain data about its format and the type of information which the guidance officers required. Information from this form was used in answering my second research question.

I also sought to explore whether there was, and to what extent, alignment between the objectives in the workplans with those in the programme and the lesson plans. I did this to check for accountability since this is a purpose of the CIPP model (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). In order to collect data for document analysis I created an instrument using the purpose of the study, research questions and the previously discussed evaluation criteria as a guide. The instrument comprises four sections aligned to each aspect of the CIPP model Appendix J. After the data was collected, it was analysed (see page 113).

Reflexive Journal

I used a reflexive journal to help me gain a better understanding of different aspects of the research process such as how I designed my study, my methodology and how I collected and analysed my data. It also helped me to greater understand my role as the researcher in the process. A reflexive journal is iterative in changing both the researcher and the research process and it constitutes an important aspect of the research findings (Palaganas et al., 2017).

To aid my reflexivity, I wrote my thoughts and feelings about the

different aspects of the research process in a notebook at regular intervals. In the classroom observations I made jottings to which I returned to later in the journal to ruminate on certain observations. This journal helped me to reflect and pose questions to myself about my study. It helped me to clarify concepts and do further research on elements that I was unsure about. Using a reflexive journal allowed for transparency in my research journey, and it assisted me in charting my research path in an organized manner. For example, each time I visited a school I made a journal entry and reflected on how the interviews and observations were conducted. This allowed me to think about how I could improve my interviews and observations, and how I could overcome the challenges which I encountered. Excerpts from the journal entries were used when discussing my findings with respect to each research question.

Sometimes I used Gibb's Cycle (1988), where I first described my experiences, I stated my feelings about it, and I determined whether it was a good or bad experience. Subsequently, I tried to make sense of it and reflected on what could have been done differently and how my approach would change if the issue presented itself again. Not all my journal entries used this method as not all required something different to be done, some just helped me to question and clarify things. An example of how I did my data analysis using the reflexive journal can be found on page 115.

When using the CIPP model, multiple methods and sources of data collection should be used for triangulating qualitative data to have a better idea of how a programme works (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). In this investigation triangulation, helped me to "increase the credibility, trustworthiness and utility of conclusions" (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017, p. 183). Table 10 shows how data collection methods were aligned to the research questions.

Use of Emails

Emails were not a primary source of information for this study but were used to ask follow-up questions and to clarify data from the face-to-face interviews. Questions were emailed to two teachers, a parent, and the senior guidance and counselling official. Emails were used because of their convenience and because they allowed the participants time to reflect on their responses, and to give clear, and concise answers. The questions were written as simply as possible, and participants had the option of asking for clarification

if they so desired. The parents exercised this option. The questions emailed were similar to those which were previously asked to the participants in the face-to-face interviews. The email responses of the senior guidance and counselling official with respect to human and youth development and social justice were very detailed.

Table 10

Alignment of Data Collection Methods to Research Questions

Data Collection Methods		Research Sub-Questions (Chapter 1, pp. 21-22)			
		1	2	3	4
Semi-structured interviews	Participants were asked in-depth questions about their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences with all aspects of the guidance and counselling programme. Introductory, transition, key, and closing questions were asked. Attention was paid to giving participants cues and prompts. Probes were also used.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Documents	The written guidance and counselling programme (SSSD, 2008), the guidance officers' workplans, and lesson plans were used to get background information about the programme, identify the strategies and activities used by the guidance officers and success indicators. They were read, coded, and themes were generated.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	Observations were made during the classroom guidance sessions. I looked at how the lessons were delivered, their alignment to the guidance and counselling curriculum, and the work and lesson plans. I also noted the interactions between the guidance officers and the students and if students grasped the concepts taught. My observations were recorded in an observation protocol which was then coded to generate themes.			✓	✓
Reflexive Journal	This was used to reflect on my methods of data collection. I used the journal to help improve the ways by which I collected data, for example, improving my interview questions or adjusting my interview and observation protocols.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emails	Primarily used to clarify what was said in interviews and to fill gaps in data collection with four participants.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Maintaining Objectivity During Data Collection

I maintained objectivity by attempting to remain as neutral as possible during data collection, for instance, by not asking leading questions during interviews or trying not to influence the participants' responses. Using multiple sources of data and having participants review transcripts of interviews also assisted in maintaining objectivity. Writing in my journal to reflect on data collection helped to process data collection procedures and this led to improvements in my data collection. Stating my positionality also assisted with maintaining objectivity since it provided both personal and professional insights.

Participant bias may have also been an issue since in some cases I felt that stakeholders were providing me with information which they thought I wanted to hear. I noticed that most of the students were lavish in their praise of the guidance officers, and I got the impression that the students felt I was collecting information to judge the performance of the officers. To mediate this, I explained the purpose of my visit as simply and clearly as possible to all stakeholders. I also tried to ask questions in such a manner that participants would feel that no matter what their answers were, I would find them acceptable. I tried to word my questions differently and tried to engage the participants to provide detailed answers during the interview process.

It is not possible to achieve total objectivity during data collection because of my own assumptions and personal bias/prejudices which I may not be totally conscious of. Being a novice researcher could also have an impact on my objectivity. Other threats to maintaining objectivity could be participants not being honest about reviewing transcripts of their interviews to confirm what they said, and my inability to properly interpret and integrate data because of the large amounts that were collected from multiple sources.

As I reflect on the data collection process, I think that despite potential issues I was successful in being as neutral as possible. For example, I used my reflexive journal to state questions, and I re-worded them after much thought to ensure that they were not leading. I also spent time thinking about the suggestions made by my peers to modify the amount and nature of my questions. I did not use every suggestion that was made, but critically assessed

what they were saying and tried to determine its relevance to what I wanted to find out as a researcher. I used multiple sources of data to gain information and insights from different perspectives to get a more complete picture of the guidance and counselling programme.

Sampling Procedure

There are 15 secondary schools in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago. At the time of the study only one of these schools did not have a full-time guidance officer. Three are denominational schools: a Roman Catholic male single sex school, a Roman Catholic coeducational school, and a Hindu coeducational school. Table 11 shows the four schools which were purposively sampled based on their school type. Focusing on different school types was undertaken because I wanted to evaluate how the guidance and counselling programme was being enacted in different school types which signify in the educational contexts of Trinidad and Tobago differentiation and segregation of students based on ability levels.

Table 11

Demographics of Schools Sampled (2020)

School	Type	Date Established	¹Number of Years	Student Population	Gender
Pilot School (Pilot Study)	² SEMP	2000	5	676	Co-ed
A	Denominational (Roman Catholic)	1957	7	484	All Male
B	New Sector (Former Junior Secondary School)	1973	5	709	Co-ed
C	SEMP	2000	5	213	Co-ed
D	Government Secondary Built after 1959	1961	7	972	Co-ed

1. Number of years - It is mandatory that students attend all secondary schools for five years while some schools have a Form Six where students have the option of studying for an additional two years.

2. SEMP- Schools built under the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (Chapter 1, p. 6)

Research Site

School A- The school is situated approximately 2km away from a major town, (Town X), and has a teaching staff of 30. It is currently expanding its infrastructure to accommodate its growing student population and to provide amenities to meet their learning needs, for example, constructing a new building for 6th form students. The students are of mixed ethnicities, and from varying, socio-economic backgrounds with the majority hailing from the middle-class. While the students have varying religious backgrounds most of them are from the Christian denomination. School A has a larger proportion of students that perform well academically than other secondary schools in the districts, and the students are exposed to a mostly traditional academic curriculum. The students participate in many sporting activities, namely cricket and football, and have done well at district level competitions.

School B- This is a former junior secondary school that has been converted from a 3-year school which operated on a shift system to a 5-year school in 2006. The school has a staff of 75 teachers. It is located approximately 1km away from a major town, (Town Y). The students are of mixed ethnicities and religions, and they mostly hail from a lower socio-economic background. In 2022, 208/230 or 90% of the Form One students who were assigned to the school scored less than 30% in the SEA examinations (Ministry of Education, 2022b). This school had the highest number of students who scored less than 30% in the NEED (Ministry of Education, 2022b). The school is also plagued by student indiscipline and has been categorized as one of 26 high-risk schools in Trinidad and Tobago. It has also been selected as a school for the implementation of a revised curriculum for 2022-2027 (Ministry of Education, 2022b). The curriculum is varied and includes the traditional academic curriculum as well as technical vocational subjects such as woodworking, technical drawing, and agricultural science to cater to varying student needs. The students also take part in the various sporting and cultural activities.

School C - This is a SEMP school also has a similar demographic in terms of academics and socio-economic background to the one where I teach. It is one of the smallest schools in the NEED with only 33 teachers, and it is

situated in a rural area, approximately 10km from the nearest major city (Town Y). The students are of mixed ethnicities and religions, and mostly from a lower socio-economic background. Although the students generally do not perform well academically, and the school has indiscipline issues, it has not been placed on the list of high-risk schools by the Ministry of Education. While many students live in homes and villages where agriculture is common, agricultural science is not taught at the school. However, there are other subjects that may cater to students who are not academically inclined such as beauty culture. The school also offers a traditional academic curriculum.

School D - This is the oldest and largest school in the NEED. It is situated next to School B and is approximately 1km from the closest major town (Town Y). It has a teaching staff of 72. The students are of mixed ethnicities and religions, and from varying socio-economic backgrounds. The school generally does well academically, and several students have won national scholarships. The school offers a varied curriculum consisting of both traditional academic subjects and subjects from the technical and vocational areas.

The Pilot Study

I selected Pilot School, a SEMP school, for the pilot study because it was here, I initially observed the guidance and counselling being implemented, students' experiences with it, and was intrigued about its possible impact. I chose this school because I am well acquainted with the students, staff, parents, and guidance officer, and felt that they would have been more forthcoming with information than if I used another school. I have been a teacher at the school for the past 17 years and I understand the school's culture and climate.

During the pilot study, interviews were conducted with two teachers, two parents, a focus group of students and the guidance officer assigned to the school. The teachers, parents and students were selected by purposeful sampling since this method helped me to obtain the most useful data. The criteria used were:

Teachers - Teachers who were employed at the school for at least five years and were Form teachers of students who received individual and group guidance and counselling. I felt that teachers who were at the school for at least

five years would have been able to see the students' holistic development over this fairly long period of time, and they may have been able to observe any changes in the students that may have resulted from exposure to the guidance and counselling programme. Form teachers were chosen because I felt that they interact more closely with students daily than teachers who were subject teachers.

Parents - The parents of children who have received individual and group guidance and counselling from the guidance officer. This criterion was used to see if parents observed any changes in their children after they were the recipients of both individual and group guidance and counselling. The parents were identified by the school's guidance officer and asked if they would be willing to participate before they were contacted by me.

Students - Students of both genders were interviewed in a focus group comprising eight students (four boys and four girls). The students were selected based on their class level, Form Four, and on recommendation of the guidance officer, since she was aware of who had previously received individual and group guidance and counselling. The students were chosen from this Form because I wanted students who experienced both individual and group guidance and counselling for several years at the school to see if and how it was helping them. Students were asked questions in general terms to protect their privacy and they had the option of not participating if they felt uncomfortable with the questions. It is possible that students withheld information because they were uncomfortable discussing certain issues.

Guidance officer - The resident guidance officer who is responsible for the planning and implementation of the programme.

After the pilot study was undertaken, the data was analysed, and upon reflection I decided to make some changes. Care was taken not to ask closed questions which would just result in one word or yes/no answers, to ensure that, questions were asked one at a time, and that no leading questions were asked. Further adaptations made include changing the sequence of interview questions moving from broad questions to narrow ones and asking more probing questions. I simplified some of the questions, especially for the students and parents. For example, instead of asking students what

recommendations they had to improve the programme I asked, *“How can we make the programme better?”* Or instead of, *“What expectations do you have of a guidance and counselling programme?”* I asked, *“What do you feel a guidance and counselling programme should really be doing in a school?”* I reduced the number of questions from 40 to 30 since it was observed that some students appeared to be getting bored. I tried to not align my questions too closely to my theoretical framework and research questions. The reason for doing this is that the questions, when too specific, appeared to be limiting the data that was forthcoming. I therefore tried to make the interview to be more of a discussion to allow the data to emerge. This, however, proved challenging at times since in doing an evaluation, questions had to be asked to determine if the programme was achieving its objectives. I also made a greater effort to pay attention to how I coded my data and classified the codes into themes and subthemes.

Based on the advice of The UWI’s Ethics Committee I interviewed students individually and did not use focus groups, as such, the number of students to be interviewed in each school was reduced to four. After the pilot study the students were chosen from both Forms Four and Five, instead of just Form Four. This occurred because not all students from a particular Form were able to obtain parental consent. The pilot study also showed me that greater care was needed to choose participants who had knowledge about the guidance and counselling programme because as was previously stated the parents had limited knowledge about it. On completion of my pilot study, I decided to interview a senior guidance and counselling official since this individual was one of the first guidance officers, she had years of experience in the programme and had more knowledge about the programme’s development than other participants.

Ethical Considerations

I made a concerted effort to ensure that participants were not physically or psychologically harmed, to ensure that data was not falsified and to ensure that it was presented accurately. To ensure that the highest ethical standards were maintained during this investigation, the following steps were undertaken:

Permission to conduct the study

Written and verbal permission to conduct the study was sought and granted from the Ministry of Education, the principals of each school, and The UWI's Ethics Committee. Before conducting interviews, I also ensured I had written permission from the guidance officers, teachers, and parents. Parental consent was received for the students to participate, and the students also provided both written and verbal consent to being participants, after their parents discussed the purpose of the study and the interview process with them (Appendix K).

Informed consent

The participants were informed of the nature of the study to ensure that they knew what to expect and they were comfortable with the questions and procedures. This allowed them to choose whether they wanted to participate or not. All participants had to sign consent forms which explained to them the purpose of the study and what it entailed (Appendix L).

Anonymity and confidentiality

The participants were assured that their real names would not be used and any information which they provided would be kept confidential. This was to ensure that they would not be held accountable for any possibly negative views that they might give about the guidance and counselling and its implementation. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality the participants' real names were not used on electronic folders containing recordings and transcripts of their interviews. Pseudonyms were used for each participant and were also used when discussing the data in chapters four and five.

Right to withdraw from study

Participants were informed that they had the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. However, none of them elected to do so.

Ethical procedures are also relevant to data analysis and trustworthiness strategies and are discussed on page 117.

Use of Emails

It is possible that bias was introduced according to how the questions were phrased. To mediate this I tried to ensure that the questions were posed as simply as possible to ensure that the participants understood what was being

asked. I also made efforts to avoid asking leading questions, and I asked questions which were either exactly like or similar to other questions which were used in the face-to-face interviews. Other possible issues include my misinterpretation of their responses so if clarification on any issues was required, I spoke to the participants via telephone. Ethical issues using emails include the participant's level of accessibility to technology and their proficiency with it. To ensure that these issues did not occur I asked the participants before if they were willing to have another in person interview or answer the questions via email and they all chose email because of its convenience. Participants were also assured that their privacy would be maintained and to maintain confidentiality I assured them that I was the only person who had access to the emails.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Interviews

I transcribed the interviews and labelled them according to participant and school. The participants were given pseudonyms starting with the first letter of each school. For example, the guidance officer from School A was called Arlene. The other schools were similarly labelled B-D. I then proceeded to analyse the data according to each school. Data analysis is a “complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings on insights constitute the findings of the study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). Two elements of grounded theory methodology used in data analysis in this study were open coding and the formation of themes. “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data” (Saldana, 2015, p. 4), and the process of coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 57). Open, axial, and selective coding were used to analyse the data.

With respect to open coding:

...the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences. Events, happenings, objects, and actions/interactions that are found to be conceptually similar in nature, or related in meaning, are grouped together in more abstract terms called 'categories.' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102)

Axial coding involves the linking of subcategories of data to categories using inductive and deductive processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During the process of selective coding, different concepts and categories are streamlined and related to each other (Mills et al., 2009). I coded the transcripts and then compared the codes to each other to look for patterns and subsequently grouped them to form categories. The different categories were then compared to generate themes. "A theme is an *outcome* of coding, categorization and analytic reflection not something that is in itself coded..." (Saldana, 2015, p. 15).

During data analysis, I first coded the senior guidance and counselling official's transcript followed by the guidance officers, teachers, parents and finally the students. I read transcripts a few times to get a deeper understanding of what the participants were saying. After making meaning of the responses, codes were manually assigned to segments of the data and typed on the margins of the transcripts. The following is an example of how data from the guidance officers was coded. The guidance officer from School D, Debra, said, "*So then it becomes necessary to reassess the needs and to restructure and develop more.*" This was coded as "reassessment of student needs," and together with codes such as "restructuring of programme," and codes from other guidance officers, were categorized under the subtheme, "the utilisation of a national needs assessment in programme development." It is also possible that some statements can be coded and placed in themes in different ways. The subtheme was then grouped with another subtheme "limited assistance in helping students with socio-economic challenges" under the theme "the development and functioning of the guidance and counselling programme." An excerpt showing the organization of codes and subthemes to form a theme can be found in Table 12.

Table 12

An Example of How the Theme “The Development and Functioning of the Guidance and Counselling Programme” was derived.

Codes	Subtheme	Theme
A new needs assessment is currently required. Need for programme review. Programme domains address different areas. Programme originally American influence. Programme focused on three domains. Programme relevant in past. Changing student’s needs. Reassessment of student needs. Restructuring of programme. Possible programme improvements needed.	The utilisation of a new national needs assessment in programme development.	The development and functioning of the guidance and counselling programme.
Programme assists students to an extent. Holistic nature of the programme helps. Social issues are covered. Referred to social workers for further assistance Programme adapted to socioeconomic needs of students. Lack of financial resources available to help challenged students.	Limited assistance in helping students with socioeconomic challenges.	

An example of a transcribed interview from a student, illustrating how codes were formed can be found in Appendix M. A codebook was then created showing the codes from each interview.

The data was first analysed within-case where themes were generated for all participants for each school. My reason for doing this is that within-case analysis helps “...to describe, understand, and explain what has happened in a single, bounded context-the “case” or “site” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 101). The themes were compared for each category of participant in each school (or case), to draw conclusions and help in data reduction. For example, in School B, the themes for the two parents were compared with each other to see

whether there were any similarities and differences, and this information was displayed in tabular form (Appendix N). The data from the different stakeholders were also compared for each school. The results of the within-case analysis allowed me to interpret what was occurring in each school, for each category of participant, and it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of what was going on overall in each school with respect to the programme.

After doing the within-case analysis, the cross-case analysis was done to get a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences in the implementation of the guidance and counselling programme across the four schools (or, cases). I wanted to find out if there were differences in the stakeholders' perceptions in the four schools, to see if any unique issues or phenomena emerged. After coding and the generation of subthemes and themes I reflected on the data and decided to make changes. For example, in Table 12, I originally had the two subthemes as separate themes but after thinking about it I realized they could all be subsumed into one theme, and this led to further data reduction.

Four methods by which case studies can be written have been outlined by Yin (2009). As a result of the relatively large number of participants and the fact that four schools were used, I decided to use his fourth method where ... "there may be *no* separate chapters or sections devoted to the individual cases. Rather your entire report may consist of the cross-case analysis, whether purely descriptive or also covering explanatory topics" (Yin, 2009, p. 172). I reported my cross-case analysis in different sections of Chapter four as Yin (2009), indicates that with the fourth approach, a chapter or section can be used for different cross case issues with the data from the individual cases being, "...dispersed throughout each chapter or section" (p. 172).

Analysis of Observations

On completion of each observation I compared the data collected to information in the guidance and counselling programme to determine if the objectives from the lesson emanated from it. I observed if the lessons flowed in a logical sequence according to the lesson plan. I also looked at the objectives to determine the levels to which they were pitched according to Bloom's Taxonomy (cognitive, affective, or psychomotor). I looked for congruence

between the objectives and the activities and evaluations. I analysed the questions which the guidance officer and students asked and to see if the questions were constructed at different cognitive levels. I also determined if any 21st century skills were taught or emerged during the sessions. For example, in School A from the lesson on time management, I noted that critical thinking and communication skills were not listed as objectives, but they emanated from the lesson. The notes I made in my observation protocol were also coded (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), to see if any themes emerged. Some of the aspects coded included strategies used by the guidance officers, comments students made, as well as my observations with respect to challenges encountered by both students and the guidance officers during the sessions (Appendix O). An example of how subthemes and themes were derived can be found in Appendix P. The analysis of the observations was also compared within-case to see what was going on in each school and cross-case to identify similarities and differences. One cross-case theme was the “disruptive behaviour of Form One students,” where I observed the Form One students in three schools to be a bit difficult to manage compared to students in the higher Forms. They were constantly talking, sometimes not paying attention and at times they harassed each other. The results of my observations were integrated during my discussion of themes in chapter four.

Document Analysis

I used the checklist of criteria when looking at the different documents to determine what information was required. Each document was first read a few times to gain insight about its contents and then the data was manually coded using the same process by which I coded my interviews: open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The codes which formed were organized into themes and these themes were subsequently discussed in relation to the research questions and the literature. An example of a coded lesson plan and the theme generated can be found in Appendices Q & R. Another example from the written guidance and counselling programme is that the phrase, “Profound economic and social changes are creating new market technologies and new market standards (productivity, quality, variety, customization, convenience)” (SSSD, 2008, p. 6), was coded as “market

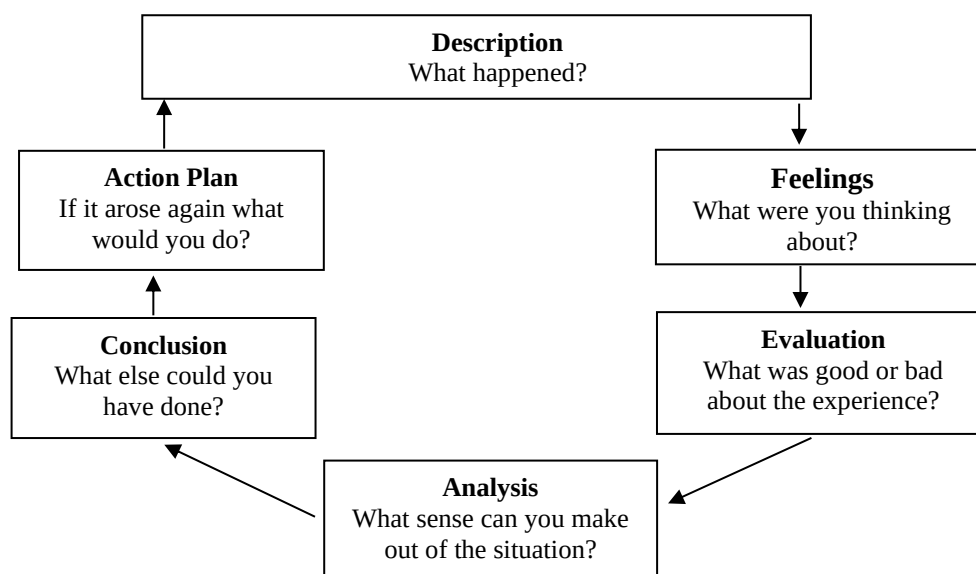
innovation in response to socio-economic changes.” Another phrase from the programme, “The new competitive framework now requires a broader set of skills: “hard (technical) and “soft” (interpersonal and communication) skills” (p. 7) was coded as, “new competitive skills required.” These two codes, with others, were placed in the theme, “The need for change in the 21st century workforce.” This theme was then discussed in relation to research question 4 (b) to determine how the programme was supporting the development of 21st century skills.

Analysis of Reflexive Data

The Gibb’s Reflective Cycle (1988) was used to analyse the data from my reflexive journal as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Gibb’s Reflective Cycle



Note. Adapted From *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*, (pp. 49-50), by G. Gibbs, 1988, Oxford Polytechnic. Copyright, 1988 by Graham Gibbs.

The following is a journal excerpt of how I used the cycle as an analytical tool:

I want my study to be exploratory in nature, however after thinking about my purpose I feel there is a strong evaluative element in that I am trying to determine how the programme is achieving its goals and meeting the students’ needs. I feel confused about this. Since I am comparing the programme outcomes to the goals, am I not evaluating

the programme? I feel I need to do more research into the difference between an exploratory study and evaluative one to ensure that I choose the most appropriate methodology.

In the excerpt above I used Gibb's Reflective Cycle by describing whether my study fit into the 'exploratory' or 'evaluative' category. I then stated that I felt confused, this was a stressful experience for me, although it was a good one in terms of my growth as a researcher. I then analysed the situation by questioning myself, "*Since I am comparing the outcomes of the programme to the goals, am I not evaluating the programme?*" This led me to examine my own beliefs about research designs and resulted in me undertaking further research into the nature of exploratory and evaluative studies. This helped me to select the most appropriate model to use for my evaluation. If any issues again arose, I now feel more competent as a researcher to search for more information and not be so overly emotional about it. This analytical thinking proved fruitful in helping me to generate new ideas and insights about my study. The data from my analysis was incorporated into themes during the discussion of my findings.

The data analysis for this study is congruent with conducting an evaluation of the programme. I integrated the data collected from the different sources (semi-structured interviews, document analysis, classroom observation sessions, the reflexive journal and follow-up emails) under the different aspects of the CIPP model, and then discussed each in relation to the established criteria and research questions. Comparing the analysed data from different stakeholders in different schools showed similarities and differences in how the programme was enacted. I looked at the alignment between the programme goals and its outcomes, both intended and unintended, the programme's challenges and its successes. On completion of this study a copy of this thesis will be sent to the Ministry of Education.

Analysis of Emails

After receiving the email responses, the transcripts were copied and pasted onto a word document and labelled using the participants' pseudonyms. I coded the participants' answers to my questions using open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The codes were then compared to

each other to see if there were any patterns, after which they were placed in categories. The categories were subsequently compared to each other to generate themes.

Trustworthiness Strategies

The maintenance of the highest ethical standards is the foundation of developing trustworthiness strategies since credible data leads to a more useful and meaningful study. Ethical standards are therefore important to ensure that the data give an accurate representation of what is occurring at the research site and is not misleading to the stakeholders. Trustworthiness refers to findings that are “worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). There are four criteria which should be pursued to gain trustworthiness in a study; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Internal and external validity in quantitative research are widely considered to be parallel to trustworthiness strategies such as credibility and transferability in qualitative research, while reliability and objectivity are considered similar or parallel to dependability and confirmability in qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Klenke, 2016, Renwick, 2017).

Credibility

Credibility refers to “The confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). In order to ensure that there was credibility, member checking, peer review and triangulation were used.

Member Checking. Participants were emailed copies of the interviews to allow them to check that the transcripts accurately represented what they said, this allowed for transparency. Member checks provided me with feedback from the participants about the data and any conclusions drawn from it. It allowed for clarification of what was said in the interviews (Bailey, 2017). Participants were allowed one month to check the transcripts which were emailed to them. The response rate can be seen in Table 13:

Table 13

Participants' Member Check Response Rates

Type of participant	Number of participants	Number of participants who provided member check feedback	Response rate %
Senior guidance and counselling official	1	1	100
Guidance officers	4	4	100
Teachers	8	7	87.5
Parents	8	7	87.5
Students	16	13	81.3

The guidance officers from schools B and C made minor changes to the transcripts that were emailed to them. Seven of the teachers indicated that the transcripts accurately represented what they said, but one teacher did not respond. All the parents who responded were comfortable with the contents of the transcripts while I was unable to get any feedback from one parent at School B. Twelve of the students responded via email that the transcripts were accurate while one student just clarified a statement he made. The guidance officers indicated that the students who did not respond may be without internet access at the point in time, and that a student from School D complained that the transcript was too long to read.

The results of my study were shared only with the guidance officers on completion of data analysis. They largely agreed with my findings and recommendations. The findings were not shared with the teachers and parents because they were generally unwilling to engage in discussion again, mostly because of a lack of time and because I was unable to contact some of them, especially the parents. The findings were not discussed with the students because on completion of the study most of them were no longer attending the schools where the data was collected. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020-2022 was also a major hindrance to communicating with participants.

Peer Debriefing. The protocol was subjected to the scrutiny of my peers who have experience in collecting and analysing qualitative data. It is

possible that my closeness to the study could inhibit my ability to view with detachment, and having my friends review it allowed them to give their observations and ask questions, which sometimes gave me fresh perspectives on my research design. My friends were concerned that my interview protocol was too long, and they felt that the students especially, would get bored. Their concerns helped me to try and view the protocol more objectively. My thesis supervisor and my peers reviewed samples of my coded transcripts and tables where I outlined how I analysed my data and created themes and subthemes. One of my peers felt that I needed to condense my subthemes and themes because I had so many. She also felt that I needed to pay attention to how I named my themes because they sometimes came across as too wordy and literal. I also had three research seminars at The UWI where the processes by which I analysed my data were presented and scrutinized and feedback was provided.

Triangulation. My data collection methods included face to face interviews with the stakeholders, follow-up emails, observations of group guidance sessions, use of a reflexive journal and document analysis. Triangulation was conducted by first coding the data from the interviews, emails, observations, work and lesson plans and the guidance and counselling curriculum. “Triangulation is typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 603). The themes which emerged were then compared with each other and with the information from my reflexive journal. I felt that in this way I adequately captured different dimensions of the same phenomenon. For example, interviewing participants about the strategies implemented during the programme provided information, but when I conducted classroom observations, I saw the actual implementation of the strategies. This provided me with a first-hand view of how the students responded to the strategies and challenges which arose while being implemented. The observations helped me to immerse myself in the study and I was also able to compare the classroom sessions to what was articulated in the written programme document. While triangulation was used, there is an inherent danger in having “a tremendous amount of data, [as] this range of data sources may present disparate,

incompatible, even apparently contradictory information” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 233). To deal with this threat, the data was triangulated to assist in rejecting lines of analysis that seemed inconsistent, for example, minor themes from interviews which were not corroborated by analysis from other data collection methods.

Transferability

Transferability refers to, “The degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). The presentation of findings provides detailed descriptions in terms of the stakeholders’ views and experiences with the guidance and counselling programme. These descriptions can help the reader to determine if the findings are applicable to other settings. These descriptions were derived from the participants’ interviews, my observations of the classroom sessions, document analysis and my reflexive journal. The quotes made by the participants, as well as my notes from observations and document analysis, have been included in chapter four to support the themes and subthemes which emerged, and any conclusions drawn.

According to Maxwell (2008), there are two “threats to validity that are often raised in relation to qualitative studies: researcher bias, and the effect of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied, generally known as reactivity” (pp. 240-243). Researcher’s bias “refers to ways in which data collection or analysis are distorted by the researcher’s theory, values, or preconceptions” (p. 243). However, the aim is not to eliminate bias but to understand how “researcher’s values influence the conduct and conclusions of the study” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 243). My bias may have been apparent in how I created questions to collect data. Attempts were made to achieve this by trying to come to terms with my potential bias and stating my positionality. Another threat is reactivity, which refers to the impact of the researcher, however, “the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and to use it productively” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 243). To mitigate this, when conducting interviews and observations I tried to remain as neutral as possible to reduce my impact on data collection.

Dependability

Dependability refers to, “The stability of findings over time” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). To ensure dependability the interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by me. The data was then sorted and placed in different categories, and pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to protect their privacy. Transcripts of the interviews as well as the observation protocols were filed in folders and stored in multiple ways such as on the hard drive of my computer and on my flash drive. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, I was the only person who had access to the computer and flash drive where the data was stored.

Confirmability

This is “The degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). This was addressed by a confirmability audit trail of the data collection processes, verbatim transcripts of interviews, the notes on classroom observations and the process by which transcripts were coded and themes generated (Appendix S). To ensure that the findings of the study are based on the original data, triangulation occurred between the multiple data sources.

Threats to the dependability of the data, can include inaccurately transcribing the audio recorded interviews, and not correctly sorting and storing the data. Keeping incomplete records, which do not allow independent sources to follow data collection, analysis, and interpretation procedures to link them to the study’s conclusions, are also a threat to confirmability. These issues may be reduced to an extent by recording more detailed procedures and by triangulating the data from different sources. However, using multiple data sources for triangulation can sometimes have the disadvantage of an incoherent picture of the phenomenon emerging. To mitigate this risk, I was careful when comparing themes from the different data sources to ensure that even minor themes are critically assessed to determine their relevance to answering the research questions.

Limitations

One of the possible limitations in this study is that participants may not have freely expressed themselves or may have been unconsciously influenced

by me. For example, a few students in schools A to D, initially were not totally comfortable discussing their perceptions with me, since they did not know me. I tried to make them feel as comfortable as possible and explained the process to them and what my expectations were. I also did the same thing with teachers and parents who were at times a bit apprehensive in terms of expressing themselves. All participants were reminded that their real names would not be used and whatever information they provided was confidential.

I had preconceived ideas about the guidance and counselling programme in schools and this may have influenced my interpretation of the data. I have stated my bias in the section titled “researcher positionality” (p. 123). However, for the most part I tried to reduce bias generally by asking questions in a neutral manner. I also asked my peers who have experience with qualitative research to review my analysis of the data to ensure that I was as objective as possible in my interpretation.

Most participants were selected by the guidance officers in the different schools based on the criteria provided to them by me. This could have resulted in sampling bias as the guidance officers could have selected participants who were likely to say positive things about the programme, however, the data collected does not overtly reflect this. Since individual guidance and counselling is confidential, the only stakeholders who would know the individuals who received guidance and counselling would be the guidance officer and the principal. In many cases the principals would only be aware if a referral had been completed. The guidance officers would therefore have the best knowledge of which students and parents would have been willing to participate. The guidance officers and I in some cases found it very difficult to get parents, and in some cases students, to agree to be interviewed.

Delimitations

This study is confined to only four secondary schools in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago, and therefore the conclusions arrived at may not give an accurate picture of the educational stakeholders’ perceptions of the guidance and counselling programme in other secondary schools, and in other educational districts in Trinidad.

Researcher Positionality

I have been teaching Integrated Science and Biology at Pilot School for 17 years. For 11 of these years, I was also acting as the head of the science department, a position in which I was subsequently appointed to one year ago. It is at this school that I first made my observations about the guidance and counselling programme. I have become friends with many of my co-workers and I have known the guidance officer at the school where I work for some years. She is also a past student of the school and was able to provide valuable insight into how the programme works in the school. It is possible that my close relationship with these stakeholders could have influenced the data which I collected for my pilot study because they were very comfortable with me and freely gave information. Conversely, I was a stranger to the participants in the other schools so this could have resulted in them not being as comfortable with me in terms of providing information, although generally they appeared to have no issues with the interview process. Based on my observations of the students in the NEED I felt that the guidance and counselling programme was not helping the students to the extent that it should, and this belief could have influenced my data analysis and interpretation of findings. Before commencing this investigation my knowledge of the programme was extremely limited. After conducting the study and finding out more about the programme I realized that I had unrealistic expectations of its objectives, however, this has since been clarified.

CHAPTER FOUR - DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected from four schools. Data were derived from interviews with educational stakeholders, observations of the classroom guidance sessions in each school, document analysis of the Trinidad and Tobago National Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programme (SSSD, 2008), workplans, and lesson plans used by the guidance officers, a reflexive journal and emails.

Research Questions

Over-arching question

What are the perceptions of educational stakeholders (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents and students) in the North Eastern Educational District (NEED) of Trinidad and Tobago, regarding the ways in which the guidance and counselling programme is addressing the needs of students in secondary schools?

Sub questions.

1. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is aligned to the needs of the students? (context)
2. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of the strategies and activities which have been planned to meet the needs of the students? (input)
3. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is implemented in schools? (process)
4. What are educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is:
 - (a) meeting the personal/social, career and academic needs of students? (product)
 - (b) supportive of other dimensions of youth development such as 21st century skills? (product).

(c) adapted to cater for the variation in youth development needs across the different types of secondary schools in North East Trinidad?

(product).

(d) fostering social justice? (product).

Voice: The Senior Guidance and Counselling Official (Jane)

Context Evaluation

The History of The Guidance and Counselling Programme

Jane indicated that following independence in 1962, it was recognized that there was an inadequate number of places for students in secondary schools, so a new department was created “...to look at the vocational needs of students.” In 1969, the Vocational Guidance Unit was instituted, and “*In the 1980s the name changed to the Guidance Unit, but the original thrust was vocational guidance in 1969.*” Several expansions were subsequently done, after the Black Power Revolution in 1970 when “...the government recognized that there was a need for Junior Secondary schools to be implemented to deal with young people who are out of school.” In 1988, the harsh economic climate, and changes in policy by the then National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) government resulted in the departure of the original foreign based staff who were responsible for the programme. The number of guidance officers has since increased from 34 in 2000 to 276 presently.

In 1998 there was a pilot programme to hire social workers to assist with the out of school suspension programme to help with school indiscipline. Originally the guidance officers fulfilled the role of the social workers, however, “*There was no policy document beside the cabinet note to direct and determine what was going to happen.*” The programme initially started with four teachers before being expanded.

Jane expressed doubt about whether a national needs assessment was conducted specifically for creating the programme in 1969, however, she indicated that the programme was based on stakeholder collaboration in all educational districts where members of the public were allowed to provide feedback. In terms of conducting a national needs assessment “...we were

guided by the White Paper, Education White Paper of 1993- 2003... ” and this “...gave you the background to the starting of Student Support Services Division (SSSD)... ” These consultations “...led to the development of the White Paper so SSSD came about in... January 2004, but we have a lot of background work from 2001, I was there writing and doing the drafts getting ready to launch this new division.” I think that the White Paper is predicated on human and youth development as well as social justice and youth empowerment therefore these aspects would have been part of the guidance and counselling programme’s foundation.

Meeting the Guidance and Counselling Needs of Students

Before implementing the guidance and counselling programme, a needs assessment should be conducted in each school. A “*school climate survey*,” must be done together with interviewing school staff, and making observations. This is important because “*...a programme is not developed in thin air you must look at the background of your communities, parents, everything must be taken into consideration.*” Identifying socio-economic factors, school issues and getting parental support are also necessary for programme success. Sometimes parental support is a problem and collaboration is needed between guidance officers, social workers, school safety officers and deans to conduct home visits. Since efforts are made to identify individual school issues via needs assessment, this would greatly assist in meeting the students’ needs.

Guidance officers and social workers “*...work as a team to address those poor and disadvantaged students ...*” Identifying programme assets is a criterion for the context evaluation and I consider this collaboration to be a programme asset. The identification of programme problems is also an evaluation criterion, for example, not all schools have social workers and the guidance officers sometimes had to perform their functions. Opportunities for programme improvement, criterion for the context evaluation, include getting more parental involvement and increasing the number of social workers. Students may also receive extra help during challenging times, for example, the Student Support Services Division directly helped communities during floods in 2018. This outreach can also be considered a programme asset.

I believe that although the programme appears contextually sound, it

may not achieve all its goals because of the programme problems. While it was influenced by the White Paper on Education (1993-2003), this interview uncovered uncertainty about whether a national needs assessment was conducted when developing the guidance and counselling programme and if so, when did it occur. Since the national needs assessment was possibly done many years ago, conducting one now can be an opportunity for programme improvement as the students' needs may have changed.

The Promotion of Social Justice

The guidance and counselling programme does not use the term “social justice,” but for the purpose of this evaluation I wanted to find out if this was a goal and an asset of the programme.

The White Paper 1993-2003 recognized that there was an absence of a mechanism: to provide psycho-social support to primary school children and early detection of physical, psychological, or structural barriers to learning, as a result, Student Support Services Division to also service primary schools and eventually introduce a Social Work unit to assist with the social justice intervention.

Jane also shared that the education system is “...the foremost tool used to promote social justice...” and “social mobility.” The programme has moved from focusing on academics to a more holistic thrust catering to the “*psycho-social well-being/development of students and skills necessary to make a functional transition to the world of work.*” The curriculum allowed all students to have the same opportunities, gain a greater understanding of self and to “*know their rights,*” as espoused by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. The term social justice was therefore part of the philosophical underpinning of the programme.

Since the programme nurtures the students' strengths, I feel this can be considered one of its major assets. “*It focuses on strengthening attitudes, behaviours, beliefs students need to acquire the best experience in education system possible and become well balanced adults.*” The programme nurtured these strengths by focusing on the “*psychological component,*” “*skills to better themselves,*” such as, decision-making and resiliency, “*social skills,*” good study techniques, career guidance and “*social responsibility.*” I think that these

skills show that the programme aims for holistic student development, and this is congruent with its primary goals.

Jane's statements seem aligned to the programme's mission statement, another criterion, which is, "To provide ongoing support for all students to maximize their learning potential, do well at school, achieve to their capabilities and develop holistically" (SSSD, 2008, p. 5). These views suggest that the programme has a defensible purpose, another criterion, since its purpose is beneficial to society. I think the programme appears to be well conceptualized and it has evolved from its original vocational thrust. Its holistic nature appears to be aligned to its mission and it appears to focus on the development of life and 21st century skills.

Programme assets include universal, selected, and targeted interventions being used to deal with social and cultural issues and the programme's focus in ensuring that all students are treated equally and treat each other fairly "...regardless of race/colour/class/sex..." This is especially important in a plural society like Trinidad and Tobago.

A core function of the Guidance Officer is to advocate on behalf of the child. Any injustice that is observed or impacts the school population in any way is raised with school administration, GOII, SSII/III to ensure rights of the child are adhered to. Guidance Officers also promote the revised NSCOC (National School Code of Conduct, May 2018) which addresses inappropriate behaviour by both students and staff.

If students feel they are being treated unfairly at school, they are still encouraged to abide by rules since as adults they have to follow rules at work and national laws and "*Counselling is offered to mitigate any negative perception students may have about the school.*"

The programme helped students to challenge unfair practices in society by assisting them in developing "...a higher degree of self-esteem, self-worth and a stronger sense of self and have stronger convictions ..." I think that while the programme does not use the term social justice, this appears to be part of its underlying philosophy since it uses interventions to address social and cultural issues and efforts to ensure that there is fairness.

The Programme's Role in Human and Youth Development

The promotion of human and youth development was found to be a programme priority, an evaluation criterion. *"Youth development is a broad spectrum. It's about your own skill set, your own, your talents, your vision, your dreams, parental influence on your life, societal influence, community influence..."* The programme serves as a mechanism of youth development especially with regards to achieving career goals since the youth need to have a *"vision for themselves"* and the Career Fairs provided opportunities for children *"...to meet with a wide spectrum of persons..."*

Great efforts were made to help students obtain scholarships, to place at risk students in youth camps and alternative apprenticeship and life skills programmes, such as, the Military-Led Academic Training Programme (MYLAT). This was done after it was determined that the students' needs could not be met in the traditional school system *"...it's about empowering them to have other options and other alternatives as part of your own youth development..."* I think this can be considered another of the programme's assets as part of the larger education framework.

"Human development as a concept is focused on factors like knowledge/technical skills (academic achievement/qualifications), Gross Domestic Product/ Gross/ National Product (economic factors) and life expectancy/quality of life. The guidance and counselling programme facilitates the core factors in a variety of direct and indirect ways." The students' human resource potential is developed holistically by addressing the programme's major domains (personal/social, career and academic). This can lead to *"a higher percentage of the population experiencing a higher quality of life within the country."* Variables such as *"political participation, human rights-social justice and environmental sustainability also highly correlate with the aforementioned points."* Jane's responses indicate that human and youth development are central tenets of this programme.

I believe that the promotion of healthy lifestyles is another programme asset since, *"Students are taught concepts like stress management, healthy coping mechanisms, decision-making skills, how to form healthy social relationships, how to better understand themselves. These things positively*

affect the psychological and social well-being of the students.” Healthy lifestyles are also promoted by the Health and Family Life (HFLE) curriculum. Communicable/ contagious diseases and their impact on lifestyle, and the importance of proper nutrition were also addressed since it is “...correlated to physical, psychological and academic well-being.”

Another asset of the programme is that it promotes inclusiveness, *“Within the context of equity, guidance officers provide support for students with special needs in mainstream schools and advocate for equality of treatment and access to education for the differently abled.”* Jane shared that the programme helped students to get quality education experiences which promotes lifelong learning in the following ways:

- i. It teaches skills, values, practices that allows the students to get the best possible experience out of their education.*
- ii. A focus on holistic development means that the psychological/social/domestic lives of the students are not sacrificed/ignored for academic achievement, as is the case in the traditional education model...*
- iii. It shows them education is but one step in their journey in life, being preparation for the World of Work, giving them a big picture perspective...*
- iv. It offers a re-habilitation component when need be that facilitates re-directing students or placing them in alternatives to the traditional schools...*

The programme is part of a wider framework therefore it is not expected to be operating in isolation and be solely responsible for meeting the students’ needs. Since the programme is said to be nurturing the students’ strengths this indicates that it is also aligned to positive youth development. Its overarching human development role is apparent based on its focus on developing the human resource potential of the students, its focus on Sustainable Development Goals such as good health and well-being, inclusivity and providing a quality education

Input Evaluation

Alignment of The Programme to International Standards

Jane indicated that models of programmes from other countries were

reviewed when creating Trinidad and Tobago's guidance and counselling programme. These include the American School Counsellor Association's (ASCA) model and the New Zealand model to determine "*...what is the best way for us to deliver support services to students.*" The guidance and counselling programme is globally relevant because "*...if you watch what we have here and you go online and pull it, this is almost word verbatim from the international curriculum that is there for guidance... it is the standard and a lot of countries maintain this...*" For example, for "*Latin America and South America it was 200 different countries who signed on to the changes with the global perspective.*" While Jane stated that the programme is culturally relevant, I question this since she said that content was taken verbatim. Although the guidance and counselling programme has been used since 2008, it is currently being reviewed because ... "*changes are needed to keep in alignment with international trends as well as what is happening now.*" Increased attention is being given to global relevance by introducing a fourth domain, the 'global perspective' by January 2019. This is being done because it is recognized by ASCA, and since the programme is aligned to that model "*...we have been trying to get into the new millennium 21st century and include lesson plans now for the fourth domain the global perspective.*"

The current issue of migration in Trinidad and Tobago is controversial and relevant since the world is now a global village. There needs to be awareness of this else "*...we going to make ourselves redundant.*" Presently there are children from Dominica, Venezuela, Nigeria, China and Cuba in Trinidad and Tobago and there is a "*...need to transition smoothly because of the 1989 Conventions of the Rights of the Child we can't exclude children.*" The 4th domain was required to challenge our xenophobia since non-nationals here are feeling ostracized "*...we see them more as pests, they come to destroy our families...*" Students also need to focus more on decision-making and critical thinking skills required for the 21st century to remain globally competitive. With respect to the present primary school students, in the future new jobs will be created and "*...how are we preparing them to think out of the box?*" Efforts are being made to train guidance officers to prevent them from becoming redundant to "*...speak a language that is appropriate to the*

developmental trends worldwide.” Since the programme takes into consideration the development of 21st century skills, I believe this shows its continued evolution to provide students with the requisite skills needed for the global environment.

Guidance Officer Training

Training programmes for guidance officers are important and they are conducted every July/August. Currently the focus is on the new officers who have a three-month training session. On appointment to schools, they are required to attend training sessions “...*one day a week for the month of January, just to share their findings and to ensure that they are comfortable.*” This training was necessary because “...*they’re expected to be competent,*” and the officers indicated that they appreciated the training tremendously. More training was currently provided than in the past, for example, there was a batch of guidance officers that was only given one-week training in 2014. I think this could have affected their professional competence, an evaluation criterion. A degree in guidance and counselling is not offered in Trinidad and Tobago and “...*a lot of errors were made so what I have done is trying now to avoid those errors, so for the 48 that came back I am doing a refresher training with them.*” Other professions have refresher courses, and this was needed to empower the staff. Jane noted that, “*To be a guidance officer in the States and other parts of the world you must have your masters in guidance and counselling,*” but this was not a requirement in Trinidad and Tobago. I think this has implications in terms of the professional competence of the guidance officers because if they are not properly trained then the quality of guidance and counselling given to students may be compromised. The organization of training sessions for the guidance officers shows that professional competence is being nurtured.

Strategies and Resources Used in the Programme

Career Fairs are used in schools, and on a much larger scale, such as, a US Career fair which provided thousands of students in Trinidad with information from universities from the United States, Canada, and the German embassy. Varying classroom strategies were used to meet the student’s needs such as “*role play...colour pencils, paint, the art therapy those are things I*

would recommend that guidance officers should have and of course your handbook.” The curriculum was also adapted to meet the student’s needs “...if you see the level of the academic performance of the students you use a differentiated approach...” In lower performing secondary schools, which have a large percentage of students scoring under 30% in the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA), the guidance and counselling programme for the standard five students may be adapted for their use. This flexibility was made possible because “...the manual... it goes from infants department straight to upper six and it covers lifelong learning.” Worksheets and lesson plans are also used to a large extent when delivering the curriculum.

The representatives of Student Support Services Division at secondary schools were similar to that of consultants and “...it’s a remit of the school to treat us like a department...” and provide officers with basic resources. While adequate resources were not always forthcoming, many schools were supportive. I think that the wide range of strategies used in the programme allows for adaptation and differentiation, and this suggests that the programme is flexible and inclusive of varying learner needs.

Challenges to the Guidance and Counselling Programme

When the programme initially started there were only 34 guidance officers, however, that has improved to approximately 80% coverage in 125 schools. According to international standards the ideal ratio is 1 guidance officer to 250 or 400 students depending on whether it’s based on the British, American or New Zealand model. There is the view that the current ratio should be increased to “...the international ratio even if you go 1:400 students, in larger schools we still have schools with 12 and 1400 and more students, we need to have 2 or 3 officers for those schools.” It was not possible currently, to expand the Student Support Services Division because of financial constraints.

There is also a lack of security of tenure and when guidance officer’s contracts ended “...that would have impacted the delivery of the services...” Requests for replacement guidance officers are only made if they are going to be gone for a prolonged period, for example, three to four years. There is a need for guidance officers to adapt their methods especially young officers and those who are “stuck in their own ways.” This would have an impact on the

programme's success since if curriculum delivery strategies were not adapted to meet the students' needs, they would be unsuccessful.

The current poor economic climate has resulted in the Student Support Services Division "...not always getting what we want but there is a budget especially for the delivering for career guidance." Schools may receive a small district grant for delivery of career guidance programmes, however, "*It's really for the schools that may not or don't have the means...*" Not all schools have a private place to counsel students because additional space was now also required for social workers and special education teachers. I observed all schools had offices for the guidance officers, however, at Schools B and C the offices were in the general administration area. A teacher at School B felt the location of the guidance office was inappropriate because it reduced confidentiality since people could see the students waiting outside the guidance office. I think that the efficacy of the programme can be improved if these challenges are mitigated.

Voice: The Guidance Officers

Pseudonyms were created for the guidance officers: School A- Arlene, School B- Brooke, School C- Chloe and School D- Debra. The interviews with the guidance officers generated the following themes and subthemes.

Context Evaluation

The Development and Functioning of the Guidance and Counselling Programme

The Utilisation of a National Needs Assessment in Programme Development.

Table 14

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of the Importance of a National Needs Assessment

Guidance officers	The Importance of a National Needs Assessment
Arlene	<i>"...the Ministry of Education need to do a whole needs assessment on the education system..."</i>

Guidance officers	The Importance of a National Needs Assessment
Brooke	<i>“...it (the guidance and counselling programme) really addresses a broad range of issues and potential challenges...”</i>
Chloe	<i>“...and it (the guidance and counselling programme) really kinda geared towards the child...”</i>
Debra	<i>“the students are evolving and in this, needs would change...”</i>

A more holistic approach to guidance and counselling is necessary, and a new national needs assessment should be conducted since there is a greater prevalence of gangs and drugs at the school [Arlene]. Similarly, “...it becomes necessary to reassess the needs and to restructure...” [Debra]. The officers’ responses indicate that the national needs assessment is outdated, and I consider this to be a programme problem, an evaluation criterion. This problem, however, can also be an opportunity for programme improvement, another evaluation criterion, to ensure that evolving societal issues are aligned to the programme goals. Since the programme has three major domains, it adequately addresses the students’ needs in a holistic manner [Brooke & Chloe] and this can be a programme asset, another evaluation criterion.

Limited Assistance in Helping Students with Socioeconomic Challenges.

Table 15

Guidance Officers’ Perceptions of How Students Are Helped with Socioeconomic Challenges

Guidance officers	Assistance with Socioeconomic Challenges
Arlene	<i>“To a point yuh know... I think so but again it (the guidance and counselling programme) still needs updating.”</i>
Brooke	<i>“...it (the guidance and counselling programme) stresses availability to all students...”</i>
Chloe	<i>... “Yes, social issues are covered in the programme.”</i>
Debra	<i>... “there are certain things that the guidance programme cannot reach because we don’t have funding...”</i>

The programme provides limited assistance with socio-economic challenges [Arlene] and this can be an opportunity for programme improvement. It helps students who have financial difficulties [Brooke], and such students are sometimes referred to the social worker [Chloe]. Allowances are made for students, for example, during the World of Work programme if students do not have proper attire, they can attend in their school uniform [Debra]. The limited assistance in helping all students with socio-economic challenges shows that the Students Support Services Division's mission and goals are not being totally achieved according to evaluation criteria.

Youth Needs

Table 16

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Students' Needs

Guidance officers	Students' Needs
Arlene	<i>"sometimes even if you have the father in the home, they still absent."</i>
Brooke	<i>"...students need to have more of an interest in themselves...the education process and a better understanding on how that is going to impact their quality of life later on."</i>
Chloe	<i>"...we need to get something with agriculture because we live in a rural area and remember our area is dealing with fishing, our area is dealing with forestry..."</i>
Debra	<i>"The students need to be aware of consequences for certain actions. The popular trend in the environment tends to be drug use and gang involvement."</i>

The absence of father figures is a societal problem and has resulted in many boys requiring male mentorship [Arlene]. Because of their poor socio-economic backgrounds, many students may not be exposed to a range of options, however, they need to know that it's possible to achieve greater things than their parents [Brooke]. Students also require a more diversified curriculum [Chloe]. The programme is negatively impacted by the students' unsupportive home environments [Debra]. The guidance officers expected the programme to meet the students' holistic needs and their responses suggest that the programme has a defensible purpose, an evaluation criterion.

Guidance Officer Expectations

Table 17

Guidance Officers' Expectations

Guidance officers	Expectations
Arlene	Parent and teachers: <i>"They too have a lot of expectations, magic wand again..."</i>
Brooke	<i>"My expectations is that over time there would be some observable improvement..."</i>
Chloe	Teachers: <i>"they expecting the programme to really assist the child especially where career is concerned..."</i>
Debra	<i>"...the parents don't have any expectations and that's a big problem..."</i>

The guidance officers generally had the same programme expectations such as observable student improvement, primarily in terms of character development and being able to function in society. While Arlene and Debra felt teachers had unrealistic expectations, Chloe thought they wanted the programme to focus on career guidance. Some parents understood the process took time [Brooke] and it provided an opportunity for alternative education programmes and helping students with their personal and academic issues [Chloe]. However, others exhibited a reluctance to accept that their children had problems because of the stigma towards mental illness in Trinidad and Tobago [Debra]. Students had varying programme expectations ranging from none [Arlene], to expectations linked to their goals [Brooke]. Some even saw the programme as insignificant because marks were not allocated to it during examinations [Chloe]. Initially students had few expectations, but once they used the given plan, they usually achieved positive results [Debra]. I think some stakeholders may feel the programme is failing because they are unaware of its goals and the time frame by which results can be expected. This can also be an opportunity for programme improvement to educate the stakeholders about the programme's attributes and help them to have realistic expectations.

Input Evaluation

Workplan Development

Table 18

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Workplan Development

Guidance officers	Workplan Development
Arlene	<i>"...each school has their individual needs assessment and based on this together with consulting with the principal you plan your programme."</i>
Brooke	<i>"...gambling was a big issue more so than in the other schools so we would have partnered with St. Ann's Hospital to have somebody come in and treat it from an information perspective like an addiction and work with a risk group."</i>
Chloe	<i>"the major components are the personal/social, academic and career, but one of the things we try to balance all three aspects per programme."</i>
Debra	<i>The workplan's components are ... "the theme, the objectives, the outcomes...we try to target specific outcomes as opposed to broad outcomes so it would be measurable am those are the basic components."</i>

Each term specific classes are focused upon and there is no restriction on strategies used despite it being a board school *"...remember I belong to a Catholic school, they would pitch in as well in terms of mental health awareness..."* [Arlene]. A school profile was usually conducted to inform the needs assessment by determining students' most pressing concerns and subsequently aiding in the identification of specific topics and strategies to assist them [Brooke]. The programme focused on different classes at different times. For example, career guidance is given to Form Three students since they have to choose subjects, and for Form Five ... *"post-secondary options and getting them prepared for the world of work after exams"* [Brooke]. The workplan is designed for the year and then broken down according to the term and lesson plans are created for each term [Chloe]. Circumstances sometimes arise which result in adjustments having to be made to the workplans [Debra].

Analysis of the termly workplans revealed that they all use the same format. The workplans have headings such as the classes to be taught, the number of students, the theme and topic, the baseline (the percentage of

students who are having an issue in a particular area), the success criteria (the percentage of students who have successfully met the objectives), and the methods of evaluation. In all the schools the workplans addressed the three major domains: personal/social, career and academic. The methods of evaluation were largely similar with oral questioning and activity sheets being mostly used. The guidance and counselling programme was utilised to develop the workplans and when compared, I observed that the topics and objectives in the workplans were aligned to the programme. The major difference in the workplans was that the topics varied in each school, and this provides evidence that the officers conducted needs assessments before creating them. The number of topics covered in the workplan also varied, and each term all Forms were targeted to be the recipients of the programme. The success criteria for achieving the objectives were 100% for each lesson and the development of the workplan suggests that there is a supportable plan to deliver the curriculum.

Challenges identified included time constraints and scheduling issues however, despite being timetabled for Form One classes, sometimes issues arose, such as visitors to the compound having sessions with the students and using time allocated for the programme [Brooke]. Only Form One students are rostered and Forms 2-5 are available if teachers are willing to surrender their classes, which they usually do [Brooke]. *“Sometimes there are issues with the physical compound, like the sewer system was acting up and that took weeks from proper teaching time...”* [Brooke]. Occasionally adaptations to the workplans were made because of unforeseen circumstances, for example, flooding [Chloe].

Strategies and Resources Used in the Programme

Curriculum Delivery Strategies. Brooke used technology, worksheets, games, and written and oral activities. The guidance and counselling programme was adequate to use in the classroom since *“...it’s very detailed and we also have that flexibility in terms of tailoring it for our own students”* [Brooke]. While the standards, topics, themes, and content remain the same, guidance officers can customize the activities and style of delivery to meet the students’ needs [Brooke]. Worksheets are frequently used, and the class is assisted with literacy development and lessons are simplified because

many students scored under 30% in the SEA [Chloe]. Debra used music to stimulate the students, she helped them to identify their individual learning styles, and utilised skits, and seminars. However, insufficient resources resulted in an increased use of class handouts and discussions [Debra].

Table 19

Personal/Social Strategies Used by the Guidance Officers

Guidance Officers	Personal/Social Strategies
Arlene	Different strategies are used to get the students to gain self-awareness and since each may be at different points in terms of psychosocial and cognitive development. Group work. Carnival safety. Invite organizations and support personnel. For example, a representative from the Catholic Commission spoke to the students about the impact of pornography addiction and he is usually well received.
Brooke	<i>"We always work on communication, self-esteem, managing negative emotions, whether it's anger, whether its grief, teach them certain coping and resiliency skills."</i>
Chloe	Preventative strategies.
Debra	Counselling. Referrals. <i>"...we will do the learning assessments and stuff like that but clinical assessment we don't do that..."</i>

Table 20

Career Strategies Used by the Guidance Officers

Guidance Officers	Career Strategies
Arlene	<i>"It really takes out of you because right now I have 74 students in Form Three to see and I need to see all of them before the term is out."</i> <i>"World of Work" geared to Forms Five and Six and sometimes Four, where students "...sit and do interviews, they have resume writing and they are exposed to the Ministry of Labour. They get the feel for the interview skills and how to dress..."</i> <i>Some students regret subject choice, so the programme was re-structured, "Parents are now called in to the information session and we also urge parents to encourage students to do what they want to do."</i>
Brooke	Career development is introduced in Form One. <i>"I give them a resource list, different websites that they could go to, to get further information...you need to encourage them to do that work on their own."</i>
Chloe	Career development is introduced in Form One to help students <i>"...find their interests and their abilities..."</i> so at <i>"Form Three they usually have a better idea about what they want to do."</i>
Debra	Career Fairs. Class discussion about career choices. Encourage students to do research and liase with parents to educate them to help support their children.

The major career strategies used in all four schools were the World of Work programme, Career Day and the Holland Code Test (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, RIASEC) which was used to match personality types to career interests.

Table 21

Academic Strategies Used by the Guidance Officers

Guidance Officers	Academic Strategies
Arlene	Study skills, identifying learning styles, and the use of both individual and group work. Remedial teachers help students and greater parental involvement is solicited. Students' grades are monitored both at midterm and end of term examinations and the following school year reinforcement is done. Medical checks "...maybe you not seeing well, you not seeing the board, not hearing well so what we do is we work with the parents to go get them checked medically to eliminate that..."
Brooke	The use of timetables. <i>"Teaching them, proper study conditions, the environment, in terms of lighting and noise and nutrition."</i> The importance of the length of their study sessions, rewarding themselves, using study groups, note taking and the SQ3R (survey, questions, read, recite, review) method. <i>" learning styles...so that they could tailor their own studying that works for them."</i>
Chloe	Study skills, ensuring that students have their personal space to study and the importance of proper nutrition in helping them to study. Goal setting.
Debra	Storytelling, research skills, test taking skills, the SQ3R method.

The responses of the guidance officers suggest that there are many similarities in terms of the strategies used. The major difference is that at School A, all Form Three students are provided with individual career guidance and in School C the curriculum delivery methods are simplified.

The Availability of Resources.

Table 22

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of the Availability of Resources

Guidance officers	Resource Availability
Arlene	<i>"Sometimes I go to get the school's projector and a teacher has it and I have to do a session...I have to keep on shifting and changing sessions to adapt to fit. I want to get copies of worksheets, copier not working, we have no paper ..."</i>
Brooke	<i>"Oh yeah, paper, whiteboard markers, whiteboard." "I can't complain"</i>
Chloe	<i>While an audio-visual room would be helpful, resources are generally available. "Yes, we get enough paper, we get enough markers, we get enough dusters everything, is readily available."</i>
Debra	<i>"Basic resources, I don't have internet access," and, "I would assist students' registration wise, I would assist when they doing their searches for universities, scholarships and stuff like that cause I don't have internet, it creates a disconnect."</i>

While the guidance officers at Schools B and C felt they had adequate resources those of A and D felt they did not. This shows that there is a need for a more equitable distribution of resources which is an opportunity for programme improvement.

Guidance Officer Training

Qualifications and Experience. All the guidance officers were employed at their schools for approximately five years.

Table 23

Guidance Officers' Qualifications and Experience

Guidance officers	Qualifications and Experience
Arlene	<i>A first degree is in psychology, a master's degree is in educational technology and a certificate in management and guidance and counselling and, "I'm twenty-four years in training..."</i>

Guidance officers	Qualifications and experience
Brooke	A master's in clinical psychology and training and experience from ChildLine for four years. Training for three months with different Guidance Officer IIs (GO II) and supervisors on assumption of duties. Training given in terms of, <i>"report writing, classroom management, presentation skills, communication skills, probably among other things..."</i>
Chloe	Behavioural sciences with an emphasis in psychology and a minor in sociology, <i>"I also did the foundation of guidance for two years at UWI open campus..."</i>
Debra	A bachelor's in psychology and, <i>"other degrees but not related to this particular."</i> Training from the Ministry of Education in different areas in terms of session planning to create lesson plans

Adequacy of Training.

Table 24

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Training

Guidance officers	Adequacy of Training
Arlene	Adequate training: <i>"...because of the amount of years that I spent mastering my art or trade in counselling."</i>
Brooke	Adequate training: <i>"Yeah and then we also go to shadow senior officers before we were placed on our own as well"</i>
Chloe	Adequate training: sessions are, <i>"...usually updated to meet the needs of students of our country," "...for example, Globalization sessions were added recently to meet the needs of the students from Venezuela and other countries."</i>
Debra	There are many training sessions but: <i>"...sometimes we are informed today, and the deadline is tomorrow and yuh have to register online and I did not have internet at work so as long as I am at work I can't register, by the time I get to register I can't register anymore but the classes closed..."</i>

Based on her qualification of educational psychology and on her knowledge of guidance officer training, a teacher at School B, Bree said, *"...I feel that they are not equipped to handle the magnitude of the problems and challenges that students attending high school come with."* The guidance officers were better serving as social workers to do intake and not counselling [Bree]. Previously, the senior guidance and counselling official indicated that a

degree in guidance and counselling is not offered in Trinidad and Tobago, yet guidance officers sometimes experienced difficulty in registering for the online courses. This could affect their professional competence and job performance which are evaluative criteria in this study.

While the development of the workplan and using varying strategies show that the programme has a supportable plan, issues with resource allocation, scheduling and guidance officer training can have a negative impact on its success.

Process Evaluation

Programme Implementation

The Consultation Process. Consultations seemed to occur in relatively uniform fashion.

Table 25

Guidance Officers' Perceptions About the Consultation Process

Guidance officers	The Consultation Process
Arlene	They occurred mainly with parents and teachers who usually asked for advice on issues such as classroom management. Before consultations are conducted, they are mentioned to students so “... <i>they don't feel ambushed...</i> ”
Chloe	Consultations with the Guidance Officer II, who oversees the district, and the principal are conducted during the creation of workplans, and teachers are informed about “... <i>what is going to be done, we give some consultation and feedback most of the time</i> ”
Debra	The principal understands that student information is confidential and will only be provided if it is necessary to help the child. Parental consultation is also very important.

The Referral Process.

Brooke outlined the steps in the referral process:

- i. A teacher identifies a student's issue.
- ii. The school will adapt some techniques which they think will affect the student's improvement.

- iii. If there is no improvement, the school completes a referral and attaches relevant documents such as students' attendance and students' progress report.
- iv. The principal completes and signs the referral form.
- v. The principal is supposed to have knowledge of every referral that is being forwarded and that is supposed to be sent to the Ministry of Education's Multi-disciplinary team (MDT).
- vi. The MDT is supposed to assess the student's needs and then refer to the relevant departments to assist the students in the best way possible.

...when we get a referral, we submit it and when they meet on a weekly basis when they call MDT they will assign it according to the nature of the case, who is going to take leave whether special ed, social work, guidance, or DAI, (Developmental Assessment and Intervention Unit) most of the time it's a collaborative effort. [Brooke]

Since Brooke usually got more self-referrals this could indicate that students are able to identify that they have a problem, and they have faith in the guidance officer's competence. The guidance officers reiterated that children are free to solicit their assistance anytime or they could be referred by teachers. However, *"When they come, we go through the limits to confidentiality because there are certain things we have to report ..."* [Brooke].

Referrals were not always completed punctually because sometimes you must *"...run down the teachers,"* to get them done [Arlene]. This was also noted in the other schools. Sometimes teachers were hesitant to complete referral forms because of the *"...stigma attached to mental health in Trinidad and Tobago..."* [Debra]. Teachers hesitating to complete referrals highlights a programme challenge and underscores the need for a more collaborative relationship among stakeholders. It also demonstrates the need for clarification about programme misconceptions and for destigmatizing the soliciting of psychological support from trained practitioners.

Structured Delivery of the Guidance Curriculum. From my interviews and observations of classroom sessions, all lessons were conducted in a largely similar manner. Lessons aligned to the three domains were observed in each school and analysis of the workplans showed that attention

was given to each domain. One major theme which emerged from my observations was, “Delivery of the Lesson.” Sub themes for my observations include, set induction, strategies, evaluation, classification of questions asked, 21st century skills, resources used, classroom atmosphere and challenges encountered. The guidance officers all used lesson plans which listed the domain, topic, objectives, strategies, and methods of evaluation and set inductions when introducing their topic. *“We would go with a lesson plan, so it’s not a vikey vike...”* [Brooke].

In all the schools the officers asked questions throughout the lesson to stimulate discussion, however, I observed that students asked few questions. This could indicate that students were not totally engaged. Perhaps more stimulating material could be used to elicit responses. Most of the students were attentive and listened to what was being said and they answered questions when asked. While questions in each school were asked at both low and high order cognitive levels, it was observed that they were mostly pitched at the lower levels. This was especially so at School C, possibly because the students here were generally academically weaker than those in the other schools. An example of a question pitched to the remembering/knowledge level at School A was *“How much time do you all spend doing schoolwork?”* At School B, a question which allowed for synthesis was *“Give examples of challenges you experienced when transitioning from primary school to high school and what are some of the solutions to these challenges?”* Questions were also pitched to the affective domain. At School C, the lesson on, *“Identifying emotions,”* lent itself to this with questions such as, *“How would you feel if you and your best friend fight?”* For two lessons at School D, the guidance officer did not ask many questions but focused on disseminating information to the students. A review of the lesson plans indicated that the guidance officers do not categorize their objectives according to the different levels of the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domains.

In all the schools the officers used basic resources such as markers, whiteboards, and handouts. It was observed that ICTs were not used in any of the classes. At School C, the guidance officer simplified the handouts and lessons since the students had literacy problems. She also walked around the

class and assisted students in answering questions. In contrast, at School A, the students worked independently as they were able to read the handouts themselves.

Most of the sessions were held in the classrooms except for one in School A, where they were held in the audio-visual room. In one classroom at School B, electrical problems resulted in poor lighting. One session was held prior to Carnival at the church chapel at School A, where the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), Rapport Youth Information Centre, did a lecture on sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The lecture was very interactive, and the students were engaged as could be seen from their questions and comments. Despite it being a Roman Catholic school, a school which I previously perceived as being conservative, the lecture was very frank, and students were shown graphic pictures of people with STI's. Students were also given advice during the lecture on safety precautions for Carnival such as abstaining from drugs and sexual activity.

Strategies used include storytelling at School D and a skit at C. At School C, the career guidance dictionaries used were observed to be from 2004 and this made me question the relevance of the careers in this outdated book. I noticed in all schools there was insufficient time to deliver the lesson. At School A, the school's morning assembly cut into the lesson's time while in other schools the students were unable to complete their worksheets. It was noted that the guidance officers were not scheduled for classes in School A and Forms 4-6 at School D. However, they were scheduled for Forms Two and Three at School C and Form One at School D. I observed that the guidance officers had a good rapport with the students in all the schools.

While generally the students were well-behaved and engaged throughout the lesson, I noticed that it was challenging to hold the attention of the Form One students in Schools A, B and C. Their behaviour was disruptive at times and the guidance officers occasionally had to chastise them. At School C, I observed a student putting gel in her hair and a few others were disengaged. Other challenges included student absenteeism and unpunctuality. In all the schools, the classroom atmosphere was comfortable and appeared to be conducive to learning. I did not observe any adaptations being made to cater

to the different learning styles of students or any differentiated instruction taking place. Generally, the programme appears to have a responsible plan, another evaluation criterion, as I saw efforts to align the strategies used in the classroom to what was initially planned.

Classroom Evaluation Strategies. I observed the guidance officers conducting both written and oral evaluations in each school.

Table 26

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Classroom Evaluation Strategies

Guidance officers	Evaluation strategies
Arlene	Classroom assessments are referred to as, 'evaluations' "...assessment is really something different..." Students are evaluated at the end of each session to determine what they have learnt.
Brooke	Written evaluations take the form of worksheets and when doing oral evaluations, "...basically they would be asked to either identify or demonstrate something, make some kind of commitment..."
Chloe	Evaluations at school were also conducted at the end of the term and it was important to get feedback.
Debra	Inadequate resources resulted in more oral than written evaluation being conducted. "Remember the objective is not to test and stress the students, it's to get if students grasp the concept and they are able to execute what they were taught."

It was challenging in some cases to do the evaluations because of insufficient time. This suggests that too much is planned for each lesson or more time should be allocated for each session.

The Provision of Information.

Table 27

Guidance Officers' Perceptions on the Provision of Information

Guidance officers	Provision of information
Arlene	"Normally students come to get information on schools, universities, to further studies and we explore with them."
Brooke	The "Ministry of Health talk about puberty as well as Carnival safety, the community police," and, "The Ministry of Labour, they do subject selection, resume

Guidance officers	Provision of information
Brooke	<i>writing, interview skills and I have Childline to do motivation and goal setting.”</i>
Chloe	<i>After viewing the academic performance of students’ information about alternative education institutions such as SERVOL and MYLATT was provided. “...we try to give them as much information about the role of a citizen...”</i>

Methods of Programme Evaluation

The guidance officers submit monthly statistical reports showing the number of student interventions conducted, the reasons for the interventions, and quarterly, termly, and annual reports, including qualitative cases, to the district office. Reports also include observations, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, percentage of the programme completed and success indicators [Brooke]. These reports are subsequently forwarded to the Student Support Services Division. This indicates that the programme is being monitored and efforts are being made for it to be data driven.

I was allowed permission to get statistical data from the NEED office showing the number of issues that were referred for the four schools. I perused the monthly statistical reports and observed that not all the reports were there. The reports were in manila folders not organized according to school and in some cases not even the year. I was told by the GOII that reports may be missing if guidance officers were on leave, if their contracts ended or because issues in schools sometimes prevented programme implementation. I was told that the data was uploaded onto a computer database, however, I was not allowed access to this. I felt uncomfortable using the statistics to draw conclusions about the programme because the gaps in the data would give an inaccurate depiction of the programme’s implementation and success.

Challenges to Programme Implementation

Arlene felt that she was not always seen as an “...important entity,” and was taken for granted and when management meetings were held, “your voice is not always heard as an input...” The availability of

students was an issue since only Form Ones were timetabled and the teachers of Forms Four and Five were unwilling to surrender their class time [Brooke]. *“Infrastructure, student discipline and the fact that the guidance officer is just not rostered...”* [Debra] were also challenges.

Product Evaluation

General Perceptions of Programme Outcomes

Table 28

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of General Programme Outcomes

Guidance officers	Programme Outcomes
Arlene	<i>“...students might just see me once and they use the techniques given to them in terms of how they could cope and the things that they could use, and I don't see them again”</i>
Brooke	<i>“...it allows them to take responsibility for their own choices and their own efforts and not make excuses or blame circumstances...”</i>
Chloe	<i>“...the parents will come back and let you know the child came home and told you what they learnt in school and what they understand about the sessions...”</i>
Debra	<i>“...as with everything you would not reach 100%, some students for whatever reason would have a different experience but most students would benefit.”</i>

Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

Student Issues. At School A, academic stress was the primary issue and coping mechanisms were identified to deal with it. Other issues included, *“anger management...”* and bullying [Arlene]. Many of the students live sheltered lives and this could be a functional issue when they go out into society [Arlene]. Brooke mentioned issues that were similar to those at School A, *“...there is conflict, in terms of how they speak and social interaction, there is a lot of low self-esteem, there is anger management ...”* [Brooke]. *“Parent-child relationships and suicide inclinations, self-harm...”* [Chloe]. *“I would say most of the time it's not the child that have the problem, it's mostly the parent have the problem”* [Chloe]. Issues at School D include dealing with attractions at the onset of adolescence and parent-child communication issues.

Students' Personal Growth.

Table 29

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Students' Personal Growth

Guidance officer	Accepting Responsibility for Feelings
Arlene	<i>"To a point, I can't say 100% cause that's something that is difficult to evaluate..."</i>
Brooke	<i>"In terms of individual counselling you see that happening rather than in the classroom basis."</i>
Chloe	They didn't like to accept responsibility for their actions however, taking responsibility improved with maturity.
Debra	<i>"it helps them to accept and take responsibility for their feelings as long as the student gets all the interventions needed."</i> Interventions would not work, <i>"if the child is not getting the additional support whether its mental health or social support at home."</i>
Management of Change	
Arlene	Difficult to say because the programme was long-term, and the results are not always seen immediately.
Brooke	Helpful, <i>"...because most of the time you counsel there is some change required."</i>
Chloe	Helpful despite student challenges.
Debra	<i>"...the programme helps them to learn appropriate behaviours and how to manage the information that they have..."</i>
Personal Safety	
Arlene	<i>"...we do a programme called Carnival safety... it includes human trafficking ...giving students the information that they need to be able to avoid trouble..."</i>
Brooke	Programmes such as Carnival safety helped students to learn appropriate boundaries, how to interact with the opposite sex and to have greater self-respect.
Chloe	Helpful with respect to safety while travelling. Many times, personal safety advice was negated by the influence of the home environment.
Debra	Despite efforts it wasn't possible to <i>"...ensure personal safety for all the students..."</i> ... <i>"we still have some students that end up in risky situations."</i>

Benefits of the Consultation Process.

Table 30

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of the Benefits of the Consultation Process

Guidance officers	Benefits of Consultations
Arlene	<i>"I don't have an issue with consulting or seeing parents at times." The principal has an open-door policy and parents are supportive.</i>
Brooke	<i>Beneficial if, "it's done right in terms of partnering with the teachers..." Many times, communication between students and parents was poor, and it is critical that a third party is there to mediate.</i>
Chloe	<i>"...it helps the parent understand what is happening with their child in the school environment. It is all geared to assist the child in their academic or social development."</i>
Debra	<i>"...we consult with a lot of stakeholders, internal and externally and am both are very helpful, and we depend very heavily on the external when we don't have the internal."</i>

Career Guidance and Counselling

The guidance officers indicated that career uncertainty was the major career guidance issue. Other issues include students sometimes identifying suitable careers but were concerned that their grades were unsatisfactory to pursue them. Due to financial constraints, they frequently could not afford to go after their chosen careers, and they were unaware of other options [Debra]. Career guidance helped the students since *"...it causes their eyes to be open..."* [Arlene]. However, there are doubts about its long-term benefits because, they don't provide feedback after leaving school [Arlene]. The programme is beneficial because *"...without it they would be at a disadvantage"* [Brooke]. It assists to a large extent because of the focus on career development from Forms 1-5 and it helped students to learn about *"...their own talents, interests and abilities"* [Chloe]. Career guidance is successful because *"...a lot of my students have graduated they have gone on to university, to getting good jobs..."* [Debra].

Negative Parental Influence. This challenge emerged at Schools A and D. These schools receive students who perform better in the SEA

examination, however, *“Too many times we have had students come to say it’s my mother wanted me to do science, I can’t cope with the science miss...”*

[Arlene]. This can have serious repercussions as students may be forced to choose subjects they dislike or cannot cope with, and it could have a negative psychological impact on them. More emphasis should be placed on educating the parents about the negative consequences of forcing their children to pursue careers not aligned to their interests because it can affect their life satisfaction.

Academic Guidance and Counselling

Students coping with academics, and time management are the major problems [Arlene & Debra]. The slower students get frustrated because *“...they not keeping up with the rest of the class.”* [Arlene]. They need help to learn new study skills as well as completing applications for universities and scholarships [Debra]. They have problems with study skills, a lack of motivation and exam anxiety [Brooke]. Academic guidance benefitted the students, *“For example, preparation for test taking, the role and responsibilities of a student, time management skills etc”* [Chloe].

Students’ grades are constantly monitored, and attempts are made to adapt approaches depending on their performance *“...once counsel is being adhered they benefit greatly, this was seen recently with the end of term exams and Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) Exams”* [Arlene]. The results of academic guidance are not just seen in terms of better grades, but an improved attitude to schoolwork and *“...self-confidence towards academic study”* [Arlene]. There has been an improvement in academic performance over the last few years especially at the CSEC level [Brooke]. *“Academic guidance assists students understanding and developing effective study skills”* [Chloe]. Strategies used helped the students *“...to see the importance of academic performance, the relevance of school...”* [Debra]. Interventions have also contributed to a reduction in the dropout rate and, *“100% of students receiving academic guidance perform better after completing guidance”* [Debra].

While the consensus is that the academic guidance is having a generally positive impact on students’ academic performance, there are challenges, *“I think when they just don’t apply when we do sessions with them, or they didn’t comprehend what was done”* [Arlene]. The students also exhibit a lack of

perseverance when using strategies [Chloe] and this suggests that new strategies should be conceptualized to help them.

Programme Evaluation

Programme evaluations are done termly, and they are determined to be meeting their objectives by “...*observations of behavioural adjustment and change in attitudes in the main areas personal/social, career and academic*” [Arlene]. Despite it being sometimes difficult to determine if objectives are met since human behaviour was difficult to measure, the programme is achieving some of its objectives [Arlene]. Quantitative evaluation indicators such as student suspensions and grades give a good indication of the efficacy of the programme, however, “...*to a slightly lesser extent the self-report depends on the honesty of the student...*” [Brooke]. The counselling process would be more successful if students saw the value of counselling and participated in it wholeheartedly [Brooke]. Evaluations “...*may not be that accurate because children have a tendency to forget...*” and repetition of lessons is important. [Chloe]. Feedback from teachers about the students’ performance give an indication of the programme’s ability to achieve its goals, since, “*The child would have improved whether it was grades, attendance in class, attendance in school, just general deportment depending on the issue that the child has*” [Debra]. The guidance officers’ perceptions suggest that the programme is helping the students with all three domains but to different extents in each school. This also suggests that the programme has merit and worth which are evaluation criteria.

The Development of 21st Century Skills

The guidance and counselling programme states that the guidance curriculum benefits both parents and students by preparing students for “...*the challenges of the 21st century and beyond through academic, career and personal/social development*” (SSSD, 2008, pp. 37-38). The programme identifies the need for lifelong learning and recognizes that changing global and educational issues require students to learn new skills. While it identifies numerous skills for students in secondary schools to learn it doesn’t specifically indicate which of them are 21st century skills. I used a list of skills identified from a meta-evaluation by the World Economic Forum (2015) to

identify which of the skills learnt by the students were specifically 21st century skills.

The Absence of Foundational Literacies. The guidance officers indicated that foundational literacy was not really part of the programme's mandate.

Table 31

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Foundational Literacies

Guidance officers	Foundational Literacies Taught
Arlene	Minimal assistance with literacy, numeracy, and scientific literacy. Exposure to ICT only when used in the classroom. Assistance with financial literacy. Cultural and civic literacy touched on when learning about good citizenship.
Brooke	Assistance with literacy through, <i>"written parts,"</i> and possibly numeracy
Debra	Civic literacy: <i>"...in terms of what is acceptable legally."</i> Literacy: <i>The most literacy we do is we require them to and read but we don't really teach literacy"</i> Financial literacy: Students are taught about the salaries for different types of jobs.

Competencies. The guidance officers indicated that the programme focused to a larger extent on the development of competencies.

Table 32

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Competencies

Guidance officers	Competencies Taught
Arlene	<i>"Yes, critical thinking, problem solving and being creative..." "we might do sessions that might cause all of these things too, communication, collaboration, character qualities...I would say all of them."</i>
Brooke	Creativity: <i>"The last project I did was self-esteem, and they would have had to make a collage or brochure or poem on themselves to indicate their positive views on themselves."</i>
Chloe	The programme helped to a large extent with <i>"...critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration..."</i>

Guidance officers	Competencies Taught
Debra	Critical thinking, problem solving especially with respect to managing relationships and conflict resolution. These skills were taught through presentations, workshops, and skits.

Critical thinking, problem solving, and communication were the most common 21st century skills I observed being taught in all the schools. For example, at School B, during the career guidance session, students had to identify a suitable post-secondary option for themselves as well as conceptualize an action plan for achieving their post-secondary options.

Character qualities.

Table 33

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Character Qualities

Guidance officers	Character Qualities Taught
Arlene	The programme helped mostly with curiosity and persistence.
Brooke	<i>"...our group work would also help them in terms of their social interaction, their leadership skills..."</i>
Chloe	All listed character qualities were focused upon, especially curiosity, adaptability, initiative, persistence, and leadership. Students need to take the initiative when entering the job market, <i>"to create new things, create new jobs."</i>
Debra	Primarily with curiosity, persistence, and adaptability, <i>"...like recently we did a programme with the prefects we were able to do leadership skills..."</i>

I observed students engaged in social and cultural awareness during the personal/social session when the NGO Rapport educated them about Carnival safety at School A. They learnt about the negative consequences of irresponsible behaviour during Carnival such as STIs, teenage pregnancy, and abortion. During the session on academic guidance at School B, adaptability was developed as students learnt about transitioning from primary to secondary school. Students were taught how to adapt to stressful situations during the personal/social lesson on stress at School D. They learnt about persistence and

grit as they were taught to keep working towards their goals during challenging situations.

The theme, “The need for change in the 21st century workforce.” emerged from document analysis of the guidance and counselling programme which aims to prepare students for “...*the challenges of the 21st century and beyond through academic, career and personal/social development*” (SSSD, 2008, pp. 37-38). The responses of the officers demonstrate that efforts to get students to develop 21st century skills are occurring. However, while the programme lists skills for the students to learn, it does not specifically state which of them are 21st century skills so this may be an opportunity for programme improvement. The 21st century skills contribute to the overall merit and worth of the programme and its focus on character qualities helps with citizenship, all which are evaluation criteria.

The Promotion of Human and Youth Development

Holistic Development Leads to Productivity. Part of the programme’s mandate is to help students academically “...*no matter what area of study to be able to become qualified in whatever their interests are whether skilled or otherwise...*” [Brooke]. Students could then transfer these skills to help them become more productive citizens [Brooke]. The programme helps the students’ holistic development, specifically with human resource development by assisting them in identifying a suitable career and the subjects which are aligned to it [Chloe]. On leaving school many students further their education sometimes to the tertiary level and on graduating they find jobs and become productive citizens [Chloe]. The programme allows students to reach their full potential by exposing them to new things, by providing them with study techniques and by preparing them for the world of work [Debra]. Success was observed because “...*lots of our past students are in UWI doing degrees, diplomas, we have some past students who are training as police officers, coast guards...*” [Debra].

The programme’s holistic nature helps improve the quality of education provided to students because “...*we can advocate on behalf of students...*” and this may cause things to change [Arlene]. “*It helps the holistic push that the Ministry is trying for...*” by teaching “...*different general skills*” [Brooke]. The

programme helps the child to set academic goals or to find alternative education programmes which develop their skills to become productive citizens [Chloe]. It assists by being “...*supplementary to the school curriculum*” [Debra]. If the school curriculum is not functioning then the programme would be unsuccessful, for example, if learning techniques are being taught but teachers are not attending classes [Debra].

Limitations to Human Development. More efforts are needed for human development to occur [Arlene]. The school’s curriculum is limited, and Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) subjects are not offered, and this reduces students’ job opportunities [Arlene]. Parents were informed that focus should not only be on academics, because “...*we need builders, contractors, sanitation workers...I think the programme needs to do more, and I think the Ministry needs to do more*” [Arlene]. Students are helped to be productive citizens, “*To a point, just like what I said before that you may not see it right away...* ” [Arlene].

The Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles. Organizations such as the Ministry of Health as well as the NGO Rapport were invited to give lectures on STIs [Arlene]. The programme helped to promote healthy lifestyles to an extent because although students had the information, they did not necessarily use it [Arlene & Brooke]. Students were taught about coping with mental health issues, puberty, hygiene, and proper nutrition. These topics were also taught at School C and since diabetes is a national issue, the government promoted good health and well-being by monitoring the students’ weight. The counselling is helpful because students who received counselling “...*are now functioning well*” [Debra].

Youth Development Outcomes. Arlene recalled her colleagues telling her that since she implemented the guidance and counselling programme at the school, there was a positive change in student behaviour and the classroom environment [Arlene]. Although the students “...*lack that interest in their own education...*” a large amount of assistance was provided to aid in goal setting and improving motivation [Brooke]. The programme assisted with youth development by helping the students to understand their interpersonal skills, by giving them a greater level of self-awareness and by helping them to choose

careers [Chloe]. At School D the students were sensitized about the negative consequences of drug use, and this resulted in some of them making positive changes while others needed extra support to make such changes [Debra].

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Table 34

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Guidance Officers		Confidence
Arlene	Improved confidence mostly with personal/social issues then career choice, and to a lesser extent academics.	
Brooke	Improved confidence in all three domains. This development especially for personal/social resulted in less school suspensions.	
Chloe	The guidance and counselling programme helps some students, but to the greatest extent with personal/social issues.	
Debra	Improved confidence primarily with career choice.	
		Competence
Arlene	To the greatest extent with career choice, to a lesser extent with personal/social and academics if they make the effort.	
Brooke	Easier to measure with academics since they are assessed. Harder to measure personal/social and career as results may only be seen in the long term.	
Chloe	It helps with personal/social and academics to an extent.	
Debra	Develops academic competence by teaching research skills. Personal/social based on students seeking help for conflict resolution. Competence with career choice is hampered by parental influence and sometimes both parents and students reject advice.	
		Character
Arlene	Development of leadership qualities.	
Brooke	<i>"...if you teach them responsibility for their own choices and coping and social interaction skills."</i>	
Chloe	Children in the school <i>"...have changed from being attention seekers who giving serious problems, to you don't even hear the child name calling in school again."</i>	
Debra	Students learn mutual respect.	

Guidance Officers		Compassion
Arlene		<i>"I get 'Miss I need to talk to you,' and they would tell me student X has some problems, he has suicidal thoughts..."</i>
Brooke		The programme indirectly helps develop compassion by focusing on communication and managing negative emotions.
Chloe		Assists to a point since they are generally compassionate to each other.
Debra		<i>"I would say yes, because even with the students, they would n't watch them fall down in the drain and leave them. They might laugh at them, but they would still pick them up."</i>
		Connections
Arlene		Improvements observed with students who had bad relationships with family and friends. Sometimes students disregarded advice.
Brooke		<i>"...there is no guarantee that they would apply what they are learning...I can't say with certainty."</i>
Chloe		It helps but positive impact sometimes negated by negative home environment.
Debra		Improved relationships with family and friends.
		Contribution
Arlene & Brooke		Helps students contribute because of the programme's holistic nature.
Chloe		It helps since, <i>"a lot of information and preventative programmes are done to help the child not to be involved in anything that will discredit them, their family and the school..."</i>
Debra		<i>"I believe so."</i>

Programme Adaptations

Despite having more than twenty years' experience, when first employed at School A, Arlene had *"To think like a male at times, to be able to reach them I had to learn how to communicate to males, as females we talk down to them, I had to adapt and learn quick..."* This was challenging at first, but in time the students' trust was gained and techniques and approaches to them were varied. She expressed her surprise about how much more openly they interact with her now.

At School B most of the students were from a lower socio-economic background, however, *"...all of the students need to be exposed to the same information as a higher economic bracket..."* [Brooke]. Adaptations to help the less fortunate include when the students had mock interviews in the World of Work programme, they were allowed to wear their school uniforms if they could not afford professionally made suits. While School B seemed to be getting students with higher grades at SEA, efforts were made to adapt delivery of the guidance curriculum by trying *"...to balance the written activities between matching their ability and helping them to improve their level of literacy"* [Brooke]. Brooke also read the worksheets for the students who had literacy challenges, but this was not a frequent occurrence.

At School C, because most of the students scored less than 30% in the SEA examination, the programme was simplified, and assistance was provided with literacy *"...so that the children will be able to understand ..."* [Chloe]. The guidance officer responsible for Forms 1-3 at School D, identified the students' needs and use strategies to address them. When the students were promoted to Forms 4-6, the other guidance officer, Debra, would identify their new needs and tried to adapt her programme *"...to ensure that the students at the end of school have a whole knowledge base and they could make the right choices."* I observed that only minor adaptations were made to curriculum delivery in the schools, and this suggests that apart from literacy issues, the needs of the students across schools are largely similar.

Improving Social Justice

A Holistic Approach to Meeting Students' Needs.

Table 35

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Meeting the Students' Needs

Guidance officers	Meeting the Students' Needs
Arlene	Identification of the students' needs as well as finding additional resources and support systems when needed using a holistic approach.
Brooke	Through a holistic approach. <i>... "it's mainly allowing them to be flexible and resilient to be able to manage whatever changes, so they are not dependent on us..."</i>
Chloe	Identification of the students' strengths, interests and help to develop their non-academic skills.
Debra	Through a holistic approach. <i>"The programme does affect those concerns (personal/social and academic) but as I said before we would address concerns that are related to career development."</i>

While the guidance officers felt that the programme helped to nurture the students' strengths through its holistic approach Debra indicated that it was more focused on career guidance.

Methods of Assisting with Social and Cultural Issues.

Table 36

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Assisting Students with their Social and Cultural Issues

Guidance officers	Social and Cultural Issues
Arlene	<i>"...so that they are able to deal within their communities, within their school in terms of how they deal with the gangs, even bullying..."</i>
Brooke	<i>"A lot of it is finding an identity and having sense of self-worth and self-esteem and respect for others..."</i>
Chloe	Interventions are done for issues such as smoking and drinking. Rehab centres were invited to lecture about <i>"...the consequences of drug use, the consequences of gambling"</i>
Debra	<i>"The guidance programme is not going to coerce students into certain cultural things." Students are taught, "Respect for different races, religious respect, ethnicity, people from different cultures"</i>

Student Advocacy.

Table 37

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Student Advocacy

Guidance officers	Student Advocacy
Arlene	<i>"...we are advocates for the students so anything which I think infringes on the students' constitutional right..."</i>
Brooke	<i>"...a student was uncomfortable with the physical actions of a teacher right, so we took it forward from there."</i>
Chloe	<i>"...remember the guidance programme it fights for the child, the emphasis is on the child. Yes, the school have its own policies, its own rules, that the child has to follow...but we fight for the child."</i>
Debra	<i>"...we are the voice of the students in the school..." "we encourage the students to write and inform the relevant persons so that they can get help."</i>

Fairness in School and Society. All the guidance officers felt the programme helped students to stand up for their rights and demand equality of treatment when they entered society. They indicated that the programme treated all the students equally and helped them to treat each other equally.

Table 38

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of the Programme's Assistance with Fairness

Guidance officers	Fairness in School and Society
Arlene	Attempts were made to develop self-awareness and assertiveness. Students were educated about national laws for preparation for society.
Brooke	Assists with managing negative emotions so if treated unfairly they <i>"...should be able to handle it in a responsible and respectful manner as opposed to do something that is not in their best interest..."</i>
Chloe	Helps students stand up for their rights, e.g. The Ministry of Labour lectured to students about unfair workplace practices.
Debra	If the Ministry of Labour did not attend school, then I would <i>"...educate the students in terms of what is expected in the workplace, fair wages, fair work practices, fair work hours"</i>

The Use of Data to Inform the Guidance and Counselling

Programme.

Table 39

Guidance Officers' Perceptions of Data Use

Guidance officers	Efforts to have a Data Driven Programme
Arlene	The use of evaluations during the term. Monthly, termly, and annual reports. Subject choice issues led to the programme successfully being readjusted by obtaining parental involvement.
Brooke	Needs assessments and consultations were used to inform the programme. Annual evaluations used to improve the programme for the following year.
Chloe	If any trends are observed e.g. "heightened sexuality" administration is notified and arrangements are made to "invite people to help address them "before it reach to a situation that it cannot control..."
Debra	The use of assessments and evaluations. Teachers and students give feedback which is used during programme creation. Efforts to use data to change school policies are not always considered by the school's administration.

Programme Isolation

The guidance officers' responses indicate that the programme was isolated to a greater extent in Schools A and D, than B and C. *"I feel sometimes isolation because they don't see the value of it..."* [Arlene]. *"I don't think it's in isolation, I don't know all the members of staff across the board will be aware as everyone else."* [Arlene]. Chloe usually received assistance from the teachers. *"We try to make it integrated into the schools' programme but sometimes it comes off as if it is in isolation because other stakeholders don't always buy in to the programme..."* and *"it is really meant to complement the curriculum..."* [Debra]. The misconception that the programme's purpose is solely to counsel students has resulted from some teachers having insufficient knowledge about its implementation [Debra].

Commentary

The guidance officers' views suggest that according to the criterion of societal values the programme is more effective with some aspects than others.

It appears to help with citizenship, however, I get the impression that its standards can be improved by a new needs assessment. I feel that while there is equality more effort is needed for equity. Their responses suggest that according to evaluation criteria, the programme has merit, worth and a defensible purpose, however, the laudable outcomes are not at the desired level.

Voice: The Teachers

The teachers' pseudonyms are: School A- Andrew and Anita, School B- Bonnie and Bree, School C- Cathy and Curt, and School D- Dora and Demi.

Context Evaluation

Youth Needs

Helping students to deal with peer pressure and to avoid drugs are the most important youth needs [Andrew]. The youth need *"...a sense of who they are, a sense of family, care for the environment, care for the fellow man, civic mindedness, responsibility, ownership, the ability to cope with failure and basically just being a good role model"* [Anita]. Students desire security at home, to be taught proper communication skills [Bonnie], assistance with public speaking and to have a better understanding of themselves, their sexuality, and their purpose [Bree].

A more diversified curriculum is required, *"Things to cater to the needs of the kids since we get children below 30%, 0-30 so they expect us to work a magic wand in from 5 CXC to pass exams?"* [Cathy]. Students should be exposed to ICT literacy and while the curriculum was not very diverse, the school has introduced new subjects such as food and nutrition, beauty culture, clothing and textile and technology education [Cathy]. Strong leadership skills, morals, and values and *"...cultural integration as well as how they could impact on the future..."* are also important [Curt].

Students mostly need *"...a strong academic foundation..."* and to change their confrontational nature. They should stop looking for instantaneous gratification and they require assistance with stress, time management, and coping skills, because their home issues are *"...preventing their progress..."* [Dora]. Except for diversifying the school curriculum, it appears that the

teachers' perceptions of the students' needs are addressed by the current programme. This together with the perceived holistic nature of the programme can be considered as assets according to evaluative criterion.

The teachers were unable to identify programme goals but felt that the goals and mission should be to aid the students' holistic development. At Schools A and B, they felt it was meeting students' needs to a limited extent because previously "*...we had no systems in place and now we have a resident person who is professionally trained to deal with issues afflicting students*" [Anita]. "*I wouldn't say in a holistic way...given the magnitude of students that we have, at least 600 students*" [Bree]. Curt indicated that the guidance and counselling programme was not addressing all the students' issues. Dora felt it helped, but Demi disagreed, because the guidance officers had too many students to deal with.

The inability of the programme to meet all the students' needs and the low guidance officer to student ratio are two programme problems according to evaluation criterion. Attending to these issues provides opportunity for programme improvement, another criterion.

Teachers' Expectations

The teachers generally wanted the programme's priority, an evaluative criterion, to be addressing the students' personal/social issues and character development. While understanding the need for confidentiality, Andrew expected to be informed about cases that he referred. Character development, and a focus on, "*problem solving, conflict resolution and to some extent academics*" were Cathy's expectations. The programme's focus should not be on skills development, which do not appear to be relevant to the students, but on having someone to help them with their issues [Demi]. It might be best for the programme to focus only on career guidance [Bree]. Since the officers were overwhelmed by their workload "*...remove the aspects of counselling from the programme and leave it as guidance and maybe hire a counsellor...*" [Bree].

Improved communication, and the perception that the programme should focus on career guidance and separate trained individuals ought to be hired to counsel the students are issues which can be addressed for programme improvement. The teachers' expectations are not totally aligned to the holistic

goals and mission of the programme, and this is a programme problem.

Process Evaluation

Successful Programme Implementation

Several teachers felt the programme was successfully implemented in their schools. The programme is working “...*because in this school we don’t have any major issues...*” [Andrew]. There are no major issues with the programme, but more guidance officers are required due to the large number of students with problems [Bonnie]. The programme is well structured [Cathy], the guidance officer is proactive, and the students find her approachable [Curt]. Dora felt that the programme was beneficial so all schools should have them and to an extent she observed a positive change in student behaviour. While teachers felt that the programme was well structured and implemented, they could provide very little details on how this implementation occurred. This suggests a level of programme isolation.

Limited Knowledge of Strategies Used

While the programme was perceived to be successfully implemented the teachers had limited knowledge of the strategies used. “*I know sometimes they may invite people onto the compound for different things, for career guidance*” [Anita]. Bonnie could only recall students waiting to see the guidance officer and the officer having regular classroom sessions. The guidance officer spoke to the Form One students “...*a little bit about career guidance and understanding your body and that kind of thing*” [Bree].

While unaware of strategies used, observations of follow-up sessions with students were made [Cathy]. The guidance officer usually spoke to students individually “...*depending on the nature of the incident she might refer them to outside help*” [Curt]. Based on conversations with students, they do “...*interactive things, they would make charts, they would give a lot of handouts to students...*” [Dora]. Demi could only recall the use of worksheets.

All the teachers remembered Career Days being held at their schools where representatives from different organizations had booths on the compound to provide information to the students. Some teachers and the guidance officer discussed career choice with the students each term [Bonnie]. “World of Work,” sessions are conducted where students had mock interviews

[Cathy] and career guidance was provided to the students [Dora]. The teachers' limited knowledge about strategies can indicate that the programme is not fully integrated into the school system, and this can have implications for its success.

Student Referrals

While the guidance officers mentioned that sometimes it was a bit difficult to get teachers to complete referrals in a timely manner, it was not perceived so at School A. Most referrals are done informally since teachers sometimes asked the guidance officer to speak to students who they are concerned about, whereas some students do self-referrals [Anita]. While teachers at School B had no issues with conducting them, some teachers hesitated because “...*of the amount of information and paperwork that they need to gather to get that help*” [Bonnie].

Cathy mentioned that the referral process was sometimes hampered because the guidance officers' contracts were sometimes not renewed for a few months. Dora, a dean, felt that teachers in her school “...*tend to palm it off on me...*” Despite being a teacher at the school for five years:

I am still not fully aware of their portfolio. I am not too sure of what they do, whenever I go to the principal or to a dean concerning a student that needs counselling usually, they are referred to the social worker and from my experience and not the guidance counsellor [Demi].

This provides further evidence that the programme is not fully integrated in the schools.

The Awareness of the Provision of Information Services

The teachers at School A were mainly aware of the provision of career information. The annual Career Day sessions are very informative and the persons who visit the school are from a wide range of occupations [Anita]. Career information is provided, and mock interviews are held by the Ministry of Labour at the school's annual, “World of Work,” programme [Bree]. The guidance officers highlighted issues such as abuse and advised students who to contact if they were being abused [Bree]. A lot of information was provided but “...*there are some children who make use of the information whereas others they just don't take it seriously*” [Bonnie].

The teachers at School C mentioned mostly information with respect to the personal/social domain. The guidance officer directs students to institutions that could provide further assistance, for example, a student's house burnt down, and the guidance officer was able to direct her to different organizations to get help [Curt]. At School D, teachers were only able to give general responses about the type of information provided “...*generally information on a conducive environment for students to learn and to just achieve their maximum potential*” [Dora].

From the responses of the teachers it seems that they knew about Career Day and the World of Work because these were large scale events where they saw people visiting the school to do presentations, however, they were unaware of what occurs during classroom sessions.

Good Rapport Between Students and the Guidance Officers

“*The fact that the door is knocking so frequently is a good thing, that means they want to come and speak to her*” [Andrew]. Some students visit the guidance officer because they are, “*addicted to the office,*” [Bree]. This phrase suggests co-dependency and it can reduce the officers' time to deal with other students with more pressing issues. It is possible that children are using the guidance office as an excuse to not attend classes as was alluded to by a student. While Demi indicated that students preferred to go to teachers with problems rather than the guidance officers, generally there was a very good rapport between the students and the guidance officers. This suggests that the officers are competent at their jobs and adequately fulfil their function, criteria for this evaluation, else the students would not want to visit them.

Challenges to Programme Implementation

Table 40

Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges to Programme Implementation

School	Challenges to Programme Implementation
A	Details of what is discussed with the students and guidance officer is never shared with the teacher. The programme should be part of “ <i>a larger plan of action within the school to really probably see it working</i> ” [Andrew].

School	Challenges to Programme Implementation
B	Inadequate privacy. <i>"I can see who is attending a session and I think that interferes with client confidentiality"</i> [Bree].
C	There may be a <i>"lack of connectivity"</i> between the students and the guidance officer because she is much older. Does she keep abreast of the latest trends to be able to relate to the students? [Curt].
D	Inadequate communication between teaching staff and the guidance officer and student indiscipline [Demi].

An Inadequate Number of Guidance Officers. Except for Andrew, all the teachers felt that there were an inadequate number of guidance officers at the schools. This can have a potentially negative impact on the success of the programme. *"We need much more staff...you don't want one person here to be flustered with too many problems so that she herself will be overwhelmed with work..."* [Curt]. Demi suggested having one officer for each year group *"...so say about five to six."*

Product Evaluation

Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

Varying Outcomes. The programme primarily helped with students' personal issues and how they relate to their friends [Cathy]. *"I have seen progress with some students"* [Demi]. However, not all teachers felt that way, Bree usually had a *"trouble class,"* and although she made referrals it was still so overwhelming for the guidance officer, that help had to be requested from the school social worker. Similarly, *"...when I speak to the students about the programme, they don't seem to feel that their needs are being met..."* [Demi].

Students' Personal Growth.

Table 41

Teachers' Perceptions of Aspects of Students' Personal Growth

School	Accepting Responsibility for Feelings
A	The programme could help <i>"...provided that the student wishes to make the change"</i> [Anita].
B	Positive changes in students observed. A Form One student <i>"...use to have a lot of problems, give a lot of trouble in the school and her attitude and maturity has improved tremendously."</i> [Bonnie].

School		Accepting Responsibility for Feelings
C		<i>"The younger ones would take a while but the older ones, they really practicing that"</i> [Cathy]. Unsure because not privy to students who are counselled [Curt].
D		Helps to a small extent <i>"...I don't think the students understand, that term to take responsibility for their feelings"</i> [Dora]. Unsure [Demi].
School		Management of Change
A		Helps students in Forms 1-3 adapt to transitioning to secondary school while it helps the Forms 3-5 adapt their career goals [Andrew].
B		Improvement noted [Bonnie]. No assistance due to low guidance officer to student ratio [Bree].
C		A violent, angry student <i>"...has mellowed down drastically."</i> [Curt].
D		Helps with managing relationships, doing different subjects, and having new teachers when transitioning from primary to secondary school [Dora]. <i>"No, it wouldn't seem that way based on how the students handle change..."</i> [Demi].
		Personal Safety
A		<i>"Well, it would help..."</i> [Andrew].
B		The guidance officer invited external personnel such as nurses and fire officers to speak to the students <i>"...and the fact that we haven't been getting significant reports tells me that...something good is happening"</i> [Bonnie].
C		Although the programme has a preventative element it is more reactive than proactive [Curt].
D		<i>"...all the different types of abuses, alcohol, drugs, stay away from..."</i> [Dora]. <i>"...I don't think they (students), may act on the information or the advice given to them..."</i> [Demi].

The teachers recalled examples of positive changes in students' behaviour. One boy was very aggressive since he was abused by his father but after the guidance officer counselled him and helped him to be placed in a different environment *"...he matured over time..."* [Andrew]. Many students had *"...issues at home..."* and improved coping skills were now observed [Bonnie]. *"I would say more than 50% have changed positively"* [Curt]. Two male students were referred and *"...they looked forward to the sessions with the counsellor"* and on commencing classes they were observed to be very

calm and studious [Dora].

Challenges in Providing Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

Table 42

Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges of Providing Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

School	Challenges of Providing Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling
A	<i>"There is not a system as I said in the school where we would communicate, these are the students that are seeing Miss on a daily basis" [Anita].</i>
B	Feedback about students' progress was not given unless requested [Bonnie].
D	Detailed information about the students was not required, but students who received counselling should be identified as this could help teachers monitor their progress. <i>"Honestly I don't know one student who has gone to the guidance counsellor to get counselling... I know of students who go to the social worker. So even from my form class there are a few girls who go to the social workers, and I am able to speak to them about how that's going." "I mean their negative behaviour is so ingrained from home that it will take much more than just a few hours of counselling every week to make a difference" [Demi].</i>

Only some teachers felt the programme helped with personal/social problems. There seemed to be an ethical dilemma because while teachers wanted more information about the students, the guidance officers had to maintain confidentiality.

Positive Perception of Career Guidance

The students' major career guidance issue was career indecision [Bree & Dora]. They don't know how to conduct themselves in the workplace and sometimes they are unaware of the career options available, or the subjects required for a particular career [Cathy]. The subjects available to students are limited [Curt]. *"Students, especially at the Form Three level are really conflicted in terms of, what they want, and they are torn between what they want to do and what their parents want them to do"* [Anita]. This negative parental influence was also noted by Bonnie and Demi.

The teachers generally felt that the programme helped the students to identify a suitable career choice. *"I think it is helpful"* because exposing them

to non-traditional careers gives them more options [Andrew]. It provided a foundation for the students, however, while many participated in the Career Fair, some were not interested [Bonnie]. A student was surprised by the positive feedback which she received from the mock interviews with the Ministry of Labour and this experience helped her to be successful in a real interview [Curt].

Sometimes the programme did not help because students were unable to make a link between the careers they desired, and the subjects needed to pursue them [Bree]. The teachers at School C felt the programme was beneficial and they tried to encourage the students to focus on developing their skills even if it meant that they had to leave school and enter alternative vocational programmes. After Career Day, students had a “...*more informed approach*...” to making decisions about subject choice and their career path [Dora]. Bonnie and Dora were unaware of the career guidance strategies used and could only recall the Career Fairs being held.

Academic Guidance

Requests were made to see the students with poor academic performance, and this usually occurred because of “...*underlying issues*.” While the guidance helped, the results were not necessarily seen immediately [Andrew]. Students were rarely referred to the guidance officer for poor academic performance, as this was usually dealt with by parents and teachers [Bonnie]. When children’s underlying issues such as communication and behaviour were addressed “...*we see an improvement in the academics*” [Bonnie]. The academic guidance helped the students in “...*their belief in their ability to do a task*” [Bree]. The students’ poor socio-economic background and inadequate family support contribute to their academic difficulties [Cathy]. Some of the major academic issues are poor grades, apathy and not focusing on their schoolwork. While there are “...*some success stories, some just fall through the cracks*” [Dora]. Demi was unsure how the programme was assisting with academic performance.

Limited Knowledge of Academic Guidance. The teachers appeared to be least knowledgeable about the academic domain. The confidentiality of the sessions played a role in this, “*All I know is that they would refer them, we*

didn't have a follow up to it" [Cathy]. This limited knowledge can have implications because teachers may not be aware of their options at school to assist the students academically.

The Development of 21st Century skills

Unsure about Foundational Literacies. The teachers seemed to be unsure about whether and how foundational literacies were taught.

Table 43

Teachers' Perceptions of Foundational Literacies

School	Foundational Literacies Taught
A	Cultural, civic and ICT literacy [Andrew].
B	Unsure [Bonnie].
C	It helped indirectly with literacy and numeracy since once students' behavioural issues were addressed their academic performance improved [Cathy]. <i>"Cultural and civic literacy, learning to appreciate people from different ethnic backgrounds and their contribution towards society"</i> [Curt].
D	Cultural and civic literacy, although unsure how this was occurring [Dora]. Unaware, <i>"because we don't know much about the programme, we don't get any feedback..."</i> [Demi].

Competencies. Most teachers were able to identify the competencies taught, with seven of the eight teachers identifying communication (Table 44).

Table 44

Teachers' Perceptions of Competencies

School	Competencies Taught
A	It helped with <i>"...communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving."</i> Andrew recalled hearing the guidance officer state the termly goals she wished to achieve, and this is how he knew that competencies were taught.
B	Competencies were taught indirectly: <i>"...because once you get children to deal with their issues then other things will improve ...their literacy, creativity, communication, critical thinking, so once the inadequacies are addressed then I could see improvement in the other areas"</i> [Bonnie].
C	Improved communication with students after they were counselled for getting into conflicts was observed, and critical thinking was taught [Cathy].

School	Competencies Taught
D	Dora recalled hearing the students talk about conflict management when working together, so she felt it was helping with communication and collaboration.

While it is apparent that communication was developed to the greatest extent, emphasis may be placed on this competency to the detriment of others, or the teachers could be unaware of the extent to which the other competencies are taught.

Character qualities. The teachers felt the programme mostly developed character qualities such as leadership and social and cultural awareness. I think it's important for a plural society such as Trinidad and Tobago for social and cultural awareness to be developed to help citizens live harmoniously.

Table 45

Teachers' Perceptions of Character Qualities

School	Character Qualities Taught
A	Both teachers could not provide details as to how the programme achieved this. The development of social and cultural awareness and leadership skills. [Andrew & Anita]. Leadership Skills [Andrew].
B	<i>"I am not too sure to what level, but the character qualities, curiosity, persistence those kinds of things I could see probably help children to adapt to their environment"</i> [Bonnie].
C	Adaptability, for example, the guidance officer helped the Form One students to choose clubs at school that were aligned to their interests [Cathy]. Initiative, adaptability, social and cultural awareness, and leadership skills were developed [Curt].
D	<i>"The social and cultural awareness...we have students from different backgrounds so I know the thing about having respect and being open would definitely link to that"</i> [Dora].

The Promotion of Human and Youth Development

Assistance with Human Resource Development. At School A, both teachers felt that assisting the students with their personal/social issues aided in the development of the country's human resources. Abuse and domestic

violence resulted from a lack of emotional intelligence and, *“Helping the students to deal with their emotional issues could help them to be more productive citizens”* and it could help to *“...build a sense of civic mindedness...”* [Anita]. The programme has a supplementary role in improving education, *“If it works like how it supposed to...”* because the students’ problems at home *“...actually supersedes your issues at school...”* [Andrew]. Both teachers at School B felt that the programme could assist since it considered students’ holistic development.

The programme provided a foundation for students, however, on leaving school there was no follow up *“...to strengthen those values, those morals, those beliefs...”* [Curt]. It contributed towards personal development, although, there is doubt about whether it is improving the quality of education [Curt]. Demi questioned if enough was being done to identify the students’ skills which could contribute to human resource development. The programme helped *“...make learning for them more meaningful...”* and ... *“to me it’s an overall holistic development of the child that they provide...”* [Dora]. Demi stated *“...the things they discuss with the students it supposed to enhance the quality of their education...”* however, she expressed doubt about if this was occurring.

Career Guidance Leads to Human Resource Development. Both teachers at School B felt that the programme assisted with human resource development to an extent. The career guidance helped students to obtain employment where they would be most productive, but additional career guidance was needed [Bree]. Students could become productive citizens by improving their self-awareness, by changing their negative attitudes and bad habits as well as by helping them *“...to identify natural innate abilities that could help them in their career goal and path”* [Curt]. The programme also contributed to *“...a happy satisfied workforce...”* [Dora].

Limited Knowledge of Promoting Healthy Lifestyles. All the teachers were generally unsure how the programme helped students to improve their health and well-being. Anita felt it was beneficial, but it was possible that people had the wrong perception about the programme, *“...I perceive it to be very clandestine and not in a sinister way”*. At School B, both teachers thought

students improved after being the recipients of counselling. *“I can say that physically they look better so I suppose that will be nutrition, better thinking and better approach to their lives I can’t say 100% but I would think it would have a positive impact”* [Bonnie]. Bree felt it helped with the students’ emotional health and she recalled the guidance officer successfully getting an obese student to change his diet. The students’ ability to manage their emotions could have a positive impact on school discipline [Curt]. Dora and Demi said that the programme addressed such issues but could provide very little details about it.

The Facilitation and Impact of Youth Development

Both teachers at School A felt the programme facilitated youth development by allowing students to identify their strengths and weaknesses [Anita]. It helped to a limited extent [Bonnie] and the guidance officer’s presentations *“...would be very much in keeping with developing our young people ...”* [Bree]. Allowing former students to share their experiences with students will encourage and motivate current students [Bree]. The programme assisted students in choosing a career suited to their ability, *“So like students who can’t do the Sciences, but they like to fix hair, ok, if you like to fix hair, beauty culture is there...”* [Cathy]. The programme taught students about morals, proper decision making, leadership skills, career guidance, it provided them with coping mechanisms and developing their self-esteem [Curt]. *“I would say for some, but some I think are kinda unreachable and they are even referred further to the social worker”* [Dora]. *“It doesn’t seem like they having much of an impact,”* because positive changes in student behaviour were not observed [Demi].

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Table 46

Teachers' Perceptions of the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

School	Confidence
A	Personal/social - Both teachers felt the programme could help. With regular sessions, <i>“a person may be shy in the beginning and be able to be outspoken and explain certain situations.”</i> [Andrew] Career - Both felt it helped the most with this aspect, <i>“Yeah...because I had personal experience with that, so definitely”</i> [Anita]. Academics - Both were unsure, <i>“I’d like to believe so, I don’t have any personal experience with it...”</i> [Anita].
B	Both teachers felt it helped with all three domains: Personal/social - After undergoing grief counselling because of a parent’s death, a student experienced improvement in academics and confidence [Bree]. Career- The World of Work and Career Day programmes helped students to, <i>“make good choices in subjects and career.”</i> [Bonnie]. Academics- Students who were troubled have improved academic performance [Bree].
C	Personal/social and career- Improvement [Cathy]. Academics- Mediocre, although <i>“...some of them they wanted to write the CXC at an early age in Form Three and I know one child in particular wrote four subjects and she passed all four”</i> [Cathy]. Assisted some students [Curt].
D	Personal/social - Improvement [Dora]. No improvement [Demi]. Career - Both teachers felt it helped the most with this aspect. <i>“Yeah, because they know where they want to go and what they need to do so definitely the confidence has increased amongst them”</i> [Dora]. Academics- Improved grades [Dora]. No improvement in academic confidence [Demi].

School	Competence
A	Personal/Social - Both teachers unsure if the guidance and counselling programme helped. Career- Both teachers felt it helped. Academics - Unsure [Andrew]. "...not improved grades per se but definitely am the student became more settled in class over a period of time" [Anita].
B	Both teachers felt it assisted with all three domains but to different extents. Personal/social- It varies according to the child [Bonnie]. Career choice- Improvement [Bree]. Academics- Improved grades [Bree].
C	Improved self-esteem led to improvement in all three domains [Cathy]. <i>"...the programme provides the information but remember, the competence is only if the individual uses it."</i> [Curt].
D	Personal/social- Helped to an extent but children needed support at home [Dora]. No help [Demi]. Career- Helped to the largest extent [Dora]. Not to a large extent because their subject choices are based mainly on their parents' opinions [Demi]. Academics- Improvement because <i>"the coping skills are definitely better, the management of time is better, the stress level is better to me overall..."</i> [Dora].
	Character
A	Positive change in students' behaviour and how they relate to people [Andrew]. Unsure [Anita].
B	It helped improve their values and, <i>"respect for others."</i> [Bonnie]. Unsure but it could have a positive impact [Bree].
C	Improvement- Students who previously fought are now more proactive and settled down, possibly because of maturation [Cathy].
D	Improvement because the programme was holistic and took into consideration, <i>"morals and values."</i> It helped with respectfulness, being a good friend, trustworthiness, and helpfulness [Dora]. No evidence of character development [Demi].

School	Compassion
A	The guidance officer advised teachers how to speak to the boys to reduce bullying [Andrew]. Unsure that the programme was helping [Anita].
B	When most students realize that they are not the only ones suffering from certain problems they are compassionate to others [Bonnie]. “Not necessarily, they still aggressive, but we’re working on them” [Bree].
C	Both teachers felt it helped increase the level of compassion. “We have some girls who usually play netball and suffers anxiety attack and children who you would not think about having to help they are the first to pick them up.” [Cathy].
D	It helped [Dora]. It did not help [Demi].
Connections	
	All the teachers felt that the programme helped or could help the students to improve their interpersonal relationships.
A	Student gained confidence “...he telling his dad...what you did affected me in such a way I did not appreciate...” [Anita].
B	“We had a student who was very disrespectful to her mom she actually kicked her mom, and we had her do a formal apology in our presence as well and the student has gone on to do great things.” [Bree].
C	“...they would explain how to deal with people like simple manners and respect and then having respect for adults...” [Cathy].
D	It assisted to an extent but could be hindered since it depended on effort from family and friends [Dora].
Contribution	
A	It helped “...to create a productive, civic minded person...” [Anita].
B	“Most definitely if you improve as an individual you have to live with other people so you will improve definitely with the society as well and make better contribution.” [Bonnie].
C	It could help by getting people to “...improve their attitude, and behaviour...” [Curt].
D	It was not beneficial because of problems with its implementation. Demi was the only teacher who felt it was not helping.

All the teachers felt that the programme facilitated youth development, except Demi. They felt it assisted with the 5Cs of PYD to different extents. Their responses show that the programme has a role as a mechanism of human and youth development, but the details of how it is doing so may not be fully understood because it's not fully integrated into the school.

Unsure of the Promotion of Social Justice

Development of Students Strengths. At Schools A and D, the teachers felt the programme developed the students' strengths by focusing on career guidance. Andrew was only aware of its role in career guidance while Dora stated that it helped by counselling the students. The student's strengths were developed because the programme focused on nurturing their self-esteem and self-confidence and by teaching them to be more accountable "...the counselling provides the owning of one's attitudes and behaviours." [Bree] The programme assisted by strongly focusing on "...those emotional areas, it targets those emotional areas and not talked about by families" [Curt].

Limited Knowledge of the Programme's Methods of Dealing with Social and Cultural Issues. Teachers had limited experience in addressing certain social and cultural issues, so they sometimes solicited the guidance officer's assistance [Andrew]. There is inadequate awareness of social and cultural issues that the programme is geared towards [Anita]. Sometimes conflicts arose because people have different ideologies and religious beliefs [Bonnie].

I have personally had a situation where there was if you want to call it racism, yes and I have seen the counsellor encouraging the students to embrace persons of all races and not make derogatory comments to the students or to each other. [Bree]

Curt was unaware if the programme was helping students with social and cultural issues. If students experience poverty the officer guides them to different organizations who can assist. Dora recalled a student who attempted suicide and through collaboration with the officer and the principal they monitored the child, and he was now showing improvement. The teachers at School D were unaware about the programme helping students to deal with issues such as racial or religious discrimination.

Unsure of the Promotion of Fairness in School and Society.

There is doubt about whether the programme is helping the students to challenge unfair societal practices [Anita & Curt], if they are being treated equally or being taught to treat each other fairly [Bonnie & Curt], and if the programme could help them deal with being treated unfairly [Dora & Demi]. While some teachers felt the programme could assist the students, few examples could be provided. *“I might say yes then all of a sudden there are fights and what we just spoke about, and they probably didn’t listen...”* [Curt]. The programme did not focus on helping socioeconomically disadvantaged students, or helped them to treat each other equally because, *“They very unkind to each other, very violent, very aggressive, they don’t treat each other with respect at all. They lack good communication and problem-solving skills, they are unable to resolve conflict peaceably”* [Demi].

However, several teachers at Schools A, B and C indicated that the guidance officers served as advocates and mediators for students. There were times when students had issues with certain teachers and, *“I have seen where the principal or guidance officer would have communicated certain issues”* [Bonnie]. The programme also fosters equity since it predominantly helped students from lower socio-economic backgrounds [Bonnie]. The guidance officer *“...is very much guided by equity and fairness for all, no favouritism, no discrimination, an open-door policy for everyone”* [Anita]. The programme was inclusive to, *“all students, race, class, disabilities...”* [Bonnie].

The programme provided an avenue for students to challenge unfair practices in society by teaching them to listen to different perspectives [Anita] and how to deal with discrimination [Bonnie]. Bree however, felt that our present culture is too passive, and we’re focused on being respectful *“...rather than confronting issues, I don’t know if we are training our students to be assertive and to express themselves, I am not seeing much avenues for expression of one’s personal views.”*

Programme Isolation

Several teachers were unable to provide much information about the programme, for example, strategies used. They had limited knowledge with respect to academic guidance, and aspects of human and youth development

and social justice, suggesting that there is a degree of programme isolation. Andrew felt that the programme was generally beneficial, and the teachers at School C corroborated what was said by Chloe, that there was a lot of collaboration. The guidance officer used calendars of events to disseminate information to them about the programme's activities [Cathy]. Isolation occurred because there was inadequate monitoring of students who were counselled, and insufficient feedback was given to teachers about the students' progress [Anita]. While the programme had the best of intentions "...you dispatch hundreds of guidance counsellors and they're not equipped to handle what's before them..." [Bree]. Isolation sometimes occurred "...because the admin is not being strong enough to incorporate it..." and inviting the guidance officers to staff meetings could give teachers insight into the students' problems [Dora]. On many occasions teachers were heard saying that they shouldn't be the ones to deal with the students' issues because that was the guidance officers' jobs [Dora].

Mixed Views on the Achievement of Programme Objectives

Generally, the programme was meeting its objectives, but more communication was needed amongst the school's stakeholders [Andrew]. It was difficult to determine if programme objectives are being achieved because "...the change may not come tomorrow, the change may be a few years from now" [Anita]. The programme met its objectives but there is doubt with respect to the extent it is doing so [Bonnie]. It achieved its objectives with respect to the career and personal/social domains but not academic [Bree]. At School C, the teachers felt that the objectives were realised in all three domains, however, "I would like to see them be more proactive and helping the teachers" [Curt]. While Dora felt that objectives were achieved especially with career guidance, Demi had a different opinion, because of the low guidance officer to student ratio.

Commentary

The responses of the teachers suggest that the programme has merit and worth, however, there is opportunity for improvement. Their responses also suggest that while the programme may have a good intent more can be done in terms of its defensible purpose and laudable outcomes. The level of programme

isolation seems to affect how it is perceived by teachers and not all of them felt it was excellent or successfully implemented.

Voice: The Parents

Pseudonyms used to identify the parents are: School A- Amy and Asha, School B- Belle and Barbara, School C- Corine and Candy, and School D- Dafne and Daisy.

Context Evaluation

Youth Needs

The boys need to understand that the outside world is very difficult, and they must be prepared to work for what they want [Amy]. It is important that they develop “...*a camaraderie instead of fighting each other...*” [Amy]. They need to know more about study skills and nutritional well-being, and teachers should reinforce social skills, especially with respect to the opposite sex [Asha]. Students also need to have ambition, behaviour, conduct and discipline [Belle]. Career guidance, help with academics and activities to relieve the child’s stress are desired [Barbara]. Students need frequent career guidance seminars because they are forgetful [Corine], as well as increased spiritual guidance [Candy], encouragement, support [Dafne], and improved social skills [Daisy].

The programme helped to “*a point,*” since my son had a “...*slight learning disability...*” and improvements occurred after using tips from the guidance officer [Amy]. “*I know that the guidance programme there...to help gear the children to a proper mind of frame...*” [Corine]. Since her daughter was now being subjected to counselling, Candy was unable to “...*give an honest opinion on it because I really don’t know what step it would take after...*” She was unaware that her daughters were subjected to the programme since Form One.

The parents were also unaware of the programme’s specific goals. Their perceptions of the students’ needs are covered under the three major programme domains so there is a measure of congruence with the programme’s goals and mission, evaluative criteria. The lack of consensus about whether the programme was meeting the students’ needs suggests that they feel the

programme is limited in terms of its defensible purpose which is evaluative criterion.

Parents' Expectations

Table 47

Parents' Expectations

School	Parents' Expectations
A	Individual counselling for personal issues and academic guidance [Amy]. The programme's priority should be mental health followed by career guidance and social and communication skills [Asha].
B	Both parents had little knowledge about the programme. The programme should focus on academics and social skills [Barbara].
C	Improving social skills. Help students to understand and manage themselves [Candy].
D	Improving social skills [Dafne].

At School A the parents wanted the programme to assist in a more holistic manner than the parents from other schools. The holistic thrust of the programme can be considered a programme asset. The parents desired that the programme's priority to be the students' personal/social issues and they did not view the career guidance domain as being very important. Their varying expectations can provide opportunity for programme improvement, another evaluation criterion.

Process Evaluation

The Importance of the Guidance and Counselling Programme

The parents all felt that the guidance and counselling programme in schools was important. *"I think it's needed...first to begin is boys and secondly the amount of outside influences, the technology and everything else that they have to deal with, they need that support..."* [Amy]. There are lines of students always waiting to see the guidance officer and this is evidence of its importance [Belle]. The programme is essential since students may not get that guidance at home so sessions should be regularly scheduled [Candy]. The programme provided a forum for students to discuss their relationship issues

[Dafne]. Daisy was happy that the guidance officers reached out to her when her daughter was experiencing issues at school and felt that they were easy to talk to and they monitored her daughter's progress.

Limited Knowledge of Strategies Used

The parents all had a vague idea about the strategies used in the programme. Strategies mentioned for personal/social development included etiquette classes, presentations on using social media and focusing on self-discipline [Asha]. The parents at School A and one each at Schools B and D indicated that counselling was used to a great extent. *"I know more mediation, more talking..."* [Belle].

"She (the guidance officer) ...will bring in like the police officers, other people from different Ministries to speak to them on different things that affects them..." [Corine]. Candy was unable to identify any strategies used despite having two daughters in the school at the Form Four level, one of whom was receiving individual counselling.

At School A, parents recalled the guidance officer having career guidance seminars, using handouts and a Career Fair. Career Fairs were not very effective because their focus seemed to be on marketing educational institutions rather than on providing career guidance [Asha]. Belle could only recall the Career Fair, while Barbara could not identify any strategies used. At School C, both parents shared that the guidance officer helped their children choose subjects. Daisy could only remember her daughter bringing home paraphernalia from the different organizations from the Career Fair.

The parents of School A were able to give some information about strategies used for academics, but little was forthcoming from the other schools. *"Study habits, how to organize a timetable, how to focus"* [Amy]. I got the impression that generally there was inadequate communication between children and their parents about daily school activities.

Students' Rapport with the Guidance Officer

The guidance officer's positive rapport with the students was a recurrent theme *"...he was able to come to her, feel comfortable, express himself and she was able to not just listen but do something about it, which made him confident that he can trust her..."* [Amy]. The guidance officer is

very persistent and her methods of interacting with the children results in positive changes [Corine]. While conducting interviews, I observed that there were always knocks at the door which gave the impression that the programme is being used by the students. The good rapport provides some evidence of the guidance officers' professional competence and job performance. If they were not doing their jobs the students might be unwilling to seek their assistance.

Challenges to Programme Implementation

A Lack of Awareness of Information. Despite information being provided with respect to all three programme domains, the parents had limited knowledge. *"I really wouldn't be able to tell you because as I said it was a few years ago...I know she gave them a lot of information..."* [Amy]. Information about career guidance, study habits and having an appropriate attitude to work was provided [Asha]. The guidance officer addressed many issues but focused on career guidance and a student who after pursuing tertiary studies returned to the guidance officer for advice [Belle]. Individual discussions were held with my grandson about his academics and a timetable was given to him [Barbara]. Students were told *"...ways how to prevent themselves from being abused and even though they are abused in any form, who you can talk to..."* [Corine]. Guidance was given with respect to subject choice [Candy] and the guidance officer also provided information to get the students involved in extracurricular activities [Dafne].

Inadequate Programme Support.

Table 48

Parents' Perceptions of Programme Support

School	Programme Support
A	<i>"There is too much red tape when there are strategies that are innovative and the length of time taken to make decisions with regard to the administration in terms of the that particular workshops or that particular strategy that can have on the school, it's too long."</i> <i>"There is the stigma attached to mental health as well in terms of the general public that is a damper in terms of sharing information that can help our boys ..."</i> The guidance officer does not have a good support system [Asha].
C	Disrespect from students was the guidance officer's biggest challenge [Corine].

School	Programme Support
D	... <i>“they may leave certain things for the guidance officer, to do on their own, the school not giving them their support”</i> [Dafne].

An Inadequate Number of Guidance Officers. All the parents felt that the number of guidance officers at the schools was inadequate, and this resulted in insufficient contact time with the students. *“They are spread very, very thin and one guidance officer in a school, I honestly think that’s not realistic”* [Asha]. Some parents could not identify any challenges to the implementation of the programme, and this suggests that the programme operates on the periphery of the school, and its purpose and functions have not been fully explained to them.

Product Evaluation

Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

Personal/social outcomes. All the parents felt that the programme was addressing their children’s personal/social issues. Amy’s son was better able to control his emotions and Barbara’s grandson calmed down after speaking to the guidance officer. Counselling helped my daughter to identify her problems and *“...work on it...”* and since then, *“she happier, she more friendly, more helpful...”* [Corine]. Candy felt that the programme should be helping but seemed a bit sceptical since one of her daughters was repeatedly caught in a compromising position with a young man despite receiving assistance from the guidance officer and social worker. Since receiving counselling, Daisy’s daughter had less emotional outbursts.

Students’ Personal Growth.

Table 49

Parents’ Perceptions of Students’ Personal Growth

School	Accepting Responsibility for Feelings
A	Both parents felt it helped. Son had less emotional outbursts after receiving counselling [Amy].
B	Both parents felt it helped. Grandson listened while being spoken to by the guidance officer but would act out at home [Barbara].

School	Accepting Responsibility for Feelings
C	No assistance at home, unsure about school “...you could lead a horse to water, but could you make it drink, unless it want to” [Candy].
D	“To a certain extent” [Daisy].
School	Management of Change
A	It did not help the transition from primary to secondary school [Asha].
B	The programme helped both my grandson and I to cope with domestic problems [Belle].
C	It helped my daughter [Corine]. After the guidance officer spoke to one of Candy’s daughters, Candy hoped to see a positive change.
D	Increased maturity. My son listened to the guidance officer after being spoken to about his conduct [Dafne]. Unsure because my daughter is very stubborn [Daisy].
Personal Safety	
	Parents generally not knowledgeable about personal safety.
A	Presentations about the impact of pornography on teenagers and cyber safety [Asha].
B	Information on the use of alcohol and cigarettes [Barbara].
C	Information about avoiding certain places “...certain things for her not to wear that will cause other reaction from other people...” [Candy].
D	Unsure [Dafne & Daisy].

Confidentiality. A few parents were unable to give much information about how the programme helped their children because of the confidential nature of the visits to the guidance officer, especially at School A. “*I can’t say because I’m not privy to 70% of the information that is shared with regards to them as a parent*” [Asha].

Limited Knowledge of the Major Guidance and Counselling Domains

Several parents were unsure about how the programme was helping different aspects of **personal/social guidance**. Amy was doubtful about whether her son was now taking responsibility for his feelings since boys tend to hide their feelings. “*I don’t know if letters go out saying these are the topics we covered, a schedule or something like that, I have never seen that come home*” [Asha]. The parents at Schools D as well as Belle, could not say if their

children received any information about personal safety or how it was assisting them, and Candy and Daisy expressed doubt about if the programme was helping the students to develop their interpersonal relationships.

The parents had very little knowledge about **career guidance**. The major issue they identified was the children's career uncertainty. "*She would like to be a pre-school teacher, but she still not sure what she want to be*" [Candy]. The grandsons of Belle and Barbara were unable to choose suitable careers because they were unable to settle down and because of chronic absenteeism respectively.

Although career guidance began in Form One, parents of the children from the Form Two classes had the least knowledge. Belle could only say that the guidance officer exposed the students to different careers while Barbara could not give any information but felt her grandson should be able to have an idea of his future career even from a young age. Corine felt the career guidance was helpful while Candy was unsure. Dafne whose son was also in Form Two, said that not much discussion occurred on the topic. Poor parent-child communication was a reason why parents had limited knowledge especially in the case of Daisy. Only three of the parents felt that the career guidance their children received was adequate. "*It was exactly what he needed,*" [Amy], however, Asha felt it did not help to the extent that she desired, and Daisy was unsure.

Only a few parents could identify their children's major **academic issues**. Academic guidance in terms of study skills was provided [Amy]. Amy's son had "*...a slight learning disability,*" which was not initially identified, and he was referred to another department in Student Support Services Division, however, this department was "*overbooked,*" so she had to get her son tested privately. She felt the therapy should be available to all students. Asha's son's grades were poor because of a lack of effort and motivation. Academic improvements made were because of threats of corporal punishment and not because of the guidance officer [Asha].

The parents at School B did not give clear answers. My grandson performed inconsistently and could not remain focused for the entire day [Belle]. My daughter's grades improved but this was a result of counselling for

personal reasons rather than specific academic guidance [Corine]. The parents at School D could not provide any information about if the programme helped their children improve their grades or whether they received any type of academic guidance. Dafne's son usually got good grades while Daisy did not observe any improvement and mentioned that she had to constantly tell her daughter to complete her assignments. Since the parents were unsure about how the programme was helping the students, they were unable to determine if the programme was meeting its objectives according to evaluative criterion.

The Development of 21st Century Skills

Foundational Literacies. Although the guidance officers indicated that the teaching of foundational literacies was not a mandate of the programme, Asha, Corine and Dafne, felt it was helping the students with literacy. This shows that some parents have misconceptions about the programme's role and content. Amy felt it helped with literacy, civic and cultural literacy and it helped students to focus on their strengths which helped improve their academics and literacy. It assisted with, *"Literacy, they will direct them to learn to read and them kinda thing..."* [Dafne].

Competencies. The parents felt the programme developed all the competencies listed especially communication skills. However, they were only able to provide limited details. Corine and Candy mentioned creativity and problem solving but felt it helped mostly with communication skills. Daisy also mentioned communication. *"The critical thinking because she gives them strategies and how to deal with different issues, even if it's just one situation they are able to take what they learnt and use it forward"* [Amy]. *"Well, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication"* [Belle].

Character Qualities. Only four parents were able to identify character qualities which the programme developed. *"Well social and cultural awareness it comes back to the same, say no to drugs see what's going on, the crime in the country and yuh know how to be better and how to not get yourself into these things..."* [Amy]. *"They would use, the child use the person as an example of a proper leader, a role model..."* [Dafne].

Limited Knowledge of 21st Century Skills. *"Well, I can't say if the teacher helping with any of this, because he never talks and I now seeing all*

these things here, so I don't know" [Barbara]. *"I don't know much about the programme that they offer ..."* [Candy]. *"I cannot tell you for sure..."* [Daisy]. Inadequate parent-child communication seemed to be the reason for parents' dearth of knowledge, which is ironic since most stakeholders felt the programme developed communication skills to the greatest extent. I therefore question how the stakeholders are assessing the different attributes of the programme.

The Promotion of Human and Youth Development

Holistic Development. The programme focused on the students' holistic development [Amy, Asha & Candy], especially by teaching them communication and social skills [Asha], discipline and determination [Candy]. Career development helped the students to be productive citizens [Amy, Asha, Candy & Dafne]. Increased focus on the children's holistic development is needed in the programme and not just academics to improve the country's human resources [Asha]. The programme is supplemental to the curriculum in providing teachers with extra support and, *"the guidance counsellor is able to point the child in the correct direction it makes teaching easier..."* [Amy]. The programme provided information *"...with regard to attitude, and sexuality..."* [Asha]. The students sometimes had many personal problems and it helped having the guidance officer there to talk to them [Barbara]. It also helps the students to gain a sense of *"balance,"* in their lives [Candy] and it motivates them [Dafne].

The Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles. The programme mainly provided students with emotional support [Amy & Asha], it helped them to cope with problems [Barbara, Candy & Dafne] and spiritual development [Corine & Daisy]. Students were given advice about avoiding drugs [Amy] and *"...with regard to teaching the boys about what their diets should be...I don't think it's been focused on very much..."* [Asha]. Asha made such a pronouncement because she was a qualified nutritionist. With reference to her daughter's emotional health, *"I not sure as I said how she behaves at home is different at school, so I want to say yes."* [Daisy].

The Facilitation of Youth Development Via Counselling and Career Guidance. Youth development was facilitated by having the guidance officer

counsel the students and it was felt that her absence would lead to an increase in indiscipline [Amy]. Restructuring the career day to expose the students to varying career options such as events and culinary management instead of only the traditional professions such as medicine and law has helped [Amy]. Plans are also underway to diversify the curriculum to introduce topics such as environmental and agricultural sciences to provide students with different opportunities [Asha]. The guidance officer facilitated youth development by discussing issues with the students and encouraging them [Belle & Dafne]. While Daisy felt it possibly assisted, she was unsure how this was occurring, and her sentiments were echoed by the parents at School C.

Challenges with Facilitating Youth Development. *“The support system is not there to see these things come to fruition ...”* [Asha]. The boys’ needs were considered, however, sometimes only individual attention was given but other students may benefit if guidance and counselling was done across the board ... *“because boys don’t express or communicate how they feel as easily as girls...”* [Asha]. The youth are focused on instantaneous gratification and have a mediocre work ethic. When hired they demonstrate a lack of initiative, and this has led to them being perceived negatively by society.

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Table 50

Parents' Perceptions of the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

School	Confidence
A	Personal/social - Both parents felt there was improvement. My son is now able to share his feelings about uncomfortable events [Amy]. Career - Amy felt confidence improved to a greater extent than Asha. “...he was able to choose a career that he was now comfortable with, so that definitely built his confidence” [Amy]. Academics - Amy felt confidence improved to a greater extent than Asha who thought this occurred because of “...more parental input than the programme.”
B	Personal/social - Improvement. The child is now able to explain his issues [Belle]. It was not making a positive impact on his estranged relationship with his mother [Barbara]. Career - Unable to say. He never volunteered such information [Barbara]. Academics - Unable to say because of high absenteeism [Barbara].
C	Personal/social - Both parents felt there was improvement “Yes, you seeing the confidence in it cause she taking things more seriously.” [Corine]. Career - One daughter knew what she wanted to do, the other was unsure [Candy]. Academics - Improved confidence, the child tries to be more punctual to classes. It helped with the three domains [Candy].
D	Personal/social - Improvement after applying what was taught [Dafne]. Unable to say, student doesn't speak openly about feelings [Daisy]. Career - No improvement because of insufficient exposure to career guidance at the Form Two level [Dafne]. No improvement because the child is not interested in career options [Daisy]. Academics - Improved motivation for academics [Dafne]. Unable to say, student doesn't speak openly about feelings [Daisy].

School	Competence
A	Personal/Social - Both parents felt it helped to the greatest extent with personal/social issues. <i>“Well, he is able to speak now when he has issues”</i> [Amy]. Career - Improved competence in choosing a career [Amy]. No improvement [Asha]. Academics - Improvement but unsure to the extent that it helps [Amy]. Minimal improvement [Asha].
B	The programme helped improve competence in all areas [Belle]. Unsure [Barbara].
C	Personal/social - Helping one daughter more than the other [Candy]. Career choice - Unsure [Candy]. Academics - Improved competence <i>“...she able now to more focus ...”</i> [Corine].
D	Personal/social - Unsure [Dafne & Daisy]. Career - Unsure [Dafne & Daisy]. Insufficient exposure to career guidance at the Form Two level to assess how it is helping [Dafne]. Academics - Unsure [Dafne]. Daughter lacks motivation [Daisy].
	Character
	All the parents felt the programme helped with character development.
A	My son is <i>“more honest”</i> [Amy].
B	<i>“Because some children has no self-esteem by the counselling they getting that able to build self-esteem”</i> [Belle].
C	<i>“She more friendly, loving, respectful...”</i> [Corine].
D	The guidance officers, <i>“touched,”</i> on character development but Dafne unable to give any examples of how it helped.
	Compassion
A	<i>“He does no longer want to strangle his little sisters...”</i> [Asha]. Unsure [Amy].
B	... <i>“he learnt ladies first, he learn to open door now”</i> [Belle]. Unsure [Barbara].
C	Unsure [Corine & Candy]. It could help if students received counselling on entering school [Corine].
D	Children already compassionate [Dafne & Daisy]. The guidance officer needs to speak to the students about being compassionate repeatedly [Dafne].

School	Connections
A	Children always had a good relationship with their parents [Amy & Asha].
B	Helps with all relationships [Belle]. <i>"With me, but not with the mother ..."</i> [Barbara].
C	<i>"As I said before when she home always by she self, now you would see her laughing and playing and ramping with she other sisters..."</i> [Candy].
D	Helps. <i>"Yeah, because he doesn't get outrageous"</i> [Dafne]. Incremental positive changes in my daughter but this can be attributed to expected teenage behaviour [Daisy].
	Contribution
	All parents felt the programme could help the students contribute to society.
A	The holistic nature of the programme would help the students to <i>"...contribute and make a difference..."</i> [Amy].
B	The programme needs to help students with <i>"...ambition, conduct and behaviour,"</i> to be able to succeed [Belle].
C	Students can use what they learnt from talking to the guidance officer to teach others about the programme [Corine].
D	<i>"Whatever he learn, he will implement it to others in whatever way"</i> [Dafne].

Since all parents felt that the programme could help students to contribute to society this shows it helps with citizenship according to evaluative criterion.

Unsure of the Promotion of Social Justice

Limited Knowledge of Programme's Methods of Dealing with Social and Cultural Issues. The programme helped the students to deal with social and cultural issues such as drugs and crime, however, *"I don't know if I would say a lot..."* [Amy]. Discussions and workshops with respect to pornography and social media were recalled but, *"I have not seen stuff done with regard to crime and drug abuse"* [Asha]. Both parents were unsure if the programme addressed religious or racial conflicts. *"I'm assuming she would have always incorporated all cultures, I haven't seen any evidence of discrimination or anything"* [Asha]. *"I don't know if they do religions and thing... I never really ask her"* [Barbara].

At School C, the parents were unsure if social and cultural issues were addressed but Candy felt the programme could help students to be more respectful of each other's cultures. Since the school had students of differing races it is assumed that issues such as race and religion are being discussed [Dafne]. The programme dealt with issues such as crime, discrimination, and abuse [Daisy], however, Daisy could not give details on the nature of the discussions or how it was helping the students.

Limited Knowledge of Promoting Fairness in School and Society.

The guidance officer advocated for the students if they felt they were being treated unfairly [Amy & Asha]. Amy recalled a teacher making certain accusations against her son which embarrassed him. She took the matter to the guidance officer and expressed satisfaction in how the matter was settled. Both parents thought that the programme could help develop their sons' assertiveness, which would help them to challenge any unfair treatment that they experienced after leaving school. *"I think the Guidance Unit could help them come to the realization that ok this is what I believe, so this is what I will express and stand on. I am not going with the masses and the crowd"* [Asha].

While the parents from Schools B, C and D generally felt that the programme could help the students challenge unfair practices at the schools, they could not provide examples of this occurring. The students can be assisted in challenging unfair treatment because the guidance officer listens to their concerns [Barbara]. There is an *"...an open-door policy that if anything*

bothering them personal/home life, school life they could come in... ” [Daisy].

The parents expressed doubt about whether the programme could help the students become more assertive in society after leaving school. Most of them felt that all students were treated equally in the programme and that it helped the students to treat each other fairly. However, they seemed to be unsure how the programme was doing so and could not give examples. Asha felt the programme helped the students to treat each other fairly to a certain extent by helping them to improve their communication skills.

Programme Isolation

The parents had limited knowledge about various aspects of the programme such as the type of information provided to the students, the types of strategies used, 21st century skills, and they were largely unsure of whether or how the programme was fostering social justice. They were unaware about the programme’s scope, and this could result in them having misconceptions. The programme should be part of the larger education framework in the school, and by not being fully integrated it would not be fulfilling its purpose.

Commentary

The parents’ responses suggest that the programme has equity, however, because they are unaware of its specific objectives, they are unable to determine its effectiveness. They expressed the view that the programme is beneficial in many ways to the students, so therefore, it can be deduced to be having a measure of merit and worth. Since they perceive the programme as being beneficial to students and by extension society, their views suggest that it has a defensible purpose and laudable outcomes according to evaluation criteria.

Voice: The Students

Pseudonyms used to identify the students are: School A- Adam, Arjun, Abe, and Arthur, School B- Bobby, Beth, Bianca, and Bridget, School C- Claire, Colin, Cora and Carol, and School D- Dixie, Donna, Dara, and Dina.

Context Evaluation

Youth Needs

The youth need to be loved and cared for [Adam], to have a “*proper education*” [Arjun], guidance in working with others [Abe] and improving social skills and time management [Arthur]. They need more effective communication, critical thinking, cooperation and gaining knowledge about overcoming adversity [Bobby]. They require guidance, “*With everything, school, home, mental, physical everything, spiritual problems every single thing cause is messed up*” [Bridget]. There is too much schoolwork to do and more, “*free time,*” is needed [Collin]. “*They need to have respect and stop the gambling in the school and stop the pornography*” [Carol]. “*Career guidance, emotional guidance...*” [Dixie], “*social skills,*” and “*I think they need to fix their attitude...*” and to focus on their behaviour [Donna]. Students need a more diversified curriculum such as “*trades and stuff,*” communication and social skills and to be more respectful [Dara]. More life skills are needed, “*...bill payment, how to deal with the government right now in terms of like voting and stuff like that, how to manage work life and family life all these kinds of management skills...*” [Dina].

Except for diversifying the school’s curriculum or helping students to learn life skills such as paying bills, the students’ needs are addressed by the three major programme domains.

Students’ Expectations

The students of Schools A and B mostly expected the programme to assist them with their personal/social needs. Individual counselling sessions should be scheduled once per week [Adam]. “*I think the guidance counsellor should be able to assist the child in their various needs, their weakness, their failure...*” [Bianca]. Other expectations include, resolving family problems [Claire], proper deportment [Collin], advice [Cora] and personal/social and career guidance [Dixie]. Only a few students at School C and D expected the programme to help with career guidance. “*Is like to help the students with different issues, that affects them in different ways and academic, social, emotional. It’s a safe place so when nobody listening to you...*” [Dina]. Dina was the only student who expected academic guidance.

A couple students indicated that their needs were holistic while the majority felt their needs and expectations were mostly of a personal/social nature. Similarly, parents and teachers also felt the programme's focus should be dealing with personal/social issues. This suggests that the priority of the programme should be dealing with students' personal/social issues and provides an opportunity for programme improvement according to evaluative criteria. The holistic needs and expectations of the students is congruent with the programme's goals and mission and this holistic attribute can also be an asset according to evaluative criteria. The programme's holistic nature shows that it also has a defensible purpose from a contextual perspective.

Process Evaluation

Positive Views About the Guidance and Counselling Programme

All the students generally had a positive view of the guidance and counselling programme. Those at School A felt it was informative, it helped with decision-making, assisting them with personal issues and the guidance officer was doing a good job. *"This guidance counselling service, it brings, about different solutions, opportunities and solutions to young persons' problems..."* [Bobby]. At School C, the students said that the programme was informative and helped them to, *"sort out their issues"* [Carol]. However, sometimes friends encouraged students to ignore the advice of the guidance officer [Carol]. *"I feel it's very beneficial...to certain students who need extra help in some areas that may not be academic"* [Dara]. Her sentiments were also echoed by her peers who felt the programme helped students with their personal/social issues and their career choice.

The Type of Guidance and Counselling Provided

At Schools A, B and D the students recalled receiving advice with respect to all domains of the programme.

Table 51

Types of Guidance and Counselling Provided

School	Types of Guidance and Counselling
A	<i>"Yes, so she would also take a look at our academic record and ask us if we have any problems with reading..."</i>

School	Types of Guidance and Counselling
A	<i>or seeing or if we don't ask us if we need lessons and then she would try and get glasses for us" [Abe].</i>
B	<i>"Unless we come to ask, because she is the guidance officer, we have to come to her with problems she just can't come and ask us just so" [Bridget].</i>
C	Students mentioned getting academic and career advice. Guests were invited to school to give lectures on, <i>"making right choices"</i> [Cora].
D	Advice was given on, <i>"HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, job opportunities, she is talk about a lot of things that affects society"</i> [Dixie].

Strategies Used

Personal/social guidance and counselling. The students had vague recollections of the strategies used, possibly because the sessions were done mostly when they were in Forms 1-3.

Table 52

Students' Recollection of Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling Strategies

School	Personal/Social Strategies
A	Collect information from teachers. The use of handouts and private discussions [Arjun].
B	Handouts, individual counselling [Bridget]. <i>"We do like filling out information right with random questions, how do you feel about yourself? What are your goals in life? ..." [Bobby].</i>
C	Guests were invited to speak to students [Claire]. <i>"Well colouring and doing the activities with the worksheets"</i> [Carol].
D	Grief counselling and focusing on being positive [Dara]. Handouts and personality assessments to gain a greater understanding of self and different activities including group work [Dina].

Career guidance and counselling. The strategies used for career guidance in the schools were all very similar. Students found the strategies to be engaging and informative.

Table 53

Students' Recollection of Career Guidance Strategies

School	Career Guidance Strategies
A	People from different professions provided guidance during Career Day [Adam]. Class activities to align interests to career choice [Abe]. The use of handouts [Arthur].
B	Classroom discussions [Bridget].
C	The strategies used were helpful [All students].
D	Handouts outlining career and educational institutions to pursue studies [All students]. The "World of Work" Programme - Representatives from <i>"the Ministry of Labour came and interview us and we get to dress up and show our interview skills and maybe enhance our interview skills"</i> [Donna].

Academic guidance and counselling. It appears that the academic guidance sessions are limited to three measures: developing a study timetable, the use of study skills, and counselling the students.

Table 54

Students' Recollection of Academic Guidance Strategies

School	Academic Guidance Strategies
A	Revision and time management [Adam].
B	All the students at School B mentioned the use of timetables. The guidance officer stressed the importance of exercise in helping you to relax [Bobby]. Personal problems were having a negative impact on academics and the guidance officer encouraged participation in hobbies and activities which were enjoyable [Bianca].
C	Time management [Claire]. Study tips [Collin]. Unable to recall strategies since they were done two years ago [Carol].
D	The use of timetables and study tips. The guidance officer first questioned the child to determine what was causing the academic underperformance and then <i>"...the child would give reasons about what going on in their life right now and affecting their performance, so that together with the study skills will work together"</i> [Dina].

I observed that the lessons were aligned to the three major domains, and

the work and lesson plans, according to evaluative criteria. The students found the strategies to be informative and enjoyable and attempts were made to vary the activities to align them to the students' differing needs. The strategies also corresponded to the different programme domains and programme goals, criteria also used in this study. I observed students enjoying the different strategies implemented. This is corroborated by their generally positive statements about it. They felt it was informative and it provided them with solutions to their problems.

Student Evaluations. All the students recalled doing written and oral evaluations after completing lessons. *"Yes, she gives us that and normally when we answer her questions, she gives us a prize like a pen or a booklet or something..."* and ... *"sometimes it's written down or sometimes orally"* [Claire]. I observed that the students did not appear to have problems doing the evaluations. While the guidance officers wanted to do more written evaluations, this was not always possible due to inadequate resources, therefore, more oral evaluations were conducted. However, there was not always sufficient time to evaluate each child orally so this method of evaluation may not give an accurate indication about the lesson's ability to meet its objectives.

Product Evaluation

Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

Meeting Students' Needs. Several students felt that the programme was addressing their personal/social needs while a few mentioned that they did not have any problems that required them to visit the guidance officer. I got the impression that they only see themselves as beneficiaries of the programme when they go individually to the guidance officer, and they don't see the classroom guidance sessions as being part of a holistic programme. While the youth need to be loved and cared for [Adam], and to have a *"proper education"* [Arjun], Abe said *"I ent really have much needs in this school to be completely honest."* The programme helped with managing emotions, deportment and problem solving [Bobby]. It also assisted with self-awareness, but it wasn't necessary to visit the guidance officer because, *"I don't really take advice from people..."* [Dixie]. The programme meets my needs, but

students must go more frequently to sessions to derive benefits [Dara].

Students' Personal Growth. The programme helped, “...*cause I was a really shy child and now I am able to express myself better*” [Adam]. It helped, “*In life like literally take meh time in life...*” and to make good decisions [Bianca]. Dara shared that one of her friends was suicidal but after being counselled by the guidance officer he improved.

Table 55

Students' Perceptions of Aspects of Personal Growth

School	Accepting Responsibility for Feelings
A	It helped students to understand their problems and methods of addressing them [Arjun]. Only Adam felt it did not help.
B	All the students felt it helped. “ <i>I ask myself, I really should take responsibility for this, yuh know it really wasn't supposed to go this way</i> ” [Bobby].
C	Two students felt it helped e.g. My twin sister was suicidal and was successfully counselled by the guidance officer [Carol].
D	Two students felt it helped.
Management of Change	
A	Transition to new forms and coping with new subjects [Adam & Arthur]. It assisted with changes from, “ <i>little baby to puberty</i> ” [Abe].
B	“... <i>I was the most disrespectful student... from Form One I just felt a drastic change right after I spoke to the guidance counsellor...</i> ” [Bobby].
C	Students were unable to provide examples.
D	Most students felt it helped. We were advised to be more respectful to adults as we grow older [Dara].
Resiliency	
A	The students felt it assisted except Arjun who was unsure. “ <i>Yeah mentally stronger</i> ” [Arthur].
B	All students felt it helped, “... <i>she help meh to cope with what I going through right now</i> ” [Beth].
C	Only one student felt it assisted but did not express how.
D	Two students felt it helped. The programme provided strategies in overcoming obstacles in life [Dina].

School	Personal Safety
	All the students felt it helped except for Arjun and Bridget who could not recall.
A	<i>“She taught us about substance abuse, alcohol and drugs, sex, sexual abuse, like addiction to it”</i> [Arthur].
B	<i>“...when they say no smoking, drinking alcohol and thing”</i> [Bianca].
C	It helped prevent engaging in sexual activity [Claire].
D	Information was provided to protect students from all types of abuse. [Dina].

Most of the students felt that the information they received to assist with their personal/social issues was beneficial, it helped in their interaction with others [Abe], their conflicts with peers and bullying [Collin]. Personality tests conducted allowed the students to develop self-awareness [Dina]. Arjun was unable to identify personal safety strategies, and together with Bridget was unsure if they were assisting. The students at School C, seemed to be the most uncertain about how the programme was aiding them. *“To be honest I really can’t remember what she teach me beside what type of learner I is and time management”* [Dixie].

Benefits of Group Guidance Sessions. To a large extent students felt the group guidance sessions were beneficial. It helped to create and maintain friendships throughout time at school [Arjun]. *“Yuh feel confident in knowing what you going to say, don’t have to be jittery to hide yuh true feelings in front of them”* [Beth]. Bobby felt that it worked for him but that some students were not open to it. Collin did not like working in groups very much and group guidance sessions were not conducted since he was in Form One or Two. The group guidance sessions were helpful because, *“I didn’t really use to interact with much students, she really make everybody interact and just express themselves”* [Dara].

Good Rapport with the Guidance Officer

The students generally had positive perceptions of the guidance officers and they were comfortable going to them with problems. Students went to the guidance officer for advice about personal issues, *“...she is always there to help you”* [Adam]. *“Students in this school rely on the guidance counsellor, most of them don’t even go to their teachers...”* [Bridget]. *“Yes, they are*

(comfortable), because, when, as I said, when they come back from by her nobody is like ... oh my gosh, she again? They don't be like that" [Claire]. The students at School D felt that their guidance officer was friendly.

Carol expressed a different view, "Well some of them is just want to break the class and just to do nothing." It appears that visiting the guidance officer is used as an excuse by some students to avoid academic work. Since the students indicated that they have a good rapport with the guidance officer this suggests that the guidance officers were very professional and competent in the execution of their duties.

Predominantly Positive Perceptions of Career Guidance

Three of the students at School A felt that the programme was helping them to achieve their career goals. "I wanted to become a pilot, but mummy wanted me to become an engineer but now with the guidance programme I could see that is better you do something that you love and you enjoy life while at it" [Abe]. However, "It didn't really help me personally because I still confused about what career I want to choose" [Adam]. At Schools B and C all the students felt the programme helped them to choose a suitable career. At School D, all the students indicated that it assisted, except Dixie, who said, "Because she like not going into depth...she just generalizing the whole thing."

All the students felt that the **career information** they received was helpful. "She gave me information on what fields it have out there and what I should do" [Arthur]. The guests at the Career Day helped students to decide on a career [Cora]. "Yes, she has booklets that shows qualifications...she would give you them to read and they would be mostly helpful" [Dara].

Mixed Views on Subject Choice. Except for Adam, all the students at School A felt the career guidance helped them with subject choice. "With subject choice is really the parents that choose the subjects for you" [Adam]. This suggests that parents should be educated about the subject selection process to ensure that they don't negatively affect their children's career aspirations. Only one of the students at School B felt the programme helped her with subject choice. Another student indicated that she transferred into the school after students chose their subjects, so she had to accept what was given to her. At School C, three of the students felt it helped especially the

information that was provided by school visitors and teachers [Cora]. However, a challenge was the limited number of subjects available to choose from [Collin]. Dara followed the guidance officer's advice and did not pick subjects because of remuneration but because of her interests and perceived capability. Dina did not require assistance because she already knew what career she wanted to pursue.

Predominantly Positive Perception of Academic Guidance

The students at School A indicated that the academic guidance helped them. Abe said his grades improved and he went “...*from the bottom to the top 15.*” Most of the students at School B observed or experienced improved academic performance. Despite School C receiving the most students who scored less than 30% in the SEA examination in all the schools investigated, they generally felt that they did not need academic guidance. While academic strategies were provided, “*I don't really keep up with it, it was real hard*” [Cora]. This comment validates the guidance officers' statements that students are not using the strategies. At School D, most students felt it helped. Previously little effort was placed on studying but the guidance officer's advice on preparation led to improved grades [Dara].

According to evaluative criteria, the programme seemed to be helping the students with the three major domains of the programme but to different extents.

The Development of 21st Century Skills

Foundational Literacies.

Table 56

Students' Perceptions of Foundational Literacies

School	Foundational Literacies Taught
A	<i>“There are some students who can't read as well but I'm pretty sure that Miss probably sat down with them and helped them read...”</i> [Abe]. Financial Literacy was taught during lessons on budgeting money [Abe].
B	<i>“financial, yeah, it help me with a lot of stuff because I didn't know how to budget money”</i> [Bianca].
D	Financial literacy and cultural and civic literacy [Donna].

The students at School A felt the programme improved literacy and two at School B stated that it helped with literacy and financial literacy. None of the students at School C were able to identify any of the foundational literacies from the list. At School D, the students identified literacy, financial literacy, and cultural and civic literacy, however, they could not say how this was taught. While some students felt the programme was helping to develop literacy this was not really a programme mandate. A student at School A felt the guidance officer possibly had individual sessions with students who needed help with literacy although this school received the students who generally scored higher in the SEA examination. In contrast, none of the students at School C, which received students who got lower SEA scores indicated that they were receiving help to improve their literacy. However, I observed the guidance officer at School C simplifying lessons for them and helping them to read during the classroom sessions.

Competencies. All the students identified communication as a skill which was developed.

Table 57

Students' Perceptions of Competencies

School	Competencies Taught
A	The students at School B felt it helped with all the listed competencies and they were learnt through activities such as group exercises [Arjun].
B	<i>"My mom, she didn't really communicate good with me I learn other ways in which I could communicate like write a letter to her"</i> [Beth]. The programme helped with problem solving, creativity and collaboration [Bianca & Bridget].
C	All the students identified communication as the skill they were most helped with. <i>"To not talk to each other rough, to talk to each other with kind words"</i> [Carol]. Creativity was also mentioned but students could not elaborate on how it was doing so.
D	Problem solving and collaboration [Donna]. The guidance officer taught these skills using class discussions, skits, and handouts [Dara].

Character Qualities. All the students felt the programme helped develop all the character qualities listed.

Table 58

Students' Perceptions of Character Qualities

School	Character Qualities Taught
A	To the greatest extent with leadership. Initiative: <i>"my parents wouldn't have to tell me to do meh homework I would just go and do it and get it done"</i> [Adam].
B	<i>"it raising awareness towards others and it help me to want to be a social worker"</i> [Beth]. It did not help with social and cultural awareness [Bridget].
C	To the greatest extent it helped with leadership.
D	To the greatest extent it helped with social and cultural awareness.

It appears that some character qualities are focused upon to a greater extent than others. The mostly positive views of the 21st century skills suggest that the programme is helping the students to meet challenges which they may encounter in the global environment.

The Promotion of Human and Youth Development

Methods and Outcomes of Human Development. At School A most students felt the programme assisted them in meeting their full potential and nurtured their strengths by helping them to become more independent. While it provided guidance, *"...is really the students that will have to make the decisions themselves..."* [Adam]. The programme helped students to become productive citizens by providing them with information about staying away from negative influences such as drugs and social skills [Arthur]. Contrasting views included the programme being unable to improve the quality of education because it only focused on career guidance [Arjun]. Students were prepared for workforce entry since the programme improved their critical thinking skills, empowered them, and taught them that they need to take initiative and be productive [Bobby].

The programme improved understanding of the importance of choosing a career that was liked to have a satisfying life [Claire] and deportment in the workplace [Cora]. The guidance officer helped students identify a career to

contribute to society by identifying their skills and traits [Dixie] and by teaching students interview skills, writing resumes and cover letters [Dara]. The programme taught social skills and helped students to be productive by guiding them in choosing a career aligned to their needs and interests [Dina].

Guidance and Counselling Challenges. Not all students felt the programme was beneficial because, *“Most students don’t take it on until after they leave the school...”* possibly because of fear of being ridiculed by peers [Arthur]. Once police officers came to the school to talk about gambling, but *“...just the other day I did see some children gambling,”* because of peer pressure [Collin]. The students who seemed to benefit from the programme were *“...like the nerdy ones they will take it on”* [Collin].

Negative Perception of the Guidance Officer. The guidance officer could do more to help students by, *“Being more personal with the children”* and providing individual attention [Dixie]. The guidance officer did not make it clear that students could seek her assistance if they had a problem, and some students may be uncomfortable going to her [Dixie]. She was insufficiently trained to do her job because she was unable to grasp the students’ attention [Dixie]. Despite career guidance being given *“...she never really touch on how the school can give us knowledge and stuff, just choose subjects and stuff”* [Donna].

Unsure of the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles. At School A, the students were unsure how the programme was helping to promote healthy lifestyles. While Adam felt that it could help in terms of educating students on proper nutrition, his focus and that of his peers was on how the counselling was helping them with their mental health. Arjun recalled his friend who self-harmed and after being referred to the guidance officer by the teachers he was able to stop such practices. The students at School B felt that the programme was helping to promote good health, for example, by assisting with stress management and suicidal tendencies [Bianca].

The students at School C indicated that the programme helped with promoting healthy lifestyles, but they did not provide details. Collin had some knowledge about it from the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum. At School D, students recalled little emphasis being placed on

healthy lifestyles. However, Dina said when the Eastern Regional Health Authority, visited the school, they “...*spoke to us about eating healthily balanced diet, exercising regularly, how to implement fitness into your daily cycle...*” and this resulted in lifestyle changes such as eating a proper diet and exercising [Dina].

Unsure of the Facilitation of Youth Development. Abe was unable to say exactly how the programme assisted with youth development because his peers didn’t really speak about their lives. The programme helped mostly in lower school, and it was, “*scarce,*” in upper school [Arthur]. It assisted the most with students’ subject choice and study skills [Arthur]. All the students at School B felt the programme helped to facilitate youth development by, “*offering students the space to interact and explore and come up with different ideas that would strengthen abilities...*” [Bobby]. It also helped them to improve themselves, identify their weaknesses, enable them to “...*find their inner self,*” [Bianca]. The students at School C appeared unsure about how the programme was facilitating youth development. “*To be honest I find it poor,*” because some students are not focused on the lesson possibly because they felt the programme was boring [Donna]. The programme helped because “...*each session you learn something new...*” [Dina].

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Table 59

Students' Perceptions of the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

School	Confidence
A	Arjun was the only student who felt the programme did not help with all three domains. Personal/social - <i>"I didn't used to talk to people, and I more open now"</i> [Arthur]. Career - <i>"Yeah she helped me choose a career path"</i> [Adam]. Academics - <i>"...she taught me to revise more that helped me to be more confident in terms of if I'm going to be assessed"</i> [Adam].
B	Personal/social - All the students felt it helped. Confidence to walk away from negative situations was gained [Bobby]. Career - Bianca was the only student who felt it did not help to a large extent. <i>"I want to become a chef, but I still have other options I want to try, but it helping me..."</i> Academics - All the students felt it helped with academics, <i>"but it's not as effective because I don't think I put in enough work for that effectiveness"</i> [Bobby].
C	Personal/social - Only Carol indicated it helped but declined to say how. <i>"No, I don't have no personal problems"</i> [Cora]. Career - Collin already had career goals but it helped the others. The Career Day helped [Carol]. Academics - All the students felt it helped except Carol. <i>"I make a promise to myself that I must get like all meh subjects before I leave school"</i> [Cora].
D	All the students felt the programme helped with the three domains. Personal/social - <i>"I've gained the confidence in expressing myself"</i> [Dina]. Career - <i>"...she helped me..."</i> [Dara]. Academics - <i>"...she help you to identify what type of learner you is"</i> [Dixie].

School	Competence
A	Personal/Social - All students felt it helped improve competence especially in terms of communication and social skills. Career - No assistance [Arjun], unsure [Abe]. It helped [Adam & Arthur]. <i>"I feel better around my career problems...I did not know what I wanted to be at first"</i> [Arthur]. Academics - Unsure [Adam], no assistance [Arjun]. It helped [Abe & Arthur]. <i>"Well, I wouldn't say higher grades but I more focused..."</i> [Arthur].
B	All the students felt the programme helped with the three domains. Personal/social - Better able to deal with personal and social problems [Bobby]. Career choice - <i>"...they help me to know which path I want to go..."</i> [Bridget]. Academics - It helped by using strategies, <i>"Like revision and the study timetable ..."</i> [Bridget].
C	All the students felt it helped with personal/social issues and career choice. Personal/social - The advice given was used when dealing with friends and relatives [Carol]. Career choice - It helped to choose between possible music and sports careers [Claire]. Academics - Assisted through the creation of timetables [Claire], no academic issues [Collin], unable to recall [Cora], no assistance [Carol].
D	Personal/social - No help [Dixie], never sought assistance for personal issues [Donna]. It helped restrain reactions to tense situations [Donna], and improved communication skills [Dara]. Career - Still unsure [Dixie]. Already knew what I wanted to do [Dara]. Assisted [Donna & Dina] It assisted with subject choice [Donna]. Academics - All students felt it helped using strategies such as creating timetables [Dina].
	Character
A	All the students felt it helped. <i>"It helping you understand good from bad and how to act as a citizen of a country..."</i> [Arjun].
B	All the students felt it helped. I Learnt to stop fighting, be respectful and take into consideration other points of view [Bianca].
C	No help [Claire]. Already had good values [Cora].
D	All the students felt it helped except Dixie. Students were advised to know their worth and to be role models [Dara].

School	Compassion
A	It helped all except Adam. It helped to be more compassionate to others because you may be unaware about people's problems [Abe].
B	All students felt it helped. Students learnt to assist their friends [Beth].
C	Cora felt she was already compassionate. The others felt it helped. It prevented me from seeking revenge [Collin].
D	It helped all except Dixie. <i>"I don't lash out. I try to be mature in the situation and try to find a solution..."</i> [Donna].
	Connections
A	Always had good relationships [Adam], it did not help [Arjun], it helped [Abe & Arthur]. Initially little information was shared with my parents but now I talk to them more [Arthur].
B	All the students felt it helped. The guidance helped to drastically improve the relationship with my guardians over time [Bobby].
C	No relationship issues so help was unnecessary [Claire, Collin & Cora]. It helped Carol to, <i>"Well choose the right friends and to obey meh parents."</i>
D	No assistance [Dixe & Donna], assistance [Dara & Dina]. Improved relationship with family and friends and <i>"just maintaining a good household"</i> [Dina].
	Contribution
All the students the programme helped contribute to society.	
A	<i>"If I see a vagrant, I can buy a little pie and say hey, look something to eat..."</i> [Abe].
B	<i>"I take from that the ability to guide somebody else who might be in a situation like I was in before"</i> [Bobby].
C	It taught me to help other people and to try to improve things in the country [Cora].
D	<i>"It can have an impact on society, but they need to have a lot of sessions, we don't have enough."</i> [Donna].

Improving Social Justice

Holistic Development. The students at Schools A, C and D thought the programme developed their strengths by focusing on their holistic development. They mentioned that it focused on helping them with their mental health, academic performance, and subject choice.

Table 60

Students' Perceptions of Programme Outcomes

School	Holistic Programme Outcomes
A	<i>"Well, if they realize there is a student who is very athletic, she would suggest that they get into a sport even if they not really students that could read well, she suggests that we do reading subjects something like Literature..." [Abe].</i>
B	<i>"What help me the most was my self-esteem and I had anger and she help me with to basically take control of myself and allowing me to see that its more than just this and beyond" [Bridget].</i>
C	The provision of advice about careers, personal issues, time management and study skills.
D	Focus on career, academics, and social problems. <i>"I believe is giving them the drive to be better in terms of academically, spiritually, mentally, just being better and put they best foot forward" [Dina].</i>

Mixed Views on Assisting with Social and Cultural Issues. Adam and Arjun felt the programme was not assisting with social and cultural issues, however, students were taught to help the poor [Abe]. The programme helped students to respect *"...everyone's culture, Muslim, Hindu, Christian"* [Abe] and it taught us about *"crime and drugs..."* [Arthur].

At School B, the programme helped with social and cultural issues to a greater extent, for example, students were given advice on focusing on their education to lift themselves out of poverty [Bobby]. The guidance officer advised students not to succumb to peer pressure and smoke, drink or follow gangs [Bianca]. *"Students were abusive to me because of the colour of my skin and although I wanted to fight with them, I was advised by the guidance officer on how to handle the situation"* [Bianca]. The guidance officer helped students to respect others despite their religious and cultural backgrounds [Bridget].

"It helping some students with poverty, with the gambling, well none of them with gambling getting help," despite efforts to curb it [Carol]. The

programme helped with bullying [Dixie & Donna]. It does not focus on racial discrimination, crime, or poverty [Dixie]. The programme enlightened students about societal issues and methods to resolve them [Dara]. Several students from each of the schools were unable to identify how the programme was helping them to deal with social and cultural issues.

Challenging Societal Bias. At Schools A and C, the students were unsure if the programme provided them with the skills to challenge unfair societal practices. On gaining employment if treated unfairly, we learnt that it was possible to “...*carry it to somebody who has more authority*” [Collin] and it did not help with issues such as racism because “...*it will always have racism*” [Collin]. In contrast, the students at Schools B and D felt that the programme assisted them, and it allowed them to, “*legally to stand for our rights*” [Bobby]. While at School D, most students felt it provided them with information to deal with unfair societal treatment, however, Dara felt that the focus of the programme was on career guidance and not human rights.

Student Advocacy. Abe recalled students had an issue with a teacher and sought assistance from the guidance officer who “...*asked us to write a letter anonymously to the principal who actually got that situation sorted out.*” However, if students felt they were being treated unfairly at school, the school’s student council could advocate on their behalf rather than the guidance officer [Adam]. Bianca remembered being absent from school because of financial difficulties and some of her teachers were not very understanding and refused to let her complete her assignments. She sought assistance from the guidance officer who together with the principal resolved the issue. The students at School C generally thought that the guidance officer could advocate on their behalf, however, they could not give examples of this occurring. All the students at School D, felt the guidance officer would advocate on their behalf except for Donna who said, “*They don’t have that voice, cause they would try to change about situations that really happen and make the teachers look right.*” If there was a problem with a teacher, students would go to the head of the department rather than the guidance officer [Donna].

All the students felt that they were treated equally in the programme except Donna, who felt sometimes there was a bit of racial discrimination, but

she did not elaborate. *“Poor, rich, broken, not broken anything come to view of the guidance counsellor is treated equally”* [Bianca]. The guidance officer treated all students equally [Claire]. While Dara and Dina felt the programme helped students to treat each other equally, Dixie and Donna disagreed, *“It don’t really matter because people don’t really take she on”* [Dixie]. In many cases students knew that they should treat others fairly, but they did not [Bobby & Bianca].

Commentary

The responses seemed to indicate that the programme has equality, most seem to think it is effective and it has a high standard, all of which are evaluative criteria. The students’ experiences with the programme differed and it appeared to help them with different issues to varying extents. While programme challenges and limitations were expressed, it can be deduced that it is viewed by the students as generally having laudable outcomes, merit, worth and a defensible purpose according to evaluation criteria.

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the major findings which emerged from Chapter 4 in terms of the local context and literature, but the relationships to the regional, and international literature available are also explored. Within this discussion, I put forward recommendations for improvement of the guidance and counselling programme and note the possible implications.

Programme Isolation

Several stakeholders in the North Eastern Education District (NEED), especially teachers and parents, were uncertain whether the programme was achieving its goals because they were unsure of its scope and content. Similarly, in the Victoria Education District in Trinidad and Tobago, Collins (2012) discovered that teachers lacked information and felt that they did not possess the skills required to help the students. This indicates a degree of programme isolation and suggests that the programme is not given sufficient attention within the school context.

Programme isolation, also identified by Collins (2012), resulted from inadequate communication between teachers and guidance officers. Students suggested the ‘marketing’ the programme could familiarize stakeholders about its content and implementation (Collins, 2012). This marketing thrust can be easily adopted in the NEED, in that guidance officers could distribute newsletters with a summary about the programme’s purpose and goals, and termly calendars of events listing the activities to be undertaken. Take home letters given to students could be another strategy, or a page on the school’s website devoted to guidance and counselling at the school. Co-operation between stakeholders is likely to increase (St. Brice, 2001) if guidance officers host workshops with all stakeholders to enlighten them about the programme.

An idea that has gained some traction abroad is the whole school approach to integrating guidance and counselling into the life of the school. This approach to guidance is proactive and preventative and focuses on holistic development (O’ Toole et al., 2022). It involves all school stakeholders with responsibility for delivering the guidance curriculum under the leadership of the school’s guidance counsellor (Hearne & Neary, 2020). In Scotland,

guidance counsellors wanted extra support and felt that a whole school approach would help them provide sufficient care for the students (Stoll & McLeod, 2020). Since there is limited funding to implement major changes to programmes in Trinidad and Tobago, a whole school approach may be a viable option by having teachers play an increased role in guidance and counselling.

Teachers are integral to the whole school approach, so professional development is important. While this approach may reduce the workloads of guidance officers, it can increase that of teachers, so participation can be on a voluntary basis. It is crucial to gain support from the major union which represents teachers, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teacher's Association (TTUTA), given the sometimes-contentious nature of labour relations between the government and teachers. This is especially so because the whole school approach requires changes in teachers' job specifications and terms of employment. The inclusion of teachers requires support from the Ministry of Education, to help coordinate and monitor this new approach and to be responsible for teacher training. Its implementation can take place on a phased basis in schools and be evaluated after one year, before deciding on how to proceed. To facilitate this approach, there needs to be improved communication and school-based management meetings could be used to achieve this. While a representative from the Student Support Services Division is supposed to be present at such meetings, this does not always occur, therefore it is important that the Ministry of Education monitors such activities by asking principals to provide minutes of meetings. Before the whole school approach is adopted in Trinidad and Tobago it is critical to communicate its attributes and the roles of participants to all stakeholders via staff and parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings.

Input from all stakeholders is necessary when formulating annual guidance plans (Hearne et al., 2018), however, the guidance officers' views were not always considered by the school's administration. Including guidance officers in middle management team meetings, would help in developing rapport across the board and lay the foundation for strategic alliances not only with teachers, but also with parents, and students. The non-inclusion of guidance officers in the school's decision-making process is not unique to Trinidad and Tobago, being also observed in Barbados (Griffin & Bryan,

2021).

Teachers and parents in the NEED had misconceptions and unrealistic expectations of the programme, similar to that of teachers, and school administrators in countries such as Singapore (Yeo & Lee, 2014), viz, the desire that the programme focus on counselling students for mental health issues with the expectation of quick and positive change. To a large extent, these expectations stem from unfamiliarity with the programme. To reduce this, collaboration may be fostered by getting stakeholders involved in guidance and counselling projects and activities such as the World of Work programme and Career Fairs (this occurred with a measure of success at School A). It was interesting that parents, teachers, and students appeared to focus mostly on the personal/social and career domains when discussing the programme, indicating their lack of understanding of its more holistic thrust.

It is perhaps conducive to deeper analysis to think of the guidance and counselling programme as inhabiting a parallel existence in the school system. There is the underlying and taken for granted belief that it serves some other goal, not the major one of academic achievement, conceived as the main purpose of schooling. That other goal in the social and cultural context of Trinidad and Tobago, is very much associated with mental illness and persons requiring counselling for emotional distress. This is a stigma has also been observed in Barbados (Griffin, 2019; Griffin & Bryan, 2021), and seems to encourage a view of the guidance and counselling programme as a thing apart, incidental to the main mission of the school leading to programme isolation.

The challenge is to bring about, a cultural shift in how citizens regard mental illness. Educating people about the benefits of proper mental health care, as well as the myths surrounding mental illness, can assist in changing long-held perceptions. The recent pandemic brought a brighter focus on to mental health and well-being, and a more sympathetic response from the citizenry as all were in some way affected. It would be feasible then to show that everyone may be susceptible to some form or different degrees of mental illness, and this could encourage people to take guidance and counselling more seriously.

The School Curriculum

National plans to reform education are current and on-going in Trinidad

and Tobago. Such reforms do take on board the plight of children who may be disadvantaged for any number of reasons and advocate a student-centred curriculum. However, as will be shown below, what is advocated and what occurs in reality, are miles apart. According to Trinidad and Tobago's Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022, the present secondary school curriculum is of a highly academic nature despite the curriculum for Forms 1-3 being revised in 2000-2003 and 2014 (Ministry of Education, n.d.). There has been a major thrust in technical-vocational education and training (TVET) in Trinidad and Tobago, but culturally there seems to be an ideology and preference for academic subjects, and TVET is viewed as being somewhat inferior (Mohammed, 2018). The inclusion of TVET subjects in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago has been fraught with issues such as the duplication of programmes offered by the government and private providers leading to a wastage of funds, a lack of standardisation of programmes and courses across different levels and institutions and the absence of quality assurance (Ministry of Education, n.d.). There is also a shortage of qualified teachers with a deficiency for 13 TVET skill areas (Ministry of Education, n.d.). The Ministry of Education's education policy acknowledges that a "quality education" (p. 74) can be achieved by having a student-centred curriculum and a revised secondary school system. The policy further states that it will strive to provide schools with "adequate psycho-social support systems, inclusive of career guidance" (Ministry of Education, n.d. p. 75). However, despite its vision, the results of this study revealed that the level of psycho-social support needed from the guidance and counselling programme, has not been realised.

Although Trinidad and Tobago has invested a large amount of resources into its education system, the benefits have not been proportionate, for example, our reading achievement in Progress in International Reading Study (PIRLS) from 2006-2016, shows only a 43-point increase to 479, which is still below the international reading achievement average of 500 (Skerrit, 2017). Efforts to modernise curriculum delivery include the now discontinued eCAL programme instituted from 2010-2015, where students were given laptops on entry into secondary schools, but with less than the desired results (Briggs & Blair, 2016). Although approximately 4.6-6.2 billion TT dollars were allocated to the Ministry of Education annually from 2015-2020

(Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-e), thousands of students writing the Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) examinations are unsuccessful:

In 2022, 53.05 per cent (7,148) of the students writing five or more CSEC subjects were successful in the subjects, compared to 54.1 per cent (7,487) in 2021. Further, 43.66 per cent (5,789) of the students who attempted five or more subjects, inclusive of Mathematics and English A, were successful while the figure for 2021 stood at 46.5 per cent (6,333) students. (“T&T students do slightly better,” 2022)

If we turn our attention to primary schooling, the NEED had the lowest average Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) scores in all the education districts in Trinidad and Tobago in 2019 (Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-f) and the second lowest in 2022 (Ministry of Education, 2022a).

The Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 outlines elements of the School Based Management Model in its quest to improve the education system. Two important aspects of this model are student *support services*, of which the guidance and counselling programme is part, and *curriculum*. Both elements are supposed to help develop student learning outcomes such as healthy lifestyles and self-awareness (Ministry of Education, n.d. p. 12). It is questionable whether these dimensions of learning are at all achievable in schools such as those in the NEED because the same factors which possibly have a negative impact on schooling such as poor leadership or insufficient resources, can also affect programmes such as that of guidance and counselling.

Despite the rhetoric alluding to the importance of a well-balanced curriculum and psycho-social support in the national educational policies of Trinidad and Tobago, the curriculum continues to focus, to a large extent, on academic achievement, rather than holistic student development. For example, the guidance and counselling programme was not timetabled in all schools. Principals were also found to not allocate a suitable amount of time for programme implementation in secondary schools in Kenya (Magero et al., 2020). As part of the modernisation thrust to implement a more student-centred curriculum, the Ministry of Education can advocate that principals formally schedule the guidance and counselling programme in all schools. Reluctance to

tamper with the academic nature of the school's timetable has long-standing legitimacy in the society. The historical origins of the education system, inherited from the British, is based on an elitist model (Mohammed, 2018) that focused heavily on high stakes testing (Cunningham, 2021). This stratified education system also exists in Barbados (Griffin & Bryan, 2021) where more attention is paid to academics than students' socio-emotional issues (Maynard, 2014). Principals therefore put top priority on academic subjects, especially as school and students are judged according to how they fare in the regional CSEC, and later at the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE).

The guidance and counselling programme while possessing an academic component is not seen by many stakeholders as playing a crucial role in scholastic achievement, so it is not perceived as being important. For instance, the guidance officer from School C shared that students' efforts in classroom activities depended on if they would be awarded marks in their end of term examinations. It may be interesting to note that in this study the two academically higher performing schools, the denominational (School A), and the government secondary school (1961), (School D), did *not* have scheduled guidance and counselling sessions, unlike the former junior secondary (School B) and the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP) school, C, which had lower performing students. It is apparent that latent biases allow this kind of differentiation for students who perform better academically or who come from higher socio-economic backgrounds. However, even higher achieving students stand to benefit from a planned programme that addresses their personal/social, career and academic issues.

Another way in which latent biases are evident is exemplified by the curriculum offerings in School C. This school is situated in a rural area where farming is commonly practised, but agriculture science was not offered. Agricultural work is generally believed to consist of hard manual labour, and menial at that. Such perceptions and biases feed into the notion that agriculture is unattractive to youth, and not including it on the curriculum in a rural area, seems to reinforce this message. This is an issue of grave importance to the country's development and guidance officers could play a role in pointing out to principals the relevance of this subject (agriculture, in this instance) to the

socio-economic needs of the students, since it is relevant to the students' context. Here we see the expanded contribution that guidance officers can make to the education system, national, youth and human development, if only they are seen as a partner in the education enterprise. It is also important that stakeholders listen to the students to identify their career interests and devise curriculum options that would help them better understand the nature of their choices. Such considerations may go against the grain of tradition and call for different and more vocational-type offerings.

Programme Adaptations

Successful guidance and counselling programmes are flexible (Thamaraserri, 2014), and in this study programme adaptations were made according to the different school types, and they appeared to work well. These adaptations attempted by the guidance officers provide evidence that they have been applying what they learnt from the needs assessments to identify priority needs of the students and are using this data to inform programme delivery. Among the most notable was in School A, the all-male, Roman Catholic school, where the guidance officer changed her style of communication from being overly assertive to one that was gentler, resulting in the boys became more trusting towards her. Another adaptation was providing all Form Three students with individual career guidance sessions. At School A the guidance counsellor also engaged in discussions with parents about the career options available to their children and emphasized the importance of not forcing their children to pursue careers that were not aligned to their children's interests. Lessons were simplified in School C by using worksheets, reading aloud to students, and by helping them with spelling and grammar since they had literacy and numeracy challenges, and this led to academic improvement. A student at School D mentioned that the guidance officer helped them to identify their learning types which resulted in her discovery that she was a visual learner.

While adaptations were made, the necessary support systems and resources were not always available for students with specific issues, for instance, those with learning disabilities. Efforts were made to accommodate those from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds, such as, students in the World of Work programme who did not have suits to wear for the mock interviews

being allowed to attend in their school uniform. Adaptations therefore were evident and aligned towards student needs, thereby providing for an increased measure of equity. However, these are ad hoc instances where one guidance officer struggles with addressing the needs of students against a background challenge of few resources. A possible role for the guidance officer then may be to encourage businesses in the community to adopt a school and co-operate with them in implementing programmes.

Since the education system is stratified according to academic achievement, guidance officers have some idea of students' needs at the various school types, and this can be advantageous in helping them to plan. For instance, at School C, the guidance officer knows that most students in her school score poorly at the SEA, so she can create activities and lessons pitched towards their capabilities, even before they enter the school. So, the segregation of students according to ability level, while an inhumane practice, enables guidance officers to generally 'know' their students and be aware of what works.

The Development of 21st Century Skills

In developing student learning outcomes, the National Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 (Ministry of Education, n.d.) considered a list of 21st century skills and competencies outlined in the CARICOM Regional Education and Human Resource Development (HRD) 2030 Strategy and Action Plan (Regional Strategy 2030). The inclusion of such a list indicates that the Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of these competencies and is making attempts to include them in the curriculum. A list of 21st century skills compiled and categorised by the World Economic Forum (2015) as foundational literacies, competencies and character qualities was used as criteria for this evaluation (pp. 46-47). This list includes some of those stated in the National Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022. The skills from the policy paper which were not investigated include ecological literacy, knowing how to learn, knowing oneself, technological skills, multilingualism and transformation of self and society (Ministry of Education, n.d. p. 12). These skills were not evaluated because they were not included in the list from the World Economic Forum (2015) which I felt was sufficiently comprehensive, however, this provides an opportunity for further research. There was the

misconception by several teachers, parents, and students that foundational literacies were part of the programme's mandate. The only foundational literacy that was an objective of the programme was financial management, and the guidance officers and students indicated that this was taught.

Competencies, like communication, are among the skills which according to the CCYD (2010) report, are important characteristics of the ideal Caribbean youth (p. 40), and the findings show that the guidance and counselling programme is perceived to be fostering their development. The 21st century skills would especially be integral to the labour force because they are needed for innovation (Petrie et al., 2021). In the Caribbean and Latin America workers should be able to upgrade their skills and re-train to remain relevant and to modernize industry (Petrie et al., 2021). Developing competencies would be an advantage for Caribbean youth because the CARICOM Single Market and Economy allows Caribbean nationals such as university graduates, artistes, media workers and athletes to work in different Caribbean countries allowing them to transfer their skills across borders. These 21st century skills include those related to the agriculture, tourism, and petrochemicals.

While these industries have a heavy focus on academic and practical skills, more emphasis can be placed by the guidance and counselling programme on the development of 21st century competencies. Both the wider school curriculum and the guidance and counselling programme could perhaps target the development of key competencies. In the NEED, the programme assisted with collaboration by improving aspects of the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development (PYD) such as the development of *connections* with family and friends. This is also beneficial since collaboration, together with competencies such as communication and problem-solving are highly sought after by employers (Rios et al., 2020).

Stakeholders felt that the programme had a role in developing “character qualities” such as leadership and adaptability, which the CCYD (2010) report lists as aspects of Caribbean youth that should be enhanced. While with rapid technological advancements there exists a need for more complex skills, the development of character qualities is very important to prepare the next generation and to live and work together and, “also develop personal values and virtues for sustainable participation in a globalized world

shared with other forms of intelligence” (Garcia Alvarez, 2018, pp. 157-158). Several stakeholders also indicated that the programme made efforts to promote social and cultural awareness and encouraged students to contribute to society and be more respectful to each other.

Although there is a list of skills to be taught in the guidance and counselling programme document, it does not specify which are 21st century so formally categorizing these skills in the written guidance and counselling programme may assist in increasing focus upon them. Finally, in reflecting on the inculcation of 21st century skills, one must be cognizant of the architecture of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago. It is quintessentially post-colonial, characterized by elitist practices and high stakes examinations (Mohammed, 2018). Under such conditions teachers teach to the test which negatively affects learning, and 21st century skills such as: “communication, creativity, critical-thinking, global-awareness, digital literacy, social and cross-cultural skills...” (Doodnath, 2020, para. 7). There is little data available about how teaching and learning these skills have been facilitated in the Trinidad and Tobago education system and thus further exploration is required.

The Education System

It is important to keep in mind that the guidance and counselling programme is implemented in an education system in Trinidad and Tobago that is post-colonial and stratifies students according to academic performance routing them to different types of secondary school. This differentiated system is not the most suitable for developing our human resource capital since “many youth leave schools without qualifications and fail to access post-secondary training leading to unemployment, poverty and, for some, a life of crime” (Mohammed, 2018, p. 297). Although an important aspect of a “quality education” is equity, a pillar of human development (ul Haq, 1995), the Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 acknowledges that in Trinidad and Tobago there is, “Inequity in the system of placing students, leading to stratification throughout the system” (Ministry of Education, n.d. p. 74). In primary schools, students write the SEA, and are then sorted according to their scores and placed into secondary schools. For as long as the education system has existed, citizens of Trinidad and Tobago preferred that their children attend the “prestige,” usually denominational schools, rather than the state or non-prestige

schools. This has historical roots since religious leaders in the post-emancipation era supported the integration of religion and education (Mohammed, 2016). Historically, too, the focus of the education system has been on social mobility placing emphasis on intellectual achievement and examination success (Mohammed, 2018). Therefore, there is a basic tension between dominant traditions in our education system that focus on cognitive outcomes and more modern ideas of student centredness and the affective, yet to achieve legitimacy, where guidance and counselling may be located.

Stratification in education has been deepened by the Concordat of 1960, an agreement between the state and the religious bodies, which shored up the power of the denominationalists. Tensions arose prior to 1960 when the state tried to have a more nationalistic education system, but the powerful lobby of the religious bodies thwarted that move (Mohammed, 2016). The Concordat resulted, in which the state agreed to be responsible for the maintenance of school infrastructure and the payment of teachers' salaries, with the understanding that denominational schools abide by the state's regulations. The denominational boards in turn were allowed to choose 20% of the intake of Form One students and they have the right to object to books or apparatus which were not aligned to their beliefs, to teach their religion, to object to the appointment of teachers on moral and spiritual grounds and have the right to request removal of a teacher on such grounds (Ministry of Education and Culture, The Concordat of 1960).

The Concordat has "...served to solidify in Trinidad and Tobago society the divisiveness on the basis of class, race and colour which emerged during the colonial era" (Superville, 2017, p. 49). National consultations on education occurred in 2016, but, when the issue of the Concordat emerged, the denominational boards defended their position, supported by the Minister of Education. This led to the charge that there was "no real consultation" (p. 49), and "that certain elements of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago are untouchable and permanently entrenched, even if those elements are contributing to problems in the education system and need to be eliminated or restructured" (Superville, 2017, p. 49).

It is within this educational context that the following attempts at educational reform have occurred:

- *Post-Emancipation to Independence (1850s to 1960s)* expanding the number of state schools to increase the places available to students.
- *Post-Independence (1960s-1980s)* focused on the establishment of senior comprehensive schools, equal opportunity, education planning and teacher training. The state took a greater role in the education system as it became more centralized and there was increased emphasis on aligning human development with a more positive economic outlook.
- *Education For All (1990s-present)* focused on, “equity, access, quality and equality” and increased emphasis on, “institutional strengthening and structuring of the education system,” and a greater understanding and appreciation of the role of the local education district in reform.
- *Towards developed status 2010-2020*, includes the use of legislation to improve accountability, improved staff professional development, increased equality between “educational inputs and outputs, particularly student outcomes” and attaining global educational standards (James, 2014a, Phases of School Improvement in the Secondary Sector in Trinidad and Tobago, section, para, 2-5).

Such reforms have not the intended impact on the system, and not on where it may be needed the most, state schools. Mohammed (2018) surmises that this could be due to the large numbers of students from the lower socio-economic brackets, who do not hold much power in the society.

The guidance and counselling programme is unable to assist all students in the NEED, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds such as in School C. This is a SEMP school, which received the lowest performing students in the SEA, yet did not receive extra resources. The Policy Paper 2017-2022 acknowledges that in the education system there is a “Lack of inclusivity, equity, and learning for special needs education and gifted students” (p. 74), and it vows to address this by ensuring equity in the school system using collaboration and research, and by placing increased emphasis on using specific interventions to help students from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds (Ministry of Education, n.d.). However, based on my

observations, especially in the NEED, the most pressing concerns of the underprivileged do not appear to be met.

Stakeholder relationships

The success of the education system relies largely on the nature of the relationships between stakeholders, for instance, the engagement between secondary schools and parents can positively impact students in terms of their academic performance, completion of high school and their social and emotional well-being (Jensen & Minke, 2017). Although the parents generally got along well with the guidance officer at School C, they did not provide the support that was required. In contrast, the parents at School A, the denominational school, were very supportive. Yet, similar to what was found by Kleinman (2018), parents in the NEED were generally satisfied with the support provided by the guidance officers. All the parents had good relationships with the guidance officers and spoke highly of them and this would have a positive impact on the students. There is the perception that schools in Trinidad and Tobago are “good” and “bad” (Superville, 2017), with the denominational schools being perceived as “good,” and the non-denominational, as “bad.” This could explain the limited support for non-denominational schools by stakeholders, however, this support is important.

From my experience, in Trinidad and Tobago, parents are usually only engaged by schools via infrequently held PTA meetings, annual parent conferences, or if students have committed some infraction. It is therefore common for many parents to not have any interaction with school personnel for long periods of time, to the students’ detriment. The reasons for the inadequate support can be identified by doing surveys with parents to determine why they choose not to participate in school activities.

I have also observed that schools tend to blame parents for their lack of assistance, however, they can use more creative ways to engage parents to support programmes such as guidance and counselling. Schools should try to create an environment more conducive to building a collaborative relationship with families to increase their level of school involvement. This was achieved with a measure of success in School A by including parents in career guidance activities. Building trust and respect and by, “simply understanding and respecting family preferences as well as cultural differences” can assist in

encouraging family participation (Dove et al., 2018, p. 54). Teachers can help form positive relationships by identifying the family's preferred methods of receiving information about the child, being accommodating when scheduling school events, considering the needs of families, and asking them for increased input (Dove et al., 2018). It is important that the lines of communication between families and the school are kept open to allow for more meaningful discussion about pertinent issues on a regular basis. These are also strategies which can be used by guidance officers to build rapport, although from the findings of my study, rapport between guidance officers and parents was not a cause for concern.

These recommendations about promoting the guidance and counselling programme, are pitched not directly at the programme itself but on transforming the education system in which it is implemented. This transformation involves collaboration by all stakeholders, such as the community and the private sector, not only the school. School-community partnerships can create opportunities for improved learning experiences for students, as well as for enhancing the relationships amongst stakeholders. Partnering with organizations can assist with staff development so there will be a greater understanding about the impact of a child's social and emotional well-being on their ability to learn. School-community partnerships can also allow for increased input in policy development, planning, and decision-making to create a more positive learning environment (Sepanik & Brown, 2021).

Several teachers in the NEED felt that the parent-teacher relationships were poor, highlighting the scope, at the school level, for teachers to improve their practice by encouraging more meaningful interactions with parents. This might be difficult to do because it involves bridging the gap between parents and secondary school teachers, a gap in Trinidad and Tobago's history attesting to the exalted status of secondary school teachers (with specialist knowledge), as opposed to say, primary school teachers. That parents in this remote area of the country may also be barely literate, adds to the difficulty. Instituting teacher education programmes that focus on the relationships between teachers, students, and parents and which "develop skills and strategies to involve parents in upper secondary school" (Krane & Klevan, 2019, p. 82) can be helpful in improving such relationships.

In the NEED the guidance officers generally felt that the teachers were willing to collaborate although they were sometimes tardy in completing referrals because of their heavy workload, this was similar to findings in Slovenia (Gregorcic Mrvar et al., 2019). Other factors which influenced the relationship between teachers and guidance officers, included the teacher's personality, since some teachers were more receptive to suggestions than others. Teachers not following the advice given by the guidance officers, and the competence of the guidance officers also had an impact on the relationships between them. These findings were similar to what was found in Serbia (Slijepcevic & Zukovic, 2021).

Several teachers in the NEED desired improved communication and collaboration with the guidance officers, an issue which also emerged in the Victoria District (Collins 2012). The teachers had insufficient information about the students' issues and felt more was required to better assist them. This created something of an ethical dilemma because of the issue of confidentiality a problem also noted by Sensoy and Ikiz (2022) in Turkey. To resolve this, guidance officers should discuss with teachers the ethical implications of breaching guidance officer-student confidentiality. Such education programmes can take the form of the Student Support Services Division having seminars in schools to educate teachers about the ethical and legal ramifications of breaking the bounds of confidentiality. None of the students complained of any breach in confidentiality though or had any such concerns, in contrast to a study conducted in Nigeria (Bella-Awusah et al., 2022). Parents were also unaware about how the programme helped students because of the confidentiality of the sessions. While parents in Singapore occasionally wanted to get more information about the sessions (Yeo & Lee, 2014), this issue did not emerge in the NEED.

Governance and the Education System

The education system is part of a social system and effective change cannot occur in sub-systems such as the guidance and counselling component, unless there is input and influence from other major social systems. In Trinidad and Tobago other institutions which play an integral role in child development are the Ministries of Youth Development and National Service, Social Development and Family Services, Sport and Community Development,

Health, and the Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs.

Collaboration between ministries for school improvement has been suggested by James (2014b) “to arrive at shared values, mutual understandings, and agreements” (p. 200). Increased cooperation between these ministries can assist in creating a more youth-centred national culture and a good place to start is creating a Cabinet sub-committee with representatives from the various ministries with a mandate of improving child welfare.

The Ministry of Health can focus on the students’ physical and psychological health and assist the Student Support Services Division with professional expertise to deal with some of the more serious and extreme behaviours displayed by them. The provision of a legal framework for governing changes to the education system by the Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs will also be beneficial. It is important that collaboration between the sub-committee and other stakeholders in education such as TTUTA and the National Parent Teachers’ Association (NPTA) occurs to prevent an autocratic approach to educational reform. The creation of clear objectives and plans as well as seeking the Opposition’s support to ensure continuity if there is a change in government, can also be part of the reform exercise.

There are many imbalances and dysfunctions in the Ministry of Education, with no clear mechanisms at the ministerial and school level for meaningful collaboration to ensure that the students benefit. Efforts at education reforms in Trinidad and Tobago have been largely ineffective because:

1. school improvement practices derived from foreign contexts are not sufficiently customized to suit the Trinidad and Tobago school context and culture.
2. the Ministry’s approach to the reform tends to be more prescriptive than facilitative, that is, top-down.
3. the Ministry is not engaging meaningfully with stakeholders, particularly policy implementers, to find out what school improvement looks like from their point of view and using their opinions to formulate policies and initiatives.
4. monitoring and supervision of the implementation are insufficiently rigorous.
5. capacity building support in terms of resources and training are inadequate and

6. some school leaders are not sufficiently empowered to lead improvement at their schools. (James, 2014b, p. 203)

It is important to address these issues before changes are made to the guidance and counselling programme. I have observed at Pilot School, that mechanisms such as the School Based Management model are not adequately used. As a member of the School Based Management committee at Pilot School, I have noticed that meetings are held infrequently and plans created are not implemented, monitored, or evaluated, usually because of insufficient time and poor leadership. The School Based Management meetings are therefore ineffective in eliciting positive change. Increased training of principals and vice-principals may not be the answer as this already occurs. Perhaps the mechanism by which principals and committee members are selected could be reviewed to ensure the most competent individuals are chosen, and the Ministry of Education can monitor the principals' leadership, and their achievements for accountability.

Political decisions have also had a negative impact on the development of the guidance and counselling programme in Trinidad and Tobago. For example, a multiyear consultation project between a consulting team from the United States and Trinidad and Tobago, while initially yielding positive results such as manuals with national standards on reading assessment for elementary school students, rating scales for students in elementary schools, and the norms for psychological measures for students in secondary schools, did not progress because of political changes (Watkins et al., 2014). This occurred because of a change in the minister in charge in 2007, who did not seem to prioritize the project's expansion, and then in 2010 when, "Much of the work in setting up the Student Services Unit was undone by the new regime, and the majority of Guidance and Special Education Officers (GSEOs) were reassigned to teaching duties in schools" (Watkins et al., 2014, p. 301). The retirement of the Director of the Student Support Services Unit also had a negative impact (Watkins et al., 2014). Little action was taken based on the outcome of the consultations which led to the senior staff at the guidance unit becoming frustrated (Watkins et al., 2014). Consultations with governments are sometimes problematic because their success are often "dependent on on the luck of taking place

during the time of one political administration as they are on the contribution that the work makes to the country's development" (Watkins et al., 2014, p. 302). This shows the uncertain context in which the climate of reform in the country exists, and the fate of the guidance and counselling programme is enmeshed in this scenario.

Human Development

The guidance and counselling programme has a role to play in human development since the Human Development Paradigm (HDP) is people-centred and takes into consideration not just development that is economic, but also social, cultural, and political (ul Haq, 1995). It can serve as a framework for building capabilities, and in helping students with their functionings. For example, a functioning could be just staying in school to completion; counselling for personal issues may have the functioning of improved mental health. More sensitive career and academic guidance might provide students with a functioning related to finding a suitable occupation. Human capabilities could be expanded through investment in the education system, and more specifically in programmes such as guidance and counselling, which have a holistic thrust and allow students to enjoy different conditions and activities that are valued (functionings).

I propose that equity be a central theme in the approach to guidance and counselling because the programme cannot be expected to achieve its goals if disadvantaged students are not provided with extra support. It is important to view schools not as homogeneous institutions but establishments with individual students who have varying issues. While needs assessments were conducted in each school, individual student assessments are important in developing new strategies to help them and to adapt the programme to create new opportunities for the impoverished.

The four pillars of human development are equity, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment (ul Haq, 1995), and as a mechanism of human development, the programme, while currently trying to incorporate these pillars, can improve how it pursues such ideals. Because of economic constraints, the government of Trinidad and Tobago has reduced funding available to programmes such as guidance and counselling, therefore it is critical that limited resources be used efficiently. The programme can still have

a positive impact on human development in the present adverse economic situation, because, while economic growth is important for human development, increased economic growth does not necessarily mean increased human development (ul Haq, 1995).

The programme assisted to a limited extent in the NEED with the four pillars of the HDP by helping the students cope with personal/social challenges, academic achievement and in finding suitable careers. Addressing these domains provided a measure of assistance in helping the students to become financially independent, to have productive, satisfied lives, and to contribute to human and national development. While the guidance and counselling programme may be viewed as a mechanism for investing in citizens, the government and private sector have a role in creating an enabling climate for individuals, since productivity “requires investments in people and an enabling macroeconomic environment for them to achieve their maximum potential” (ul Haq, 1995, p. 19). Failure to create such an environment and not aligning the education system to national development, will constrain the programme’s role in improving productivity. Limited resources and the fact that the education system in which it operates in Trinidad and Tobago is characterised by maintaining inequity, are negatively affecting the guidance and counselling programme in providing students with developmental opportunities. An outcome of this flawed system is a continuation of the poverty-cycle.

The teachers felt the programme promoted human and youth development through human resource development. Their perception has merit since a country’s development is dependent on its human resources and vocational support which can empower the youth (Oyinloye, 2016). Guidance can help empower the youth and result in them being creators of employment rather than just being employees (Oyinloye, 2016). Stakeholders felt career guidance played an important role in human resource development, however, it is important to vary these methods. While RIASEC (p. 142) was used in all schools, other methods may be of assistance such as, the development of an afterschool apprenticeship programme, or enrolling students in on-the-job training programmes after completing their CSEC examinations. Another option is providing students with mentorship from professionals.

Several stakeholders, especially the guidance officers, thought that the programme empowered students to a degree by encouraging critical thinking/problem solving, by assisting them in dealing with their personal/social problems, in finding suitable careers and improving their academic performance. However, its role in empowerment appeared to be greatly limited because it was implemented in an environment that was not conducive to learning. For instance, students with lower SEA grades are placed into schools where extra support was not provided.

The guidance and counselling programme, as outlined, was observed to be in accordance with the basic tenets of HDP, and its holistic thrust was supplemental to the academic curriculum. Rather than being merely supplemental, there are clear indications that a more integrated effort would be increasingly meaningful. However, a call for more integration belies the fact that the education system at present has a heavy academic focus and this first must be addressed. The programme's human development stance helps in achieving 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, such as, to, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2017, pp. 4-5) but not to the extent that is required because of the flawed education system within which it operates.

The NEED already suffers from major inequalities (pp. 35-37), which is characteristic of a colonial past where hinterlands were not developed, hence poverty goes hand in hand with rurality, and poverty is associated with "low educational attainment and low school achievement for low-income children" (Sengonul, 2021, p. 1). The neglect of rural communities can result in rural urban migration as people pursue education and career opportunities, however, this deprives the rural communities of "human resources" (Noreiga, 2020, p. 118). This leads to economic inequality which further serves as hindrances to education and social mobility (Braga et al., 2017). When conducting a school's needs assessment, as a prelude to rolling out the guidance and counselling programme, one wonders how much of the geographical and socio-economic background is considered. A career development curriculum for the NEED ought to look quite different from one created for students in Port of Spain. It is my observation that such close attention to the contexts in which these children live, and customizing the programme to suit, is beyond how guidance officers

presently see their work. When, (and if), conceptualizing a more involved guidance and counselling curriculum for schools such as those in the NEED, it is quite likely that school-work partnerships, even very temporary experiences for students, might be of value. If this occurs in tandem with their guidance and counselling sessions, then their issues, questions, and complaints can be fielded by the guidance officer, and a richer curriculum emerges.

In the straightened economic circumstances that exist, a closer relationship with businesses in the area, makes good educational sense. Adopt-a-School initiatives will help, but there are relatively few corporate interests in the NEED, so that a more intelligent deployment of funds on the part of the central government is necessary. For example, ensuring reliable regional internet connectivity would boost participation rates in schooling. Guidance and counselling has the potential to make a more valuable contribution if the context is considered when planning sessions for students. It may involve officers seeking out partnerships with business owners, religious institutions, community-based organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the central government.

Parents and teachers were largely unaware of the programme's role in promoting healthy lifestyles pointing once again to a lack of engagement of participants about the programme's attributes. One of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (UN, 2017) is ensuring that people have healthy lives, and several stakeholders felt the programme played a role in achieving this, however, not to the optimum level. Curriculum integration may enhance the delivery of this section of the guidance and counselling curriculum, for instance, the guidance officers and teachers of subjects such as Biology and Food and Nutrition can collaborate to reinforce topics about healthy lifestyles, and they can also cooperate during delivery of the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) lessons.

Youth development

There tends to be a negative perception of youth in Trinidad and Tobago, since they are seen as being “increasingly involved in crime” and engaging in “anti-social and delinquent behaviour” (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2017, p. 13). This negative behaviour has been attributed to poor parenting, “an increasing number of single-parent households headed by

women; unemployment; growing drug use (alcohol and cannabis); teenage pregnancy; dropping out of school; child abuse and exposure to violence; and general poverty” (UNICEF, 2017, p. 13). Integrating a philosophy of PYD in the government’s overarching national youth policy to focus on youth strengths rather than their weaknesses could assist in changing the negative perceptions. The National Youth Policy of Trinidad and Tobago (2020-2025) (Ministry of Youth Development and National Service [MYDNS], n.d.), articulates youth concerns, many of which are subsumed under the personal/social domain of the guidance and counselling programme, thereby demonstrating that the two are linked, and the programme can serve as a mechanism for improving youth development.

In this study, participants felt the programme had varying youth development outcomes and they had diverse views about its ability to foster such development, mostly perceiving it to be primarily for counselling students rather than being part of a larger educational framework. The implications of this were unrealistic programme expectations. The national youth policy takes into consideration issues such as poverty eradication and social justice (MYDNS, n.d.), indicating that from a policy standpoint in Trinidad and Tobago, there is the acknowledgement that social justice is linked to youth development. Placing more emphasis on integrating a social justice approach in the guidance and counselling programme may assist the youth in making a more concerted effort for societal change.

Youth development in Trinidad and Tobago does not appear to be a priority because there seems to be a gap between the creation and the implementation of youth policy with insufficient focus on improving social justice (Sanatan, 2018). Despite the national youth policy acknowledging the role of youth in national development and their need for intervention, especially those from the lower socio-economic brackets, previously implemented programmes have not been very successful (Mohammed, 2018). In Trinidad and Tobago, youth reforms are largely ineffective, possibly because of “dominant elitist ideologies” (p. 312) which mostly target low-income demographics and a political culture that does not foster a participatory approach, therefore youth empowerment is treated superficially (Mohammed, 2018). These issues can be addressed by challenging elitist ideologies when

creating new youth programmes and by including the youth as partners in national development (Mohammed, 2018).

There is opportunity for youth organisations to play a larger role in national development by lobbying for improved leadership and political support of youth development programmes. This can be achieved by demonstrating to programme managers the benefits of a social justice approach to youth development and the importance of youth being included in the actual decision-making processes. Despite identifying the community as a key education stakeholder (Ministry of Education, 2018), from my observations in the NEED, there appears to be insufficient focus placed on including them in the guidance and counselling programme. To achieve this, improved leadership at the levels of the Ministry of Education, school and community are required for more meaningful collaboration.

While some stakeholders perceived the programme to be helping with the 5Cs of PYD to different extents, others expressed doubt about how this was occurring. The 5Cs of PYD are not officially stated as goals of the guidance and counselling programme, but several of them are integrated within it, and all the guidance officers felt their inclusion was necessary. The 5Cs are mentioned in the National Youth Policy and officially incorporating them into the guidance and counselling programme will reinforce the link between the programme and the youth policy.

The youth in Trinidad and Tobago are at risk from societal problems such as crime and poverty (Campbell-Phillips, 2020) and post COVID-19, these risks unfortunately are multiplied because of the economic downturn. The negative prevailing economic conditions result in youth unemployment and with reduced revenue streams the allocation of scarce resources to youth programmes is not going to be the government's priority. The programme is therefore of increased importance in mitigating some of these issues especially in providing emotional support and career guidance.

Social Justice

Although the guidance and counselling programme can help in attaining social justice by increasing capabilities, its role was not apparent or widely understood by all stakeholders. Many seem to view the programme superficially, and they did not appear to think of its value outside of the school

system, a perception that can only be altered by sensitizing stakeholders as to the broader goals. Social justice provides equal opportunity for people to develop their capabilities and these increased capabilities can lead to greater freedom to make choices and therefore more opportunities (Jarvie & Ahrens, 2019).

To aid in youth development, guidance officers in Trinidad and Tobago can perhaps use the five signposts of a social justice approach to career guidance (Hooley et al., 2021). This can be initially achieved by encouraging students to build critical consciousness by encouraging them to develop self-awareness and to become more aware of their environments and to consider “why these things are happening and, in whose interest,” (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 60). Guidance officers can also help students to identify oppression and “to organise in solidarity with others who are also experiencing oppression” (p. 61). They can get students to understand that the problems they are experiencing may not necessarily be a result of their personal failures but because of external structures and power differentials which allow some to progress at “the expense of others” (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 61).

Thirdly, students can also be thought to “question what is normal” to get them to think about in whose favour do certain structural inequities work (Hooley et al., 2021). “One of the insidious ways in which power, domination, and exploitation work is by making socially constructed institutions, relationships, and behaviours appear as if they were ‘social facts’, and therefore ‘natural’ and immutable” (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 61). Encouraging students to question some of these ‘social facts’ can result in societal change. Questioning what is normal in my opinion would not only be beneficial to specifically a social justice approach to career guidance but institutions, governments and even powerful individuals should be questioned to improve social justice.

When the youth work together in exploring their career goals, the purpose is “to include heterogenic and plural standpoints into a ‘diverse way’ and thereby widen the picture of what is normal or employable” (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 62). Motivating people to work together can start in schools by having the guidance officers allow the students to share their perspectives and experiences rather than just having the guidance officer as the expert with all

the answers. This approach can show the youth that career guidance can work at an individual level, for example, getting promoted or at a group level, for example, collective bargaining for better terms and conditions at work (Hooley et al., 2021). ‘Emancipatory career guidance,’ the final signpost, “is not about choosing whether to work at the micro (individual and group), meso (institutional and organisational), or macro (social and political system) level” (Thomsen, 2012, as cited in Hooley et al., 2021, p. 63) but having an awareness of all of them. This awareness would have an impact on how we work with others and different groups (Hooley et al., 2021).

A major objective of a social justice approach to school counselling programmes is to challenge oppressive practices in schools (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007), and this was realised by the guidance officers advocating for students when they felt their rights were infringed. For instance, students solicited the officer’s assistance because of conflicts with teachers, an issue which also emerged in the study by Collins (2012). The guidance and counselling programme helped to prepare students for societal oppression by educating them about fair wages and discrimination, although this was not apparent to all stakeholders. The introduction of specific themes, goals and specific objectives during programme reform specifically related to social justice may assist in reducing oppression and developing the students’ capabilities.

The guidance and counselling programme appeared to have elements of a social justice approach to counselling such as highlighting student strengths (empowerment-based counselling) and emphasizing sociocultural and environmental factors. However, this was only minimal because of insufficient community engagement. While a social justice approach is focused on equality and equity (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007), the programme was not always able to facilitate equity. For instance, insufficient support was provided to a parent whose son had a learning disability. The guidance officers also shared that the programme was not entirely meeting the needs of all students from lower socio-economic backgrounds despite their efforts.

A social justice approach to counselling depends on data to guide counselling services and evaluate existing interventions (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007), and efforts to do this were observed since needs assessments were conducted in each school to identify the students’ most pressing issues. The

data, however, were not always used to modify school policies because the guidance officers' views were infrequently taken into consideration by the school's administration, and this served as a barrier to improving social justice. This approach to counselling focuses on enrolling students in more, "rigorous courses," (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007, p. 19) and the programme guided students to other programmes which were more suited to their needs, such as vocational programmes outside of the traditional school system, for example, the Military-Led Academic Training (MiLAT) programme.

In terms of the socio-political approach to career education and guidance (adapted from Watts & Herr, 1976, as cited in Watts, 1996) the guidance and counselling programme does not seem to be directly aligned to any one category espoused by the author, but it appears to most closely resemble the progressive approach which is "...focused on individual change, seeks to alter the distribution of opportunities but not the opportunity structure itself," (Watts, 1996, p. 231). While efforts are being made to encourage the individual students to change and provide them with equal opportunity, the programme's shortcomings do not allow all student inequities to be addressed. The socio-political aspects of career education and guidance are important because of their role in reinforcing or reducing inequities (Watts, 1996), and such inequities can be diminished to an extent in Trinidad and Tobago if the guidance and counselling programme and its implementation is revised. To be successful, programme improvement should not occur in isolation, but be part of reforming the entire education system.

Needs Assessment

Participants expressed doubt about whether a national needs assessment was conducted to specifically create the guidance and counselling programme, although the senior guidance official indicated that stakeholder collaboration resulted in the White Paper on Education (1993-2003) and helped to develop the Student Support Services Division. Currently, assessments are conducted in each school before implementing the programme, to determine priority issues since different secondary school types have students with roughly similar achievement abilities. However, within each school type there are students who come from distinct socio-economic backgrounds who possess different strengths and weaknesses. Attempts have been made to address varying youth

concerns by creating a holistic curriculum based on programmes used in developed countries, and while this has the advantage of being aligned to international standards, it may not address the issues of students in the NEED, or for that matter in Trinidad and Tobago.

A concerted effort to align a new national needs assessment to Trinidad and Tobago's current human development requirements, with increased focus on social justice and the development of 21st century skills could be beneficial. This assessment can be undertaken by having stakeholder consultations with members of the public throughout the country, particularly those that have a vested interest in education. A participatory approach will allow programme managers to hear the different voices, especially those of the students, to develop a comprehensive programme based on students' most pressing concerns. For example, since stakeholders want more emphasis placed on the personal/social aspect of the programme, adaptations can be made to focus on this.

The programme attempts to foster inclusiveness commensurate with the SDGs (UN, 2017), by helping students to identify their strengths and achieve their maximum potential via exposure to alternative education programmes. However, other endeavours are not always successful because of limited human and financial resources. For instance, students with serious psychological issues are referred to the Student Support Services Division, but this division has an inadequate number of specialists to effectively deal with the volume of cases, also noted by Parey (2020). Such students therefore are unable to fully participate in classroom activities thereby diminishing the quality of their education.

While the findings suggest that overall, the guidance and counselling programme is student centred, their most pressing concerns have evolved since its creation. I have observed in the NEED that students seem to require increased psychological support, and there is increased dependence on social media. A new national needs assessment can place greater focus on these issues. The programme is currently being revised to include a 4th domain, the global perspective. Students are expected to gain competencies to adapt to worldwide geo-political, socio-economic, and technological changes, to take advantage of newly arising global employment trends and opportunities, and to

survive in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected. The 4th domain was supposed to be included in the programme since January 2020, yet to date this has not yet occurred, possibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guidance officers are currently modifying their curriculum and its delivery because of the COVID-19 pandemic since programme adaptation is important because of global environment changes (Collins, 2012). They are sensitising students to the reality that some occupations have been negatively affected, and that technological skills are important in taking advantage of an increasingly virtual job market. Whilst they offered online sessions during the pandemic, this has been unsuccessful because many students did not have computers or reliable internet access. This has the potential to create further societal inequities because the most disadvantaged students are unable to access the programme.

The pandemic has also caused students to develop several issues, for example, prolonged periods on the computer have resulted in them being affected by emotional and sensory responses as well as increased frequencies of seizures and tantrums (De Silva, 2021). The different departments that cases are referred to are understaffed, thereby inhibiting the impact that can be made. For instance, “Despite more than 5,400 distress calls since the start of COVID-19, the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education has been operating at 20 per cent staffing with only 23 trained professionals in the unit” (De Silva, 2021, para.1). Revisions to the programme also need to consider the number of Venezuelan migrants of school age. Presently 4,400 migrant children are supposed to be in schools, however, they are currently in, “a parallel education system awaiting approval from the National Security Ministry to allow them access to public school” (p. 22A). Currently, 1,400 of them are enrolled in “Equal Place, a parallel system developed in 2019” (La Vende, 2021, p. 22A). The needs of these students should be considered by the programme, however, this would entail the guidance officers having to bridge the cultural and language divide and place even greater stress on an already overburdened system.

The youth have diverse needs and to a large extent, stakeholders felt the programme holistically addressed most of them (personal/social, career and academic), however, several indicated that it did not address the student’s

desire for a more diverse curriculum, and life skills. Generally, stakeholders felt a wider range of career choices and practical skills were required by the students and although not part of the programme's mandate, they can be included in an expanded version. For instance, the introduction of more practical skills for everyday life like paying bills, providing first aid, filling out online forms, and making online purchases. Since some participants wanted the programme to teach them basic life skills, this suggests that parents/guardians do not possess the knowledge or ability to communicate such information, and it demonstrates the importance of schooling to human development.

While guidance officers felt that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds benefitted by being exposed to new opportunities, this was belied by my own observations in the NEED that students sometimes did not use the strategies suggested. I argue that a capability approach be used to identify students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who require extra help. "The capability approach can help to identify the possibility that two persons can have very different substantial opportunities even when they have exactly the same set of means..." (Sen, 2005, p. 154). While students could be at the same socio-economic level, they might have different opportunities. For example, a student may have access to career information or a relationship with someone in their chosen field while his/her peers may not. Programme managers can therefore help identify the students' capabilities, perhaps by making an inventory in each school.

In almost all countries education is linked to national development goals. If some are excluded from full participation, then they will be unable to develop their capabilities fully (Akala, 2019). Having a stratified education system, where the weakest students are placed in schools where there are inadequate resources, and a school climate not conducive to learning, can result in students being unable to develop their capabilities, thereby widening the socio-economic gap. This can result in the marginalisation of some communities, as has been observed in the NEED and shows that our present education system mounts a barrier to gaining capabilities and subsequent freedoms.

The Cultural Relevance of the Guidance and Counselling Programme

The Trinidad and Tobago guidance and counselling programme is based to a large degree on international programmes such as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. It is therefore important to review the programme to determine its cultural relevance because of this close alignment. The ASCA National Model was developed based on the needs of students in the United States (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), and while their needs may be similar to students here, there might also be many differences. The Barbados model of school counselling is also based on the ASCA model, however, school counsellors there believe that it would be beneficial for a more culturally relevant model to be developed since it does not include “the cultural aspects of Barbadian society such as the role of Christianity and religion in schools, the inclusion of HFLE, and the work they do with students, families, committees within the schools, and their role in the community” (Griffin, 2019, p. 149). To ensure cultural relevance in Barbados, it is recommended that local counsellors form partnerships with counsellor educators from the United States and Canada and use:

an anti-colonial lens to develop and deliver trainings to ensure that local knowledge and practices are centered in teaching counseling approaches which inevitable have a western, Eurocentric lens. Simultaneously, they can benefit from training on inequities, social justice, and advocacy that has been integrated into school counseling in the U.S. (Griffin & Bryan, 2021, para. 47)

This anti-colonial view of school counselling would also be beneficial in Trinidad and Tobago since both countries have similar colonial histories. Similarly, the aforementioned recommendation by Griffin and Bryan (2021) would also be relevant to Trinidad and Tobago. In Jamaica counsellors were also heavily influenced by practices in the United States of America (Palmer et al., 2012). Super’s Life-Span, Life-Space Theory of Career Development (SSSD, 2008) can also be examined to determine if it’s the most appropriate theory for the guidance and counselling programme to be based upon since it has been criticized as not being “multiculturally sensitive” (Robitschek & Hardin, 2017, p. 360), which may have implications for a plural society such as Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago is a small, island, developing state (SIDS) and a common problem in SIDS is rural to urban migration amongst the youth because of “push factors” such as “fewer jobs, less income, and limited access to better housing and social services in rural areas” and “pull factors” such as “perceptions of more opportunities for higher paying jobs, securing adequate housing, and improved access to social facilities in urban centers” (Mycoo & Bharath, 2021, p. 2). Most SIDS lack economic diversification, they have “slow and volatile economic growth” (p. 3) and they have climatic and environmental vulnerabilities (Herbert, 2019). SIDS also are challenged by social issues such as poverty, high levels of youth unemployment and crime fueled by the drug trade (Goede, 2018). The youth may be especially vulnerable in such high-risk environments and as such social and education programmes such as the guidance and counselling can assist in mediating these risks.

The youth in SIDS have reduced opportunities for “informal and traditional education within communities,” (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2014, p. 51). This appears to be more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic when many students are unable to access their education in Trinidad and Tobago because of a lack of ICTs “...as of May 21, 2020, approximately 68,000 students were in need of electronic devices and approximately 27,000 children were identified as in need of internet access” (Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, n.d.-g, p. 29). In SIDS, social media and information technology play an important role presenting both “threats and opportunities,” (UNEP, 2014, p. 51) and when the guidance and counselling programme is being reviewed it is important to take into consideration these opportunities and threats. Some of the online threats encountered in Trinidad and Tobago were “either sexual in nature, related to gangs and violence, or contacts that promoted self-harm. Some students also admitted that they were exposed to possible credit card fraud and other forms of financial email scams” (Cummings & Cleghorn, 2022, p. 4). Opportunities presented by increased internet connectivity in SIDS include its use in industries such as education, health, ease of financial transactions and in public safety with respect to natural disasters (Jensen & Minges, 2017).

For the guidance and counselling programme to achieve its goals, it

must be part of an education system which meets the students' needs. In the SIDS there is a close association between education and sustainable development, and educational systems "...should include knowledge and skills relevant to island living and empower young people to become change agents for sustainability within their own communities" (UNEP, 2014, p. 51). Currently, in Trinidad and Tobago the education system may not be achieving these ideals, for example, it appears to constrict students' career choice from a young age since they choose subjects for their major examinations at the Form Three level. This limits the impact of the career guidance provided, however, its effects may be mitigated by educational reform and by creating national guidance and counselling standards based on information gleaned from all stakeholders to ensure its relevance.

Although the guidance and counselling programme is based on the model initially published by the ASCA, changes have been made to the original ASCA's National Model which is now in its 4th edition. This includes student standards and professional standards for school counsellors, which are further categorized as "mindsets" and "behaviours" that identify the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students need for each domain, and which counsellors need for implementing the programme (ASCA, 2019). An example of a mindset is, "Belief in development of the whole self, including a healthy balance of a mental, social/emotional and physical well-being" (ASCA, 2019, p. 3), while an example of a behaviour is, for the category learning strategies, "Demonstrate critical thinking skills to make informed decisions" (ASCA, 2019, p. 3). The guidance and counselling programme does not categorize standards as mindsets neither does it identify professional standards for guidance officers.

The ASCA model has changed its four components from *foundation, management, delivery, and accountability* to *define, manage, deliver, and assess* and its four themes of *leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change* are no longer on the programme's periphery but are integrated into the model (ASCA, 2019). While Trinidad and Tobago's model is not as culturally relevant as desired, there are elements in the revised ASCA (2019) model that could be beneficial such as, identifying professional standards for guidance officers in Trinidad and Tobago. The model's components and themes can be

scrutinized to determine how relevant they are to our needs and, if deemed worthy then adapted. It is also possible to develop entirely new components for Trinidad and Tobago's programme based on our national needs assessment, for example, themes such as *equity, personal responsibility, student empowerment* and *social justice*.

Challenges to Programme Implementation

Guidance Officer Training

Not all stakeholders in the NEED felt the guidance officers were sufficiently trained to counsel students and this has implications for programme success since it can affect the confidence that stakeholders' repose in the officers. School counsellors in Barbados also expressed the need for continuous training to keep abreast of current best practices (Griffin, 2019). A lack of trained counsellors and facilities were also identified in Ethiopia (Arfasa & Weldmeskel, 2020). Guidance officers and school social workers in the NEED are not trained to deal with critical mental health issues, however, this has not been adequately conveyed to all stakeholders leading them to have unreasonable expectations. Mental health issues are in fact referred by the guidance officers to behavioural specialists, school psychologists and psychiatrists in the Student Support Services Division. The different departments that these cases are referred to are understaffed, thereby inhibiting their impact (De Silva, 2021).

While all the guidance officers interviewed possessed degrees with psychology as a component, and participated in continuous professional development, a guidance and counselling degree is not offered in Trinidad and Tobago, and this may impact programme delivery. In Trinidad and Tobago, the qualifications to be a guidance officer are, "a recognized university degree with major courses in guidance and counselling or a diploma in guidance and counselling with experience in the field of guidance and counselling or any equivalent combination of experience and training" (Appendix T). In contrast, in the United States, school counsellors are required to be certified/licenced educators, with at least a master's degree in school counselling, and they must fulfil continuing educational requirements and maintain ASCA ethical and professional standards (ASCA, 2019). "In Barbados, The Public Service Qualifications (2016) now states that guidance counselors are required to have

the following: (a) A degree in Guidance and Counselling; or (b) A degree and a certificate or a diploma in Guidance or Counselling” (Griffin, 2019).

Consequently, to improve the delivery of the curriculum, it is suggested that the qualifications to be a guidance officer in Trinidad and Tobago be revised, to meet international standards. A review of the degree programmes at universities in Trinidad and Tobago revealed that at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine, a certificate in guidance and counselling is offered, as well as a degree in psychology. At the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC), a degree in psychology, as well as a master’s in counselling psychology is offered, however, no certificates or degrees in guidance and counselling are offered at the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). Political support can be directed in providing scholarships to foreign universities for officers to pursue such studies. A master’s degree in school counselling is offered at The UWI’S Cave Hill campus and a guidance and counselling certificate and an HFLE certificate is offered at Erdiston Teachers’ Training College in Barbados (Griffin, 2019). It is possible that there is an inadequate demand for guidance and counselling degrees to make it financially feasible to offer such a programme in Trinidad and Tobago or there are insufficient trained personnel to deliver such a degree so political support could also be directed at channelling resources to improve training.

Resource Allocation

Basic resources were generally used and while efforts were made to infuse technology into lessons, this was not always possible because of the limited number of ICT devices and unstable internet connectivity across the NEED. The programme was not perceived as being a priority for the allocation of scarce resources by all school administrators. For instance, the guidance officer at School D had to justify to her principal, the need for basic resources, such as a stapler. Inadequate support for similar programmes was also noted in Tanzania (Chilewa & Osaki 2022). Issues such as inadequate training, time, and resources to use for the programme were identified in Barbados (Griffin, 2019).

Political support is also necessary for increased budgetary allocations. The Student Support Services Division is unable to meet the demands of all students, and this calls for the Ministry of Education to allocate more resources

to this division and hire more trained specialists. This is problematic because if specialists are not hired the students would not be helped, resulting in the programme not fulfilling its mandate. Limited financial resources to channel to the programme presents an opportunity for increased marketing of the programme by the Guidance Unit and amplified lobbying by all stakeholders to get the Ministry of Education to deploy resources, may be of assistance. The Ministry of Education can request specialists to volunteer their services since there was an increase in demand for assistance during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed Adopt-a-School partnership is another programme that could be used to sponsor sessions with specialists.

Implementing or strengthening mechanisms by the Ministry of Education is required to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources since Schools B and C had sufficient resources while A and D did not. There does not appear to be a difference in terms of the mechanism by which government and denominational schools are funded, however, denominational schools have more options for raising funds such as religious sources, business, and professional communities (World Bank, 1996). Despite this, School A had insufficient resources suggesting the programme was not a priority there. Improved infrastructure is also necessary, and this warrants efforts by the Ministry of Education to ensure that each guidance officer has a private location for their office.

Guidance Officer to Student Ratio

Almost all the stakeholders felt that the present guidance officer to student ratio was insufficient, an issue also previously identified in Trinidad and Tobago by St. Brice (2001) and Collins (2012) and in Barbados (Griffin, 2019). Counsellors in Barbados and Jamaica also felt overwhelmed by the high case load and lack of support staff (Griffin & Bryan, 2019; Wilson-Harris, 2018). While the guidance officer to student ratio of 1:250 is correlated with lower student absenteeism and higher academic scores (Parzych et al., 2019), only School C met this condition. Despite international trends supporting a ratio of 1:250, I suggest 1:150 to allow the guidance officers to provide students with more individual attention. Increasing the numbers of guidance officers per student is an obvious recommendation, however, given the present economic constraints, this is unlikely to occur. Perhaps heads of departments,

deans, and teachers, as part of a whole school approach can be trained to do basic screening and counselling of students to assist those with non-critical issues. As part of pastoral care, deans have provided counselling to students in Trinidad and Tobago by conducting conferences with students and their parents in the absence of guidance officers (Wihby & Joseph, 2019). However, some deans were perceived as being unprofessional because of the aggressive manner in which they dealt with students (Wihby & Joseph, 2019), thus underlying the need for training. The institution or expansion of peer mediator programmes is also an option for students who are uncomfortable seeking assistance from adults for non-critical issues.

Fulfilling Personal/Social, Career and Academic Needs

Personal/social

The guidance and counselling programme was perceived to benefit the students to a greater degree by the guidance officers, than the other stakeholders, possibly because they had more intimate knowledge about it. However, a guidance officer said that the ability of the programme to fulfil students' personal/social needs was difficult to assess because of the length of time it took for results to occur. To address this issue, longitudinal studies can be conducted by the Student Support Services Division to identify its impact on students' personal/social issues. Like the NEED, teachers in the Victoria District also felt that the programme helped students with their personal/social issues (Collins, 2012) which demonstrates that to an extent, it was fulfilling its mandate. Some of the issues which the students encountered in Trinidad and Tobago included bullying also noted by Swank et al. (2018), depression and anxiety (Pascoe et al., 2019) and self-harm in St. Kitts (Jacobs, 2013).

The parents were unsure about how the programme was helping with the three programme domains and felt it assisted mostly with the personal/social aspect, although their views were not unanimous. This contrasts to Barbados where the focus of school counselling is perceived to be on the academic/vocational domains (Griffin, 2019). In Namibia, parents also felt that the most important role of school counselling was the academic domain (Hako & Bojuwoye, 2019). Parents in the NEED desired both supportive services as well as advice on how to improve their parenting skills, with one parent even requesting parenting workshops. While in Barbados, HFLE is primarily the

responsibility of the school counsellors this was not the case in Trinidad and Tobago where the counsellors have a curriculum separate to HFLE. However, a guidance officer in the NEED indicated that some of the topics in the HFLE curriculum overlap with the guidance and counselling curriculum, for example, self-esteem and puberty.

The role of the guidance officers was not clear to all stakeholders, findings which were also found by Collins (2012), St Brice (2001) and in Barbados, Griffin (2019). However, this can be addressed by providing further details about the officers' roles and allowing their contributions in staff and PTA meetings to have more prominence. Dissemination of information about the programme's goals, and content, and discussions about it may assist in increasing the level of staff support.

Not all students desired individual counselling sessions or perceived the classroom sessions to be part of a holistic programme, therefore, it is important that the overarching nature of the programme be discussed with stakeholders to prevent them from having misconceptions. Students generally found the group guidance sessions were helpful, they had a good rapport with the guidance officers, and they were comfortable seeking assistance from them. This bodes well for the programme because if students were uncomfortable soliciting help, the programme's efficacy would be affected. It also suggests that the guidance officers were professional in terms of relating to the students and were competent in doing their jobs. Similarly, Collins (2012) discovered that students preferred going to the guidance officers than the teachers.

While generally their perceptions of the guidance officers were positive, at School D, a student complained that the guidance officer did not make it clear that students could solicit individual attention, some students were uncomfortable going to her and the officer was unable to grasp their attention. The student felt that this was due to the officer being insufficiently trained and this is evidence of the need for improved training. Collins (2012) discovered that students wanted the officers to be more visible, however, this did not emerge in my study.

Career

One guidance officer felt it was sometimes difficult to assess the benefits of career guidance because students did not provide feedback upon

entering the workforce. To address this issue, data can be collected from past students to empirically determine the effectiveness of career guidance, possibly by doing longitudinal or tracker studies. Both guidance officers and students indicated that parents sometimes forced students to choose subjects that they were not desirous of doing. For example, a student was told to do Additional Mathematics despite being opposed to it. This also emerged in the study by Yamin-Ali (2014b). This is of concern because if students choose subjects and subsequently careers, they dislike, their life satisfaction will be affected. More interactive sessions at PTA meetings or workshops can educate parents about the negative consequences of not allowing their children to choose their preferred careers. In Barbados, while there was uncertainty about the roles of the guidance officers, their best-known function was to assist students with subject and career choice (Maynard, 2014).

In Trinidad and Tobago, while career guidance commences in Form One, the parents of the Form Two students had the least knowledge, likely because of inadequate parent-child communication. In Namibia, parents recalled career guidance activities such as career fairs and field trips (Hako & Bojuwoye, 2019). Since all students received career guidance, the programme provided a measure of equity because many of them did not have alternative ways of obtaining such advice. This was especially important for youth from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds (such as School C) who may be less likely to have families, friends, and a network for advice (Holt-White et al., 2022). Comprehensive career guidance will assist them since it can lead to social mobility and youth empowerment (Holt-White et al., 2022).

The success of the guidance and counselling programme is deeply related to school engagement. The programme is an integral part of the education curriculum and the choices available to students should not be only an academic matter, but allowance can be afforded to guidance officers, for example, in intervening when students make their subject choice specializations. The guidance officers can engage in discussions with students who do not get their own priority subject areas to determine how best their career aspirations can be met rather than just shunt them to another subject.

Not all the students felt the career guidance was beneficial since comprehensive guidance was not always provided, and sometimes such

guidance was unnecessary as they had already identified suitable careers. Students also felt that the curriculum limited their options, and their parents were unsupportive. While diversifying the curriculum is important, this does not fall under the remit of the programme. More efforts are needed by the Ministry of Education to make changes to the curricula through meaningful consultations with all school stakeholders, and data on student subject and career choice at the Form Three level and on the job opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago can be used to inform curricula changes. To ensure that career guidance in schools is at a high standard the present programme can be evaluated using the features outlined by Sultana (2018, p. 4).

Academic

The guidance officers and students felt the programme improved academic performance, however, the teachers and parents were generally unsure whether, or how, this was occurring. Guidance and counselling programmes in the United States (Nava, 2018) and Nigeria, (Bahago et al., 2021) were also found to improve students' academic performance. Since the students in the NEED frequently did not persevere in using the strategies suggested because they found them to be tedious, more engaging strategies and increasing efforts to improve student motivation can be used, for instance, by giving students rewards for participation. While the guidance officers provided academic assistance, many stakeholders were unaware of this and felt that such assistance was the teachers' responsibility. This is a missed opportunity since awareness of this could result in teachers integrating the guidance officers' strategies into their lessons, and perhaps lead to an improvement in academic performance. Most stakeholders felt that academic performance sometimes improved indirectly when the students received counselling for personal/social issues. This provides evidence that the personal/social dimension of counselling, can indirectly have positive impacts.

Critique of the Use of the CIPP Model for this Evaluation

When using the CIPP model, I felt that there were some constraints imposed on the data as the research questions were specifically aligned to the different aspects of the model. In qualitative inquiry, data naturally emerges, for example, programme isolation was a theme which emerged. Although, using criteria in this study narrowed the focus of the interview questions, and

possibly inhibited the emergence of data unrelated to the criteria. My literature review did not uncover disadvantages or shortcomings of specifically using the CIPP model qualitatively, so this critique assists in filling that gap. When using the CIPP model, ideally workshops with participants should be held after each aspect to discuss the analysed data and to solicit their views. I was unable to carry this out because I was the sole researcher. However, if I was able to do so then perhaps more of this (dis)connect between the evaluation, decision-making and political entities would have surfaced. In hindsight, it is possible that had these workshops been undertaken other views may have emerged. A partial use of the model might not have resulted in as comprehensive an evaluation. Perhaps this evaluation should have been undertaken by a team of evaluators. This co-operation of different stakeholders, however, was a difficult prospect considering that permission to conduct research was granted only to me and I did not have the backing of different groups of stakeholders to collaborate with to discuss emerging trends/findings. However, Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017) indicated that the model was flexible in terms of use.

The CIPP model has also been criticised as being too idealistic and while it delineates a “top down” approach to evaluation, the actual evaluative process is much more complex and iterative (UKEssays, 2018). While decisions must be made after each segment of the model, it may be problematic to achieve a truly informative relationship between evaluation and decision-making because of the political implications of such decisions both within and between organizations (UKEssays, 2018). For example, if we apply this idea to the present CIPP evaluation of the guidance and counselling programme, we immediately see that the success of the evaluation and decision-making will depend on the nature of the relationships between Ministry of Education, Student Support Services Division, and the schools.

Reflection

This evaluation has changed my view of the guidance and counselling programme, as originally, like many stakeholders, I assumed it focused solely on students’ personal/social issues. I now realize that it aims to be holistic, and ideally it should be part of a more integrated approach to education, leading towards human and youth development.

I would like to explore this point further in relation to myself as a

student, teacher and now researcher. Engaging in this study helped me to confront my elitist view on education, since I am the product of a denominational, prestige school. Although I have seen the negative impact of sorting students according to academic and socio-economic backgrounds, it remained somewhat difficult for me to transcend the ways in which I had been socialized. For example, I have observed that at the non-prestige school where I teach, the students who do better academically are, I believe, hindered by the undisciplined students, who are usually those that perform poorly academically. I feel that the sorting mechanism of SEA therefore “protects” some students from others.

I disagree with placing students in secondary schools according to their geographic location, as some have suggested. If zoning occurred when I was a child, I would not have been able to attend my alma mater, and neither my parents, nor myself, would have a choice in the school that I attended, and I feel that right should remain. While I am saying this, I realise that it is my socialized self who is speaking - that I am judging a school as a prestigious institution, when it automatically gets the highest performing students who sit the SEA. In other words, ‘prestige’ is ordained by our colonial mindsets and ideologies, and enshrined, for example in the Concordat. As a result, I saw all the non-performing students (whether they were undisciplined, low income, learning disabled, or disengaged) as ‘hindering’ the others, who needed to be protected. I am more inclined now (although it is still difficult), to recognise that the twin system we have in secondary education, where the bright and gifted go one way, and the ‘others’ are shunted elsewhere (mainly to state schools), is one that celebrates and reveres academic intelligence. The mass of young people is thus disrespected, and certainly their needs are not being met. This research, which is ultimately about human development and social justice, goes some way towards dismantling those dominant perspectives that I held as a student and as a teacher. The guidance and counselling programme, if it can work effectively in a school, would be a boon to those students who are floundering in this system. I feel this is especially important as the prevailing ideologies, even now, about academic intelligence and prestige schools, are still strongly held by the major stakeholders in education, and the society overall.

CONCLUSION

The stakeholders generally viewed the programme positively. They felt it helped with the three major programme domains to different degrees and expressed a desire for the programme to focus on the personal/social aspect. The benefits of career guidance were reduced because of negative parental influence and stakeholders had the least knowledge about the programme's role in academic guidance. Efforts made to adapt the programme in different school types seemed to be successful and in terms of 21st century skills, the programme had a larger role in the development of competencies and character qualities than foundational literacies. The findings revealed that the programme has intentions of improving social justice, youth, and human development, however, a more concerted effort was required to emphasise its role in doing so, as these functions of the programme were not apparent to stakeholders. Despite the programme having worth, merit, a defensible purpose, and laudable outcomes, it also had shortcomings which present opportunities for improvement.

These major issues include programme isolation, the focus of the school curriculum on academic achievement rather than holistic development, and the need for better stakeholder relationships. This investigation also brings to the forefront the benefits of having a new national needs assessment which especially takes into consideration the voices of the students. Improved guidance officer training, equity in the allocation of resources and reducing the student to guidance officer ratio were all challenges to programme implementation which emerged. A list of the major programme strengths and weaknesses can be found in Appendix U. Attempts to reform the programme may not be successful unless the stratified education system within which it exists, and the governance of the system, are suitably addressed. This would entail major structural changes such as the removal or adaptation of the SEA and the Concordat.

Future research ideas emanating from this investigation are, including school administrators in subsequent studies, and increasing the scope of the study to other educational districts. A fuller CIPP evaluation, one that includes stakeholder workshops, would build on this study and its findings. The cultural relevance of the programme warrants further exploration since it is so closely

aligned to foreign programmes.

The following chapter discusses the way forward for improving guidance and counselling in a SEMP school in the NEED.

CHAPTER SIX - THE WAY FORWARD FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Evaluating the guidance and counselling programme led naturally to ideas, derived from the findings, for improving the programme (its content and delivery) in Trinidad and Tobago. These recommendations were inevitably pitched at the national level because it is understood that the planners, policymakers, and budget holders would need to make the necessary interventions. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realised that it was likely that my findings and recommendations could be merely reduced to some prescriptions for practice, or worse, the report might suffer the fate of many studies in education - shelved. I therefore sought to think of some possibilities that might see the light of day in improvement of the guidance and counselling programme. For instance, I thought that my ideas may be more effective if the focus is put on only one school, so an individual school could enact the strategies I outlay, and the impetus for improvement could be generated by one school, under the right conditions.

I used my school to develop these ideas. It was built under the Secondary Education Modernisation Programme (SEMP) in Trinidad and Tobago, and is one of the lower performing schools in the North Eastern Education District (NEED). It is my intention that these ideas could be adopted by other similar lower, performing schools seeking to learn more about their own students as a strategy to better address students' needs. The results of this investigation indicated the importance of making changes to the guidance and counselling programme on a national level, for example, by conducting a new national needs assessment where students' voices especially are considered, and by exploring the cultural relevance of the programme. The findings also demonstrate that the programme can be more successful if its position and overall role in the education system is reviewed. While I continue to endorse these findings, I find that I am more enthusiastic about how one school may go about seeking to improve itself, rather than put heavy reliance on the educational bureaucracy to bring about the desired change.

This led me to another novel idea. That the improvement of the guidance and counselling programme, in the context of a particular school, was

not necessarily the best way in which I could deploy my findings. Only on completion of this study did it become clear to me that for the programme to become more meaningful, the whole school had to change. That also led to some consternation, envisaging a big project of education reform, and knowing at the same time the fate of many reforms. I thus came to the idea again, that emerging from this study should be a set of ideas that one school could use - not to improve guidance and counselling necessarily, but to improve schooling. Improving one, would lead to improvement in the other. With that in mind, I sought to build on the insights and findings of my study on guidance and counselling that a school could use to begin to think about how they could improve their own contexts. I based the ideas on the Human Development Paradigm (HDP) and the main principles of my theoretical framework. I became passionately interested in whether such an innovation could go as far as it could without soliciting permission or a heavy outlay of resources from agencies higher up in the education hierarchy. It is thus a bottom-up approach, based on indigenous knowledge (what persons at a school know about their school) and a radical way of thinking of school improvement in Trinidad and Tobago.

While all secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago are mandated by the Ministry of Education to create school development plans, this does not always occur in a participatory manner. For example, at my school input on the plan was not requested from either the general staff or myself, although I am a member of the middle management team. The current plan appeared to have been created to meet Ministry of Education deadlines and its contents have not been made available to all members of staff. The goals while stated in the document, are unknown to most staff inclusive of middle management and there is an absence of periodic assessments of the achievement of these goals. The current plan was created years ago and while representatives from the students, the parent teachers' association (PTA), the local school board, school maintenance and teachers are supposed to be included, none of their names are listed. Meetings are held infrequently, with none occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. I cannot recall information from school-based management team meetings ever being conveyed to the staff.

These issues have resulted in me proposing some underlying ideas on

how school development can occur. The ideas progressively build on each other, for example, *soliciting support for school development*, I see as a necessary first step, because without it any reform would be a non-starter (Table 61). This idea is based on findings such as the general lack of knowledge of the guidance and counselling programme amongst stakeholders. To support it they first must know about it and its premier place on the curriculum.

Inevitably, in re-orienting their thinking towards improving their school and the role of guidance and counselling in the curriculum, *behaviours and mindsets* need to be targeted. This idea has emerged from observations such as the need for stakeholders to be more collaborative and to have a mutual vision for school improvement. The *identification of barriers to good stakeholder relationships* is also important in getting stakeholders to work together for school improvement. The data indicate that inadequate communication amongst stakeholders has had a negative impact on the programme and this has resulted in misconceptions about it as well as stakeholders having unrealistic expectations.

The following table further expands upon my ideas: (i) soliciting support for school development, (ii) behaviours and mindsets needed for the innovation, and (iii) identifying barriers to stakeholder relationships. My focus is not to identify details or recommendations for school development but to present ideas which focus on nurturing and providing a collegial atmosphere in which stakeholders will have the opportunity and freedom to deconstruct their own experiences and create their own workable solutions.

Table 61

Using the Tenets of HDP as the Foundation for School Development

Soliciting Support for School Development	
Activity	Comments
(i) Use the tenets of HDP in soliciting programme support, for example, nurturing collaborative and communitarian relationships which allow for democratic discussion.	• Soliciting support for school development will take careful planning and creativity to inspire people to commit to its design and implementation, since it is a complex process. What is most important is how the stakeholders are treated, and how they are allowed to treat each other during such discussions. • The goal of the HDP is human development, and the process to get there is also based on human development. So, all the interactions of staff should have the tenets of the HDP in mind. Human development is people centred (ul Haq, 1995), and allowing all stakeholders the opportunity to freely discuss their own take on school issues, can help to empower them.
(ii) Discuss with stakeholders about how the HDP will be used to guide school development.	• Demonstrate to the different stakeholders how using the four pillars of HDP (equity, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment) (ul Haq, 1995) will assist the students and ultimately society. • Outlining how the HDP will improve the school and therefore expand the students' functionings and capabilities (Sen, 1999), may assist in getting staff support. • Emphasis should be placed on first gaining teachers' support, as this is integral to ensuring success. Subsequently, the parents and then students would be included in a similar manner. • Workshops can be organized first to familiarise the staff with the idea that they can make the most valued contribution to school improvement. The workshops can comprise of small group meetings between the school's administration and teachers, guidance officers and social workers. The workshops should not be rigidly structured but allow participants to freely give their views and engage in discussion. • An inventory of the staff's skills and talents can be created to determine how they can be harnessed in school development during the workshops.

Soliciting Support for School Development	
Activity	Comments
(ii) Discuss with stakeholders about how the HDP will be used to guide school development cont'd.	• There should be a focus on creating a community of learning by involving the community (businesses, religious institutions, and non-governmental organizations, NGOs) since these members might be able to assist financially and otherwise. • Separate meetings can then be conducted with community stakeholders to discuss the benefits of school development. • All community groups should be allowed the opportunity to be heard.
Behaviours and Mindsets Needed for the Innovation	
Identify appropriate behaviours and mindsets that are desired from stakeholders for school development.	• For the new approach to school development to be successful, stakeholders must exhibit certain behaviours such as collaboration, a strong work ethic, criticizing ideas, not personalities, and being responsible. • Their mindset should be one of growth, to have a clear vision with the goal of school improvement. • During discussions stakeholders can identify their core values and beliefs about the school and education to create an underlying philosophy that would guide school development. • Making major changes to a school will be a complex process and as such stakeholders need to be able to persevere and be flexible when encountering challenges.
Identify Barriers to Good Stakeholder Relationships	
(i). Identify and dismantle barriers between stakeholders.	• Teachers become demotivated when they have an increased workload because errant colleagues are not held accountable by the school's administration. • Poor school administration - Both senior and middle management may not perform their duties in a competent manner, or they may have a belligerent attitude towards teachers. • There is not a proper mechanism for conflict management in schools especially amongst teachers and unresolved issues can result in a lack of collaboration. • Despite heads of departments and deans having separate job descriptions the school's administration sometimes expects their duties to overlap.

Identify Barriers to Good Stakeholder Relationships	
Activity	Comments
(i). Identify and dismantle barriers between stakeholders cont'd.	• Heads of departments may not always take teachers' views to middle management meetings. • Findings show that there exists a measure of isolation between the guidance officers and teachers because (i) the teachers are unwilling to complete referral forms since it is a somewhat tedious process, (ii) teachers have unrealistic expectations, for example, they expect students to exhibit a positive change in behaviour in the short term, and (iii) teachers seem to be unaware that certain issues cannot be divulged by the guidance officer because of confidentiality. Teachers sometimes erroneously perceive this as inadequate communication in dealing with student issues. • Insufficient time for collaboration between teachers and other staff members, for example, guidance officers, contribute to isolation of the guidance and counselling programme. • Teachers complain about inadequate parental support and many times it is difficult to get into contact with parents, furthermore, get them to attend school. • The middle management team consists of the principal, vice principal, heads of departments and deans. These individuals consist of the senior qualified teachers who choose to accept the positions. Qualification is not equal to competence, therefore, many of these individuals are unsuited to their positions and it becomes a barrier to proper school management.
(ii). Improve stakeholder relationships.	• I have observed that the basis of most conflict amongst stakeholders is a lack of respect for each other. This emerges in the content of their speech, the tone of voice and body language. Stakeholders can place increased effort in trying to manage their emotions especially when they don't agree with another person's point of view. Teachers especially need to feel that their views are important to the school's administration as the success of any programme will depend on their support. • The views of all teachers should be solicited and not just those in middle management. I have observed that the loudest teachers get the most attention and teachers who may not be as vocal or lack confidence in themselves or their ideas are not heard.

Identify Barriers to Good Stakeholder Relationships	
Activity	Comments
(ii). Improve stakeholder relationships cont'd	• Stakeholder relationships can be improved by ensuring the channels of communication are open and meetings and workshops are held frequently to keep all members abreast of decisions made, and the progress of goals. • It would be fruitful for stakeholders to show their appreciation of each other's ideas and contributions when working on projects. They can do so by listening to and praising each other, by not being overly critical of each other's views and by seeking common ground. • Efforts can be made by all stakeholders to reduce cliques and to establish relationships with teachers from different departments. Teachers from different departments may not have much reason to collaborate with each other and this can lead to isolation.
(iii) Provide staff with autonomy when working on committees or performing their duties.	• Providing staff with a measure of autonomy can help with principles of HDP, for example, increased autonomy can help them to feel more empowered and might motivate them to actively participate in working towards goals.

Trying to ensure that the guidance and counselling programme is relevant and appropriate for students in a low socio-economic school and community, has led me on a journey that investigated and evaluated the programme based on stakeholder's perceptions. I have come to the conclusion that the guidance and counselling programme could not be improved (made more relevant to existing needs) in isolation. Many elements of the school and how it functioned impacted on this sub-system. While national input was necessary to improve the programme at the curricular level, upgrading qualifications and structural support, I believe that a school could make a concerted effort to improve relationships between all its stakeholders, which would provide a nurturing climate for student-centredness, the essential aspect of any guidance and counselling programme.

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Name:..... School:.....
District:.....Month:.....20.....

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Appendix B - An Example of the Guidance and Counselling Programme's Domains and Standards

Table B1

The Guidance and Counselling Programme's Domains and Standards

Domain	Standards	
Academic	A	Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.
	B	Students will be prepared for transition from one level to the next in the education system.
	C	Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, to life at home and in the community.
Career	A	Students will understand the self in preparation for career planning and the world of work.
	B	Students will acquire the skills to explore the world of work in preparation for career planning and to make informed career decisions.
	C	Students will employ career planning skills to enhance career development and achieve career goals with success and satisfaction.
Personal/Social Development	A	Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respects self and others.
	B	Students will make decisions, set goals, and take appropriate actions to achieve goals
	C	Students will develop personal/social responsibility and acquire basic life skills.

Reference

Student Support Services Division. (2008). *National comprehensive guidance and counselling programme*. Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago.

Appendix C - The Observations Protocol

1. Date:
2. School: School B
3. Class: Domain:
4. Topic to be discussed:
5. Objectives of lesson:

Outcomes: Students will be able to:

Sequence of strategies /activities utilized by guidance officer.

8. Questions asked by Guidance Officer:

9. Questions made by students to ascertain what seems to be interesting them about the topic:

10. Comments made by students to ascertain what seems to be interesting them about the topic:

11. 21st century skills mentioned:

12. Adaptation of lesson to cater for differences in learning abilities of students:

13. Resources used by the guidance officer:

14. Guidance officer's rapport with students:

15. Challenges encountered by students during the session:

16. Challenges encountered by guidance officer during the session:

17. Observations about general classroom setting:

18. Students behaviour during session:

19. How do I feel about making observations during this session (reflexivity):

20. Other notable observations:

Appendix D - The Evaluation and Values Criteria Checklist

This list of definitions originated from the Evaluation and Values Criteria Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2001). The ones listed here are those that were relevant to my study.

Societal Values

Equity - Fair to all - a free and reasonable conformity to accepted standards of natural right, law, and justice without prejudice, favoritism, or fraud and without imposition of undue hardships regarding access

Effectiveness - Successful in meeting targeted needs and/or achieving goals.

Excellence - Possessing high standards and performing near the standards or possessing good qualities in an eminent degree.

Citizenship - Being a constructive part of, acting responsibly, and contributing to the common welfare of one's community.

Criteria Inherent in the Definition of Evaluation

Merit - An object's intrinsic value or quality; concerns whether a program, product, or service matches the state of the art in concept, design, delivery, materials, and outcomes

Worth - An object's extrinsic value or how useful and affordable it is in meeting the assessed needs of a defined group of beneficiaries. While all institutions should strive to offer meritorious services, sometimes they should terminate even good programs or excellent staff members, because the institution's constituents do not need or cannot afford their services.

Criteria Inherent in the CIPP Evaluation Model

Defensible Purpose - A purpose that is ethical, socially responsible, tractable, and beneficial to society or individuals.

Needs - Conditions or things that are necessary or useful for fulfilling a defensible purpose, e.g., a child's ability to read and a school's possession of competent teachers

Supportable Plan - A sound, targeted, feasible set of arrangements for fulfilling a defensible purpose; must be responsive to beneficiaries' needs

Responsible Implementation - Congruence between activities and plans and between expenditures and budget, including improvement of plans and budgets where needed

Laudable Outcomes - Outcomes that are high in quality, service to all rightful beneficiaries, significance, safety, and cost-effectiveness.

Institutional Values

Mission - The chief function of an organization or institution.

Goals - The desired, usually long-term outcomes toward which ambition and effort are directed.

Priorities - Preferential ratings assigning attention, time, and resources to programs, goals, or other entities ahead of competing alternatives

Duties of Personnel

Professional Competence - An individual's obligations associated with membership in a profession (For example, teachers are expected to maintain up-to date knowledge of their content areas, develop ability to manage classrooms, be proficient in measuring educational achievement, be skilled in communicating with students and parents, demonstrate effectiveness in helping students learn, and help advance teaching as a profession).

Job Performance - Fulfilment of assigned job responsibilities (For example, a teacher might be expected to teach assigned courses effectively, maintain decorum in the classroom, manage extracurricular activities, counsel students, communicate with parents, and cooperate in school improvement projects).

Reference

Stufflebeam, D. L. (2001). *CIPP evaluation model checklist: A tool for applying the CIPP model to assess projects and programs.*
<https://wmich.edu/evaluation/checklists>.

Appendix E – The Evaluation Report

Title

A qualitative evaluation of the Guidance and Counselling Programme in selected secondary schools in North Eastern Trinidad

Author: Avinash Jackree

The Evaluation Report

Introduction

The major goal of the National Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programme is “...to impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive and preventative manner which ensures that all students can achieve school success through academic, career and personal/social development experiences” (Student Support Services Division [SSSD], 2008, p. 42). While the programme is implemented in all primary and secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, this study looked specifically at selected secondary schools in the North Eastern Educational District (NEED).

This evaluation is important because Trinidad and Tobago is a small developing country with limited resources, some of which are being used to implement the guidance and counselling programme in secondary schools and expected to meet the students’ needs. It can help stakeholders determine if the most efficient use of these limited resources is being made, and by extension assist with human and youth development. No other evaluation of the guidance and counselling programme in Trinidad and Tobago has been uncovered so far, therefore the information derived will be beneficial in filling this data gap. This report gives an overview of the findings according to the different aspects of the CIPP model which evaluates the context, input, process, and product of a programme to determine its merit, worth and value (Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2017).

Students in Trinidad and Tobago experience a range of issues that can possibly have a negative impact in terms of personal/social problems, career choice and academic performance. This evaluation was based on stakeholders’ perceptions of the guidance and counselling programme, and it was undertaken

to determine how it was meeting the students' needs and contributing to youth and human development. It was also conducted to identify possible adaptations during implementation in different school types.

The Purpose of this study is to:

- **conduct** an evaluation of the guidance and counselling programme using Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model.
- **investigate** the context, input, process, and products of the programme from the perspectives of educational stakeholders (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents and students) to determine if, and how, it is meeting the personal/social, academic and career development needs of students in different school types in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago.
- **examine** the extent to which the guidance and counselling programme may be helping youth to achieve the 21st century skills needed to live and compete in the global environment, become assets to society and contribute to national development.
- **consider** whether the guidance and counselling programme is helping to promote social justice, and
- **identify** strengths and weaknesses of the programme and its implementation, and to make recommendations for its improvement.

Over-arching question

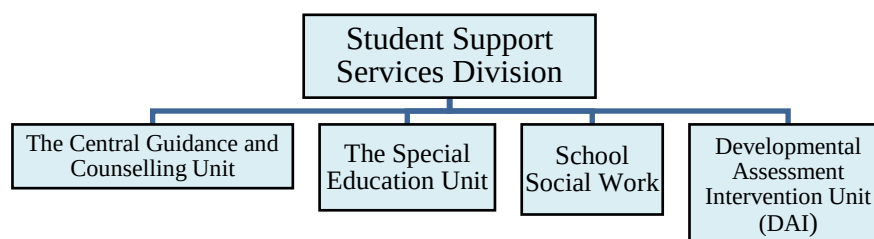
What are the perceptions of educational stakeholders (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students) in the NEED of Trinidad and Tobago, regarding the ways in which the guidance and counselling programme is addressing the needs of students in secondary schools??

The guidance and counselling programme was instituted by the Ministry of Education in 1969 to help meet students' needs. Originally the

programme had a vocational thrust but currently it has more holistic intentions. It is administered through the Student Support Services Division (SSSD).

Figure E. 1

The Structure of the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education



Note. From *National comprehensive guidance and counselling programme*, by, Student Support Services Division, 2008, Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago.

The Central Guidance Unit is responsible for guidance officers and each school has at least one guidance officer attached to it. The School Social Work Department is responsible for social workers and each social worker is assigned to two or three schools per district. The guidance officers and social workers can make referrals to the Special Education Unit which deals with issues such as diagnostic testing. The guidance officers and social workers can also make referrals for students to get help from the SSSD for psychological issues.

The guidance and counselling programme is based on the Process Model by Gysbers (1981) and not the Services model that was used in other programmes. It is delivered via seven major processes in secondary schools: counselling, consultation, provision of information, referral, assessment, group guidance and accountability.

The guidance curriculum is expected to develop students' attitudes, skills, and knowledge to lead productive lives. It has a "*Preventative and Responsive focus*" (p. 9) and is implemented through four major elements adapted from Gysbers (1990): the guidance curriculum; individual student planning; responsive services/ case management/ coordinating services; and programme management/ evaluation and supporting educational systems (SSSD, 2008).

Programme beneficiaries include teachers, parents, and students. There are 15 government secondary schools in the NEED and each has at least one resident

guidance officer responsible for implementing the programme. The guidance officers report to the Guidance Officer II in the NEED, a district education office. This guidance officer reports to the Central Guidance and Counselling Unit which is in the capital city, Port of Spain.

The programme's aim is the holistic development of students in both primary and secondary schools, and it has three major domains: personal/social, career and academic, each aligned to different standards and specific objectives.

Prior to conceptualizing work and lesson plans, a needs assessment is conducted to identify the students' needs specific to the school to which they are attached. These plans contain general and specific objectives devised by the guidance officers, based on the demands of the national programme. For instance, the latter lists strategies which officers can use to deliver the curriculum, and schools are expected to provide the guidance officers with relevant resources. The guidance officers deliver the curriculum by having both individual and group guidance and counselling sessions and attempts are made to evaluate the lessons on completion. Termly, quarterly, and annual reports are submitted by the guidance officers to the NEED to provide data about the number of referrals completed, the issues that students were referred for, and the interventions used.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation was undertaken in four different secondary school types and data were collected qualitatively.

Participants. A senior guidance and counselling official, one guidance officer, two teachers, two parents and four students in *each* school.

Research Site. Four school types: (i) Denominational Roman Catholic (all-male, 1957), (ii) Government Secondary built after 1959 (1961), (iii) New Sector (former junior secondary, 1973) and (iv) SEMP (2000) (see p. 5).

Methods of Data Collection:

- **Semi-structured interviews** with all participants.
- **Classroom observations-** Three observations in each school, one per domain.

- **Document analysis-** The guidance and counselling programme and guidance officers' workplans and lesson plans.
- **A Reflexive journal-** Using Gibb's Cycle.
- **Emails** – Follow-up emails were used to clarify information from several participants.

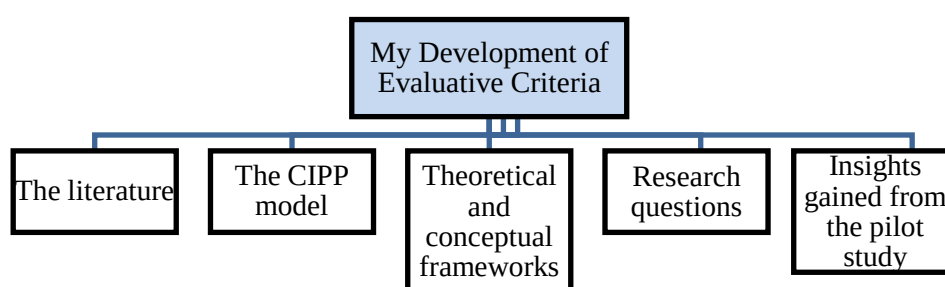
Written and verbal permission was obtained from all stakeholders before commencing this investigation.

Values

The use of values is an integral part of conducting evaluations using the CIPP model, for example, in selecting evaluative criteria and serving as a gauge for the identification of unpredicted issues or positive outcomes. This list of definitions originated from the Evaluation and Values Criteria Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2001). A table showing the values used can be found in the Methodology Section (pp. 74-77). For example, societal values such as *equity*, *effectiveness*, *excellence*, and *citizenship* (Stufflebeam, 2001).

Figure E.2

The Development of Evaluation Criteria



Data Analysis - Initial, axial, and selected coding (Straus and Corbin, 1990) were used to reduce and analyse the data from the interviews, documents, observations and emails. The findings from each category of stakeholder were compared to the criteria to evaluate the programme.

Findings

Context Evaluation

- Students have varying needs.
- The programme meets the students' needs to an extent. Most of the needs identified by parents and students are addressed by the three programme domains.
- The programme has several assets.
- Several programme problems have been identified.
- Several opportunities for programme improvement have been identified.
- The programme goals take into consideration the promotion of human and youth development.
- Social justice is a central tenet of the programme and congruent with programme goals.
- Stakeholders have varying programme expectations with some of them being unrealistic.

Institutional Values (programme goals, mission, priorities).

- Guidance officers feel that the programme's goals are not totally aligned to student's needs.
- Document analysis shows that the programme has a clearly stated mission and the parents and students' perceptions of student needs are aligned to the programme's mission.
- The programme's priorities include promoting human and youth development with a focus on personal/social guidance and counselling.

Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model (defensible purpose).

- The responses of the stakeholders suggest that the programme has a defensible purpose.

Input Evaluation

- A needs assessment is used in the development of guidance officers' workplans.
- Attempts are made to develop and use varying strategies that meet the students' needs.
- Strategies are aligned to programme goals.
- There are insufficient resources in some schools.
- There is inadequate funding for the programme.
- The programme is aligned to international standards.
- Several challenges affect the programme.

Duties of personnel (professional competence).

- While efforts are made to train guidance officers, some stakeholders believe that more training is necessary.

Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model (supportable plan).

- The programme has a supportable plan.

Process Evaluation

- The programme is aligned to the seven delivery processes.
- The strategies implemented are aligned to the workplan and lesson plan.
- Most students were engaged. Form One students were observed to be a bit disruptive. Students asked few questions.
- No lesson differentiation was observed.
- Minor lesson adaptations according to school type.
- The lessons addressed all three domains. Teachers and parents had limited knowledge of strategies used. Students in some cases had vague recollections.
- Attention was paid equally to all three domains in work and lesson plans.
- Efforts were made to evaluate all lessons through oral and written evaluations.
- There are many challenges to programme implementation.

Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model (responsible plan).

- There was alignment between the activities observed in the classroom and those in the work and lesson plans.

Product Evaluation

Personal/social guidance and counselling programme.

- Students have a range of personal/social issues.
- The programme helps with different aspects of personal growth to different extents.
- Several challenges were identified in providing personal/social assistance.
- Parents are unsure of how the programme was helping with personal/social issues.

- All students did not require assistance from the programme, but some felt it helped.
- Students generally had a good rapport with the guidance officer and felt group sessions were helpful.

Career guidance and counselling.

- Career uncertainty is the major issue.
- Guidance officers, teachers and students felt the programme helps with career guidance.
- Some parents have a negative influence on career guidance.
- Parents lack knowledge about career guidance.
- Students have mixed views on the programme's assistance with subject choice.

Academic guidance and counselling.

- Guidance officers and students felt the programme helped improve academic performance.
- Teachers and parents were unsure how the programme helped academic performance.

The Development of 21st century skills.

- Foundational literacies are not part of the programme's mandate although some parents and students felt it helped developed them.
- The programme places a lot of emphasis on the development of competencies notably communication skills.
- Guidance officers, teachers and students feel that the programme focuses to a large extent on character qualities.
- Parents have limited knowledge on the programme's role in developing 21st century skills.

Human Development.

- Guidance officers and students felt the programme promoted good health and well-being while teachers and parents had mixed views.
- The participants responses suggest that the programme plays a role in promoting inclusiveness, the provision of an equitable quality education, and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Youth Development.

- Minor adaptations made include individual career guidance in Form 3 in School A and assistance with literacy in School C.
- Guidance officers found the adaptations to be successful.
- All stakeholders felt the programme assisted with the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development (PYD) to different extents.
- All stakeholders felt the programme helps with youth empowerment.
- Guidance officers, teachers and parents felt the programme played a role in youth development, while students were unsure.

Social Justice.

- Guidance officers, parents and students felt the programme nurtures student strengths holistically, while teachers feel it does so by focusing on career and personal/social development.
- Guidance officers felt the programme helps with social and cultural issues while students had mixed views. Teachers and parents had limited knowledge of its assistance.
- There were mixed views on if the programme was helping to promote equality.
- Attempts are made to use data to inform the programme.
- Attempts are made to use data to change school policy.
- The guidance officers act as student advocates.
- Teachers and parents were unsure if guidance officers advocated for the students.
- There were mixed views on whether the programme helped promote respect for diversity.

Societal Values (equity, effectiveness, excellence, citizenship).

- There were mixed views on whether the programme promoted equity.
- Guidance officers felt the programme mostly met its objectives while teachers had mixed views.
- The data suggests that the programme has a high standard however, there is room for improvement.
- The programme generally helps/can help students contribute to society.

Criteria inherent in the definition of evaluation (merit, worth).

- Generally, the views of the participants suggest that the programme has merit.
- The programme generally is meeting the needs of beneficiaries.

Criteria inherent in the CIPP evaluation model (defensible purpose, laudable outcomes).

- The programme has a defensible purpose.
- The programme has laudable outcomes, however, not all outcomes are of a high quality.

The findings show that while the programme has a role in human and youth development, several **challenges** hinder it from achieving its goals such as: the students' needs have evolved since the programme was last revised especially during the present COVID-19 pandemic; a lack of knowledge about the scope and content of the programme by mostly teachers and parents; limited communication between the guidance officers and teachers and parents about the programme; insufficient programme funding and inadequate resources, for example, access to photocopying services; limited time to deliver the guidance curriculum to students because sessions are not scheduled in all schools; sometimes minimal support from the school's administration as guidance officers in some cases are not invited to management team meetings; and parents sometimes do not take an active role in raising their children or collaborating with the guidance officers.

Recommendations: (i) conduct a new national needs assessment by doing surveys and interviews to determine student needs, especially from their own perspectives (ii) improve stakeholder collaboration and communication, (iii) increase funding for the programme, (iv) improve guidance officer training, (v) re-visit the cultural relevance of the programme, (vi) hire more guidance officers, (vii) schedule guidance and counselling sessions in each school, (viii) ensure that guidance officers are members of schools' management teams, and (ix) educate all stakeholders about the content and scope of the programme.

References

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Appendix F - Delineation/Obtaining and Providing information for each aspect of the CIPP Model.

Input evaluation

Delineation

When conducting the input evaluation, criteria were first developed to identify and assess the guidance officer's plans and strategies, their professional competence, and qualifications, how the programme is aligned to international standards and to gain insights into how it is funded and if there are adequate resources for implementation. Delineation

...involves the translation of given objectives into criteria and alternative procedural strategies. These should be worked out jointly by those who have set the objectives and program personnel. The input evaluation team will assess alternative strategies but will not formulate them. (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 9)

Input evaluations can be comparative and non-comparative (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017) and this investigation was non-comparative so it was not necessary to assess alternative strategies.

Obtaining

"Obtaining is the gathering and analysis of criterion information for each of the alternative strategies which was specified during the delineating step of input evaluation" (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 10). To do this the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies were identified in relation to the objectives (Stufflebeam, 1971). Literature relevant to the use of those strategies was also referenced.

Producing

While the evaluation unit should submit input evaluation reports to decision makers about each of the competing strategies (Stufflebeam, 1971) this was not done periodically just in my final report. I assessed the strengths and usability of strategies in terms of their achievement of the objectives and the success of the strategies on the overall programme (Stufflebeam, 1971).

Process evaluation

Delineation

The delineating step for a process evaluation involves identification of potential procedural barriers, structuring decisions that will have to be

delayed until the program activities are under way, and the major features of the program design for which descriptive information should be obtained. (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 11)

Criteria were identified to assess how the programme was implemented and to identify the issues which emerged during implementation as well as problems with the programme design. No major structuring decisions had to be delayed until the programme was implemented. The criteria were focused on how the programme was implemented for example, aspects of lesson delivery, how it was evaluated and the rapport with the guidance officer.

Obtaining

The scope of my study did not entail daily monitoring of the programme's activities. I observed the delivery of 3 lessons each aligned to a specific domain of the programme (personal/social, career and academic) in each of the 4 schools. "Information to be obtained in process evaluation involves a daily monitoring of project activities in accordance with variables identified in the delineating step" (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 11). I also used interviews to collect data which was a technique suggested by Stufflebeam (1971).

Producing

While process data should be provided regularly to programme leaders to help in decision making or the removal of barriers (Stufflebeam, 1971), this was not done in this study and a final report on all aspects of the CIPP model was done on completion of the evaluation. This report described the procedures that occurred and assessed the alignment between how it was supposed to be implemented and its actual implementation. (Stufflebeam, 1971).

Product evaluation

Delineation

"Variables for product assessment should be delineated in terms of the objectives which have been selected and in terms of the overall problems that a project or program has been designed to solve" (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 12). The objectives of the programme and the criteria used in the evaluation were identified for comparison with data to determine if the programme was meeting its objectives. The criteria were determined by using the literature, the CIPP model, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, research questions and

insights gained from the pilot study.

Obtaining

Product information should be taken both during and at the end of the programme (Stufflebeam,1971), in this case the programme was ongoing, so it was taken on an interim basis. The data were collected to allow the context and product information to be compared. Comparison of product achieved to established criteria is one method of product evaluation (Stufflebeam,1971). The “effect of the product on the overall needs or opportunities which motivated the development of the objectives” (Stufflebeam,1971, pp. 12-13) was also considered to determine the extent to which the objectives were met.

Producing

While product evaluation reports should be done during and after a programme cycle (Stufflebeam,1971), it was done only on completion of this investigation. It contained information on both ... “descriptive and judgmental information about project achievements” (Stufflebeam,1971, p. 13). The programme’s achievements were based on the extent to which the design was implemented and whether the programme was implemented as it was intended (Stufflebeam,1971).

The CIPP model is flexible in use and during this study, the evaluation was framed by using all four aspects (context, input, process, and product) when collecting and analysing data. Important tenets of the model also used were developing and aligning criteria to each aspect, using the Evaluation Values and Criteria Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2001) and the CIPP model checklist (Stufflebeam, 2007). The model was used to determine how the G&C programme can be improved and how there can be greater accountability.

References

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Appendix G - The CIPP Model Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2007)

Table G1

The Different Elements of the CIPP Model Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2007)

1. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS	
CIPP evaluations should be grounded in explicit advance agreements with the client, and these should be updated as needed throughout the evaluation.	
Evaluator Activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Contracting
1. Develop a clear understanding of the evaluation job to be done.	Clarify with the evaluator what is to be evaluated, for what purpose, according to what criteria, and for what audiences.
2. Secure agreements needed to assure that the right information can be obtained.	Clarify with the evaluator what information is essential to the evaluation and how the client group will facilitate its collection.
3. Clarify for the client, in general, what quantitative and qualitative analyses will be needed to make a full assessment of the program.	Reach agreements with the evaluator on what analyses will be most important in addressing the client group's questions.
4. Clarify the nature, general contents, and approximate required timing of the final summative evaluation report.	Assure that the planned final report will meet the needs of the evaluation's different audiences.
5. Clarify the nature, general contents, and timing of interim, formative evaluation reports and reporting sessions	Assure that the evaluation's reporting plan and schedule are functionally responsive to the needs of the program
6. Reach agreements to protect the integrity of the reporting process.	Assure that the reporting process will be legally, politically, and ethically viable.
7. Clarify the needed channels for communication and assistance from the client and other stakeholders.	Assure that the evaluation plan is consistent with the organization's protocol.
8. Secure agreements on the evaluation's timeline and who will carry out the evaluation responsibilities.	Clarify for all concerned parties the evaluation roles and responsibilities of the client group.
9. Secure agreements on the evaluation budget and payment amounts and dates.	Assure that budgetary agreements are clear and functionally appropriate for the evaluation's success.
10. Clearly define provisions for reviewing, controlling, amending, and/or canceling the evaluation.	Assure that the evaluation will be reviewed periodically and, as needed and appropriate, subject to modification and termination.

2. CONTEXT EVALUATION. Context evaluation assesses needs, assets, and problems within a defined environment.	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Program Aims
1. Compile and assess background information on the intended beneficiaries' needs and assets from such sources as health records, school grades and test scores, funding proposals, and newspaper archives.	Use the context evaluation findings in selecting and/or clarifying the intended beneficiaries.
2. Interview program leaders to review and discuss their perspectives on beneficiaries' needs and to identify any problems (political or otherwise) the program will need to solve.	Use the context evaluation findings in reviewing and revising, as appropriate, the program's goals to assure they properly target assessed needs.
3. Interview other stakeholders to gain further insight into the needs and assets of intended beneficiaries and potential problems for the program.	Use the context evaluation findings in assuring that the program is taking advantage of pertinent community and other assets.
4. Assess program goals in light of beneficiaries' assessed needs and potentially useful assets.	Use the context evaluation findings—throughout and at the program's end—to help assess the program's effectiveness and significance in meeting beneficiaries' assessed needs.
5. Engage a data collection specialist to monitor and record data on the program's environment, including related programs, area resources, area needs and problems, and political dynamics.	
6. Request that program staff regularly make available to the evaluation team information they collect on the program's beneficiaries and environment.	
7. Annually, or as appropriate, prepare and deliver to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders a draft context evaluation report providing an update on program-related needs, assets, and problems, along with an assessment of the program's goals and priorities.	
8. Periodically, as appropriate, discuss context evaluation findings in feedback sessions presented to the client and designated audiences	
9. Finalize context evaluation reports and associated visual aids and provide them to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders. ³	

3. INPUT EVALUATION Input evaluation assesses competing strategies and the work plans and budgets of the selected approach	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Program Planning
1. Identify and investigate existing programs that could serve as a model for the contemplated program.	Use the input evaluation findings to devise a program strategy that is scientifically, economically, socially, politically, and technologically defensible.
2. Assess the program's proposed strategy for responsiveness to assessed needs and feasibility	Use the input evaluation findings to assure that the program's strategy is feasible for meeting the assessed needs of the targeted beneficiaries.
3. Assess the program's budget for its sufficiency to fund the needed work	Use the input evaluation findings to support funding requests for the planned enterprise.
4. Assess the program's strategy against pertinent research and development literature.	Use the input evaluation findings to acquaint staff with issues pertaining to the successful implementation of the program.
5. Assess the merit of the program's strategy compared with alternative strategies found in similar programs.	Use the input evaluation findings for accountability purposes in reporting the rationale for the selected program strategy and the defensibility of the operational plan.
6. Assess the program's work plan and schedule for sufficiency, feasibility, and political viability	
7. Compile a draft input evaluation report and send it to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders	
8. Discuss input evaluation findings in a feedback workshop.	
9. Finalize the input evaluation report and associated visual aids and provide them to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	

4. PROCESS EVALUATION Process evaluations monitor, document, and assess program activities.	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Managing and Documenting
1. Engage an evaluation team member to monitor, observe, maintain a photographic record of, and provide periodic progress reports on program implementation.	Use the process evaluation findings to coordinate and strengthen staff activities.
2. In collaboration with the program's staff, maintain a record of program events, problems, costs, and allocations.	Use the process evaluation findings to strengthen the program design.
3. Periodically interview beneficiaries, program leaders, and staff to obtain their assessments of the program's progress.	Use the process evaluation findings to maintain a record of the program's progress.
4. Maintain an up-to-date profile of the program.	Use the process evaluation findings to help maintain a record of the program's costs.
5. Periodically draft written reports on process evaluation findings and provide the draft reports to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	Use the process evaluation findings to report on the program's progress to the program's financial sponsor, policy board, community members, other developers, etc.
6. Present and discuss process evaluation findings in feedback workshops.	
7. Finalize each process evaluation report (possibly incorporated into a larger report) and associated visual aids and provide them to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders	

5. IMPACT EVALUATION Impact evaluation assesses a program's reach to the target audience.	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Controlling Who Gets Served
1. Engage the program's staff and consultants and/or an evaluation team member to maintain a directory of persons and groups served; make notations on their needs and record program services they received.	Use the impact evaluation findings to assure that the program is reaching intended beneficiaries.
2. Assess and make a judgment of the extent to which the served individuals and groups are consistent with the program's intended beneficiaries.	Use the impact evaluation findings to assess whether the program is reaching or did reach inappropriate beneficiaries.
3. Periodically interview area stakeholders, such as community leaders, employers, school and social programs personnel, clergy, police, judges, and homeowners, to learn their perspectives on how the program is influencing the community.	Use the impact evaluation findings to judge the extent to which the program is serving or did serve the right beneficiaries.
4. Include the obtained information and the evaluator's judgments in a periodically updated program profile.	Use the impact evaluation findings to judge the extent to which the program addressed or is addressing important community needs.
5. Determine the extent to which the program reached an appropriate group of beneficiaries.	Use the impact evaluation findings for accountability purposes regarding the program's success in reaching the intended beneficiaries.
6. Assess the extent to which the program inappropriately provided services to a nontargeted group.	
7. Draft an impact evaluation report (possibly incorporated into a larger report) and provide it to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	
8. As appropriate, discuss impact evaluation findings in feedback sessions.	

9. Report the impact evaluation findings to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders	
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6. EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION. Effectiveness evaluation documents and assesses the quality and significance of outcomes	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Assessing/Reporting Outcomes
1. Interview key stakeholders, such as community leaders, beneficiaries, program leaders and staff, and other interested parties, to determine their assessments of the program's positive and negative outcomes.	Use effectiveness evaluation findings to gauge the program's positive and negative effects on beneficiaries.
2. As feasible and appropriate, conduct in-depth case studies of selected beneficiaries.	As relevant, use the effectiveness evaluation findings to gauge the program's positive and negative effects on the community/pertinent environment.
3. Engage an evaluation team member and program staff to supply documentation needed to identify and confirm the range, depth, quality, and significance of the program's effects on beneficiaries.	Use the effectiveness evaluation findings to sort out and judge important side effects.
4. As appropriate, engage an evaluation team member to compile and assess information on the program's effects on the community.	Use the effectiveness evaluation findings to examine whether program plans and activities need to be changed.
5. Engage a goal-free evaluator to ascertain what the program actually did and to identify its full range of effects—positive and negative, intended and unintended.	Use the effectiveness evaluation findings to prepare and issue program accountability reports.
6. Obtain information on the nature, cost, and success of similar programs conducted elsewhere and judge the subject program's effectiveness in contrast to the identified "critical competitors."	Use the effectiveness evaluation findings to make a bottom-line assessment of the program's success.

7. Compile effectiveness evaluation findings in a draft report (that may be incorporated in a larger report) and present it to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	Use needs assessment data (from the context evaluation findings), effectiveness evaluation findings, and contrasts with similar programs elsewhere to make a bottom-line assessment of the program's significance.
8. Discuss effectiveness evaluation findings in a feedback session.	
9. Finalize the effectiveness evaluation report and present it to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders	
10. Incorporate the effectiveness evaluation findings in an updated program profile and ultimately in the final evaluation report.	

7. SUSTAINABILITY EVALUATION. Sustainability evaluation assesses the extent to which a program's contributions are institutionalized successfully and continued over time.	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities: Continuing Successful Practices
1. Interview program leaders and staff to identify their judgments about what program successes should be sustained.	Use the sustainability evaluation findings to determine whether staff and beneficiaries favor program continuation.
2. Interview program beneficiaries to identify their judgments about what program successes should and could be sustained.	Use the sustainability findings to assess whether there is a continuing need/demand and compelling case for sustaining the program's services.
3. Review the evaluation's data on program effectiveness, program costs, and beneficiary needs to judge what program activities should and can be sustained.	Use the sustainability findings as warranted to set goals and plan for continuation activities.
4. Interview beneficiaries to identify their understanding and assessment of the program's provisions for continuation.	Use the sustainability findings as warranted to help determine how best to assign authority and responsibility for program continuation.

5. Obtain and examine plans, budgets, staff assignments, and other relevant information to gauge the likelihood that the program will be sustained	As appropriate, use the sustainability findings (along with other relevant information on the program) to help plan and budget continuation activities.
6. Periodically revisit the program to assess the extent to which its successes are being sustained.	
7. Compile and report sustainability findings in the evaluation's progress and final reports.	
8. In a feedback session, discuss sustainability findings plus the possible need for a follow-up study to assess long-term implementation and results	
9. Finalize the sustainability evaluation report and present it to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	

8. TRANSPORTABILITY EVALUATION	
Transportability evaluation assesses the extent to which a program has (or could be) successfully adapted and applied elsewhere. (This is an optional component of a CIPP evaluation. It should be applied when the client or some other authorized party desires and arranges for such a study. Sometimes such a transportability evaluation is an apt subject for a doctoral dissertation.)	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities—Dissemination
1. Engage the program staff in identifying actual or potential adopters of the program by keeping a log of inquiries, visitors, and adaptations of the program	Use the transportability evaluation findings to assess the need for disseminating information on the program.
2. If relevant, survey a representative sample of potential adopters. Ask them to (1) review a description of the program and a summary of evaluation findings; (2) judge the program's relevance to their situation; (3) judge the program's quality, significance, and replicability; and (4) report whether they are using or plan to adopt all or parts of the program	Use the transportability evaluation findings to help determine audiences for information on the program.

3. Visit and assess adaptations of the program.	Use the transportability evaluation findings to help determine what information about the program should be disseminated.
4. Compile and report transportability evaluation findings in draft reports.	Use the transportability evaluation findings to gauge how well the program worked elsewhere.
5. Discuss transportability evaluation findings in a feedback session.	
6. Finalize the transportability evaluation report and associated visual aids and present them to the client and agreed-upon stakeholders.	

9. META-EVALUATION

Metaevaluation is an assessment of an evaluation, especially its adherence to pertinent standards of sound evaluation (See Stufflebeam, Daniel. Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist. www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists)

Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities–Judgment of the Evaluation
1. Reach agreement with the client that the evaluation will be guided and assessed against the Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy and/or some other mutually agreeable set of evaluation standards or guiding principles.	Review the Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards and reach an agreement with the evaluators that these standards and/or other standards and/or guiding principles will be used to guide and judge the evaluation work.
2. Encourage and support the client to obtain an independent assessment of the evaluation plan, process, and/or reports.	Consider contracting for an independent assessment of the evaluation.
3. Document the evaluation process and findings, so that the evaluation can be rigorously studied and evaluated.	Keep a file of information pertinent to judging the evaluation against the agreed-upon evaluation standards and/or guiding principles.
4. Steadfastly apply the Joint Committee Standards and/or other set of agreed-upon standards or guiding principles to help assure that the evaluation will be sound and fully accountable.	Supply information and otherwise assist all legitimate efforts to evaluate the evaluation as appropriate.

5.Periodically use the metaevaluation findings to strengthen the evaluation as appropriate.	Raise questions about and take appropriate steps to assure that the evaluation adheres to the agreed-upon standards and/or other standards/guiding principles.
6. Assess and provide written commentary on the extent to which the evaluation ultimately met each agreed-upon standard and/or guiding principle, and include the results in the final evaluation report's technical appendix.	Take into account metaevaluation results in deciding how best to apply the evaluation findings.
	Consider appending a statement to the final evaluation report reacting to the evaluation, to the evaluators' attestation of the extent to which standards and/or guiding principles were met, to the results of any independent metaevaluation, and also documenting significant uses of the evaluation findings.

10. THE FINAL SYNTHESIS REPORT Final synthesis reports pull together evaluation findings to inform the full range of audiences about what was attempted, done, and accomplished; what lessons were learned; and the bottom-line assessment of the program.	
Evaluator activities	Client/Stakeholder Activities: Summing Up
1. Organize the report to meet the differential needs of different audiences, e.g., provide three reports in one, including program antecedents, program implementation, and program results. ⁶	Help assure that the planned report contents will appeal to and be usable by the full range of audiences.
2. Continuing the example, in the program antecedents report include discrete sections on the organization that sponsored the program, the origin of the program being evaluated, and the program's environment.	Help assure that the historical account presented in the program antecedents report is accurate, sufficiently brief, and of interest and use to at least some of the audiences for the overall report.
3. In the program implementation report include sections that give detailed, factual accounts of how the main program components were planned, funded, staffed, and carried out such that groups interested in replicating	Help assure that the account of program implementation is accurate and sufficiently detailed to help others understand and

the program could see how they might conduct the various program activities. These sections should be mainly descriptive and evaluative only to the extent of presenting pertinent cautions.	possibly apply the program's procedures (taking into account pertinent cautions).
4. In the program results report include sections on the evaluation design, the evaluation findings (divided into context, input, process, impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability), and the evaluation conclusions (divided into strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned, and bottom-line assessment of the program's merit, worth, probity, and significance). Contrast the program's contributions with what was intended, what the beneficiaries needed, what the program cost, and how it compares with similar programs elsewhere.	Use the program results report to take stock of what was accomplished; what failures and shortfalls occurred; the extent to which the program was fully ethical; how the effort compares with similar programs elsewhere; and what lessons should be heeded in future programs.
5. At the end of each of the three reports, consider including photographs and graphic representations that help retell the report's particular accounts.	Use the full report as a means of preserving institutional memory of the program and informing interested parties about the enterprise.
6. Supplement the main report contents, throughout, with pertinent quotations; a prologue recounting how the evaluation was initiated; an epilogue identifying needed further program and evaluation efforts; an executive summary; acknowledgements; information about the evaluators; and technical appendices containing such items as interview protocols, questionnaires, feedback workshop agendas, data tables, and on-site evaluator's handbook of procedures.	

Note. From the *CIPP evaluation model checklist. A tool for applying the CIPP model to assess long term enterprises* (2nd ed., pp. 3-12), by D. L. Stufflebeam, 2007.

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Appendix H - The Interview Protocol

Table H1

Interview Questions Aligned to the Different Aspects of the CIPP Model

Section	Aspect of CIPP	Examples of Questions
A	Context	1. What do you know about how the programme originated for example, was a needs assessment done? 2. What do you feel are the needs of the students? 3. Has the guidance and counselling programme been developed to meet the needs of the students? If so how? 4. What are your expectations of a guidance and counselling programme?
B	Input	1. What are some of the strategies used in the guidance and counselling programme? 2. What type of resources are utilized in the guidance and counselling programme? 3. Do you feel there is adequate staff to implement the programme in schools? 4. What type of training have the guidance officers received? 5. What are the major components of your work plan?
C	Process	1. How are classroom guidance and counselling sessions conducted? 2. What does the consultation processes entail? 3. What types of evaluation strategies do you use with the students? 4. What are some of the major challenges to the implementation of guidance and counselling at your school? 5. Do you all enjoy the group guidance sessions? If so what do you find enjoyable about them? 6. Are you comfortable going to the guidance officer for help with a problem? If so why or why not?

Section	Aspect of CIPP	Examples of Questions
D	Product	1. How has the guidance and counselling programme helped you with: (i) your personal/social problems? (ii) your schoolwork? (iii) choosing a career? 2. What are some of the 21st century skills that you feel the programme has helped you with? 3. How has the programme helped you to develop these 21st century skills? 4. How have you adapted the guidance and counselling programme to suit your school? 5. How have successful have these adaptations been? 6. How has the guidance and counselling programme helped you to develop confidence, competence when dealing with (i) personal problems? (ii) academic problems? (iii) career choice problems? 7. How has the guidance and counselling programme helped you to develop: (i) your character (ii) your connections with others (iii) compassion 8. How has the guidance and counselling programme helped you to contribute to society? 9. Do you feel the guidance and counselling is placing emphasis on dealing with the social or cultural issues that the students have? If so how? 10. How do you feel the programme helps students challenge unfair practices at the school? 11. How do you feel that the programme will help students to challenge unfair practices when they go out into society? in an equitable manner? If so how?

Section	Aspect of CIPP	Examples of Questions
E	General Questions	12. Do you feel that the programme places emphasis on treating students in an equitable manner and helping students to treat each other. 1. What recommendations do you have to improve the guidance and counselling programme your school? 2. Is the guidance and counselling programme part of the schools' multifaceted approach to helping students or do you feel it is implemented in isolation? 3. Do you have anything else to say about the guidance and counselling programme which you feel might be important?

Appendix I - Using the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Table I1

Showing How the “5 Cs” of Positive Youth Development Were Utilised in this Study

C	Definition	Utilisation of the 5Cs in this study: Educational stakeholders' perceptions of how the guidance and counselling programme is helping students to:
Competence:	Positive view of one's actions in specific areas, including social and academic skills.	become more competent socially, academically, and when choosing a career.
Confidence:	An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy.	develop confidence to deal with problems of a social/personal, academic and career nature.
Connection:	Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and his or her peers, family, school, and community and in which both parties contribute to the relationship.	form positive connections with other people.

Character:	Respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.	develop the character of students.
Caring/Compassion:	A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.	become more caring and compassionate to their fellow citizens.
The Five Cs Lead to a Sixth C – Contribution		
Contribution:	Contributions to self, family, community, and to the institutions of a civil society.	contribute to their homes, communities, schools and societies.

Note. Adapted from *The positive development of youth. Comprehensive findings from the 4-H study of positive youth development* (n.d. p. 10), by R. M. Lerner, & J. V. Lerner and colleagues, n.d., Medford, MA: Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, Tufts University. Copyright n.d., by Richard Martin Lerner and Jacqueline Verdirame Lerner and colleagues

Appendix J - Criteria Used for Document Analysis

Table J1

Criteria Used for Document Analysis

Documents Used for Document Analysis				
	National Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programme (SSSD, 2008)	Workplans	Lesson plans	Referral form
Criteria used for each aspect of the CIPP Model.				
Context				
Student Needs	✓			
Programme assets	✓			
Human development	✓			
Youth development	✓			
Social justice	✓			
Programme goals	✓			
Programme mission.	✓			
21 st century skills	✓	✓	✓	
Input				
Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structure of workplans		✓		
Structure of lesson plans			✓	
Supportable plan	✓	✓	✓	
Process				
Methods of programme implementation	✓	✓	✓	
Lesson evaluation	✓	✓	✓	
Product				
All three domains considered	✓	✓	✓	

21 st century skills	✓	✓	✓
Human development	✓	✓	✓
Youth development	✓	✓	✓
Social Justice	✓	✓	✓
Defensible purpose	✓	✓	✓

Appendix K - Parent/Guardian Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES
CAMPUS ETHICS COMMITTEE
PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM
Phone: 645-3232 Ext: 5021 Email: campusethics@sta.uwi.edu

Title of Research:

Educational stakeholders' perceptions of the guidance and counselling programme in selected secondary schools in north east Trinidad.

Investigators:

Avinash Jackree

Your child /ward is being asked to be in a research study.

We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before allowing your child to participate in this study.

What are the things I should know about this study in which I am allowing my child/ward to participate? (*explain procedures and tasks; identify any procedures that are experimental, how children will be selected*)

This study is being done because the researcher wants to find out how guidance officers, parents, teachers and students feel about the guidance and counselling programme at their school. The researcher wants to find out about their experiences with the programme and to solicit their views on it.

How much time will it take for my child/ward to participate in this study?

Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

What will happen to my child/ward during the study?

Your child together with a group of other students will be asked to give their views about the guidance and counselling programme.

Will my child get hurt in the study?

No your child will not get hurt in this study.

What if I don't want my child/ward to be in the study?

You have the right to not allow child participate in the study if you so desire.

Can he/she be withdrawn from the study?

Yes he/she can be withdrawn.

Who should I contact if I have any questions to ask concerning my child's/ward's participation? (provide name, phone number and email contact of the researcher)

Indicate **Yes** or **No** for the following:

I give consent for my child to be audio-taped during this study

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

I give consent for my child to be video-taped during this study

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Signatures

Before deciding if you want your child to be in the study, ask any question you may have. You are also free to ask any question during the study. If you sign your name below, it means that you agree to allow your child to take part in this research study.

Print Your Name

Age

Your Signature

Date

Signature of Second Witness

Date

This document was approved by
Campus Ethics Committee on:

By Chairman:

November 14 2018

S. Arforn

This document expires on:

November 13 2019



EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECT'S RIGHTS

If I consent for my child/ward to participate in this study involving a medical experiment, I or my child/ward have the right to:

1. Learn the nature and purpose of the experiment (also called "study" or "clinical trial").
2. Receive an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the study, and any drug or device used.
3. Receive a description of any discomforts and risks that I could experience from the study.
4. Receive an explanation of any benefits that might be expected from the study.
5. Learn about the risks and benefits of any other available procedures, drugs or devices that might be helpful to my child/ward.
6. Learn what medical treatment will be made available should my child/ward be injured as a result of this study.
7. Ask any questions about the study or the procedures involved.
8. My child/ward can quit the study at any time, and their decision will not be used as an excuse to withhold necessary medical treatment.
9. Receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. I or my child/ward can decide to consent or not to consent to a study without feeling forced or obligated.

If I have questions about a research study, I can call the contact person listed on the consent form. If I have concerns about the research staff, or need more information about my rights as a subject, I can contact the Principal Investigator, The University of the West Indies at:

By signing this document, I agree that I have ready and received a copy of this document.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE AN INDIVIDUAL'S PRIVATE HEALTH INFORMATION

Name of Study:

Investigators:

What is private health information?

Private health information is any information that can be traced back to your child/ward. We need your permission to use their private health information in this study. The type of private health information that will be used and shared for this study includes:

- Their past and present physical and mental health information
- Information that can be used to contact you or your child/ward
- Results of their medical tests and DNA
- Questionnaires and information on their drug/alcohol usage and that of your family.

Who else will see their information?

How long will the investigators use and share their information?

What if I change my mind about sharing my child's/ward's research information?

Do I have the right to see and copy their research information?

If you agree to share their information, you should sign this form below. You will receive a copy of this form.

I agree to share my child's/ward's information as described in this form

Print Name

Signature

Date

If you have questions or concerns about your privacy and the use of your personal medical information, please contact the investigator at the telephone number listed in the consent form.

ASSENT FORM

**THE SECTION BELOW TO BE DISCUSSEDD WITH AND SIGNED BY
CHILDREN AGES 7 TO 17 YEARS**

Title of Research

Educational stakeholders' perceptions of the guidance and counselling programme in selected secondary schools in north east Trinidad

Investigators

Avinash Jackree

Why is this study to be done?

This study is being done because the researcher wants to find out how guidance officers, parents, teachers and students feel about the guidance and counselling programme at their school. The researcher wants to find out about their experiences with it and to solicit their views on it.

What will happen to me during the study?

Together with a group of students you will have a tape recorded interview with the researcher to discuss the guidance and counselling programme at your school.

Can anything bad happen to me?

No you will be safe during the interview.

Can anything good happen to me?

You will allowed to anonymously give your views on the guidance and counselling programme.

How much time will this take?

it would take 45 minute to 1 hour.

What if I don't want to be in the study? Can I drop out at any time?

Yes you can drop out at any time.

Will anybody know that I am in this study?

No you will be anonymous.

Signatures

Before deciding if you want to be in the study, ask any questions you have. You are free to ask any question during the study. If you sign your name below, it means that you agree to take part in this research study.

Print Your Name

Age

Your Signature

Date

Appendix L - Participant's Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
 ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES
CAMPUS ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
 Phone: 645-3232 Ext: 5021 Email: campusethics@sta.uwi.edu

Complete Protocol Title	Educational stakeholders' perceptions of the guidance and counselling programme in selected secondary schools in north east Trinidad.
Principal Investigator	Avinash Jackree
Co-Investigators	N/A
Research Site(s)	Secondary Schools in the North East Educational District
Sponsors	N/A

Why is this research being done?

To find out how educational stakeholders feel about the guidance and counselling programme in secondary schools.

What is the duration of taking part in the study (for each subject)?

All participants will be interviewed for a period of 30 minutes to 1 hour.

What will happen to me?

You will be tape recorded while the interview is conducted.

What is in in for me?

You will be able to anonymously give your views on the guidance and counselling programme at your school.

EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECT'S RIGHTS

If I am asked to consent to participate as a subject in a research study involving a medical experiment, or if I am asked to consent for someone else, I have the right to:

1. Learn the nature and purpose of the experiment (also called "study" or "clinical trial").
2. Receive an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the study, and any drug or device used.
3. Receive a description of any discomforts and risks that I could experience from the study.
4. Receive an explanation of any benefits I might expect from the study.
5. Learn about the risks and benefits of any other available procedures, drugs or devices that might be helpful to me.
6. Learn what medical treatment will be made available to me if I should be injured as a result of this study.
7. Ask any questions about the study or the procedures involved.
8. Quit the study at any time, and my decision will not be used as an excuse to withhold necessary medical treatment.
9. Receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. Decide to consent or not to consent to a study without feeling forced or obligated.

If I have questions about a research study, I can call the contact person listed on the consent form. If I have concerns about the research staff, or need more information about my rights as a subject, I can contact the Principal Investigator, The University of the West Indies at:

By signing this document, I agree that I have read and received a copy of this document.

Signature of Subject or Legal Representative

Date

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE AN INDIVIDUAL'S PRIVATE HEALTH INFORMATION

Name of Study:

Investigators:

What is private health information?

Private health information is any information that can be traced back to you. We need your permission to use your private health information in this research study. The type of private health information that will be used and shared for this study includes:

- Your past and present physical and mental health information
- Information that can be used to contact you
- Results of your medical tests and DNA
- Questionnaires and information on your drug/alcohol usage and that of your family.

Who else will see my information?

How long will the investigators use and share my information?

What if I change my mind about sharing my research information?

Do I have the right to see and copy my research information?

If you agree to share your information, you should sign this form below. You will receive a copy of this form.

.....
I agree to share my information as described in this form

Print Name

Signature

Date

If you have questions or concerns about your privacy and the use of your personal medical information, please contact the investigator at the telephone number listed in the consent form.

What will happen if I drop out of the study early?

You are free to drop out at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

What are my responsibilities if I join and what about confidentiality?

You will be asked to participate in an interview about the guidance and counselling programme. Neither your real name nor the name of your school will be used during this study.

What if I get hurt in the study?

No you will not get hurt.

CONSENT

I have read and understood this explanation. The researcher has also explained the study to me. I have had a chance to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this study. I have not been forced or made to feel like I had to take part.

I have read the attached experimental Subject's Rights, which contain some important information about research studies. I have also read the Authorisation to use my Private Health Information. **I must sign this Consent Form, the Experimental Subject's Rights and the Authorisation to use my Private Health Information. I will be given a signed copy of each to keep.**

Print Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of Person conducting the informed consent discussion

Date

Role of person named above in the research project

Researcher

Signature of Second Witness

Date

This document was approved by
Campus Ethics Committee on:

By Chairman:

November 14 2018

S. Arif

This document expires on:

November 13 2019



Appendix M- An Example of a Coded Interview

Interview Questions: Dina

I- Interviewer

P- Participant

Section A

Questions pertaining to the Implementation of the programme.

I- Alright good morning, well good afternoon.

P- Good afternoon.

I- Am so what form are you in?

P- I'm in form 5.

I- Ok, now, you know it have a guidance and counselling programme in this school right?

P- Yeah.

I- What do you all feel about the guidance and counselling programme at this school?

P- Well I think that it's a good way to get students to speak about issues bothering them at home and school and mentally and so yeah.

I- Yeah so you think it's a good thing?

P- It's a good thing, yeah.

I- Now I know you all have guidance sessions in the classroom with the guidance officer and also individually right, you enjoy the classroom sessions you have?

P- Yeah most of the times it's very informative so I learnt a lot of things about career and how to deal with certain issues.

I- And what type of activities or strategies does the guidance officer do with you in your classroom?

P- Ok she will bring like handouts and will do like quizzes, like self quizzes like personality tests like, so we would get to understand who we are as a person and which category we fall into and we would have like different activities like group activities and things like that.

I- And you find it helpful?

P- Yeah.

I- You enjoy the sessions?

P- Yeah, more or less.

Commented [AJ1]: Programme gives students opportunity to talk about issues.

Commented [AJ2]: Programme is beneficial.

Commented [AJ3]: Group guidance sessions informative.

Commented [AJ4]: Provision of career information.

Commented [AJ5]: Management of problems.

Commented [AJ6]: Self-assessment quizzes.

Commented [AJ7]: Group activities.

Commented [AJ8]: Sessions are enjoyable.

I- And you ever went to her individually one on one?

P- Am not really, I don't feel the need to I feel like I could handle mehslef.

Commented [AJ9]: Student confidence in managing own affairs.

I- But if you had to go to her would you be comfortable doing so?

P- Yes I would.

Commented [AJ10]: Comfortable going to the guidance officer.

I- What type of information services would the guidance officer give you?

P- Well it depends on the situation for example if is like depression she would give you counselling like how to get out of it, if it like self-esteem issues, she would also give you information to talk you out of it and if it's like more serious cases, now she would refer you to like further help if you understand what I am saying, further help or like further institutions that will assist in the situation that you are in.

Commented [AJ11]: Counselling for depression.

Commented [AJ12]: Discussions with respect to self-esteem.

Commented [AJ13]: Refer students who need extra support.

I- But not only like personal problems she deal with but all the information, she deals with career...

P- Yes, yes, yes.

I- Like what?

P- Ok for instance she orchestrated the career day we had recently in the school and I think that was a great, great initiative she took cause I learnt a lot about interviews and work and my career and just a great opportunity to learn something new.

Commented [AJ14]: Career day.

Commented [AJ15]: Career day successful.

I- Now when you all have classroom sessions, she usually gives you all some sort of assessment to see what you all have learnt during or at ...

P- Yes.

I- Or at the end of the session right? Yeah how does she do this, orally or written?

P- Written, well typed.

Commented [AJ16]: Written assessments.

I- You use the assessment each class you have or sometimes or what?

P- Most classes because after she gives us the assessment she would give us a paper stating ok what did you learn today or you know what aspect did you enjoy most about the session.

Commented [AJ17]: Written assessments usually given.

I- Ok.

Section B Questions pertaining to the Outcomes of the programme.

I- How do you feel the guidance and counselling programme is meeting your needs at this school?

P- Am like I said before I really don't go to the guidance officer for my needs but I have friends who went and they had great experiences they

were able to you know? Even in form 2 we had a situation when she was able to be the mediator in all and give us the advice that we need to get over it and now we are better off.

Commented [AJ18]: Students had positive experiences when soliciting help from guidance officer.

Commented [AJ19]: Guidance officer serves as a mediator.

I- Am what was the situation?

P- I could talk about the situation?

I- Yeah, yeah, yeah am once it's nothing too personal about you.

P- It was a series about like bullying in the classroom and students were getting picked on, people had personal issues and the whole class was just like an emotional mess and some of the students had to invite their parents to come in school, so it was students, parents and her and some of the form teachers and we all had this big discussion about what was going on in the class and after the issue was resolved and everything went happily ever after again.

Commented [AJ20]: Bullying in class.

Commented [AJ21]: Negative psychological impact on students.

Commented [AJ22]: Stakeholder conference.

Commented [AJ23]: Issues resolved.

I- So you find that session she had helped you?

P- Yes it did.

I- Alright, you feel the information you getting from her helping you?

P- Yeah.

I- Anything in particular?

P- Well like I said, personality tests, you know as a teenager you tend to don't know yuhself so like when you do the set of things it's like realizing like maybe I don't fall into this category maybe an introvert an extrovert maybe like that is the information that helping me as a person.

Commented [AJ24]: Self-assessment quizzes beneficial to students.

I- Do you feel the guidance and counselling programme has helped you to manage change successfully? For example as you get older, you going from one form to the other or as you maturing into a young lady or transitioning from primary to secondary school, CXC, all these things, you think it helping you to manage all of these changes?

P- Yes because even before in form 1 she treating you like you would expect this so don't be alarmed and as you go on its like more information to help you to grow and mould you into the person you want to be.

Commented [AJ25]: Programme prepares students for changes.

I- You feel that the guidance and counselling programme helping you to accept and take responsibility for feelings?

P- Yes, it is, teaching because you how to be a better person, moulding you into the person you want to be it also teaching you to accept responsibility and the repercussions of your actions, basically.

Commented [AJ26]: Programme helps with character development.

Commented [AJ27]: Accepting responsibility for your actions.

I-Ok, you feel the guidance and counselling programme has helped you to understand career development?

P- Yes in terms of the interview we had recently it did give us a grasp about career development and what we expect in our career field.

Commented [AJ28]: Mock interviews provide career preparation.

I- What other type of skill, you find the guidance and counselling programme helping you learn?

P- Am.

I- Social skills?

P- Yeah, I mean I really is not much of a talker but it definitely develop my skills in talking to older folks and other people cause normally I does just be like quiet but this helping me to be like more outspoken and to express my feelings, so yeah.

Commented [AJ29]: Improve confidence when speaking.

I- What about study skills? Time management?

P- Yes we did have sessions on time management and study skills and how to prepare ourselves for exams so this actually helping as CXC coming along and mock exams giving us the incentive as to ok to do this at this hour and you know organizing the study life.

Commented [AJ30]: Time management.

Commented [AJ31]: Study skills.

Commented [AJ32]: Preparation for exams.

I- You feel the guidance and counselling programme has helped you to ensure personal safety? For example it helping you to stay away from things that might be harmful to you or situations?

P- Yeah. We have been given insightful information on our safety and protecting ourselves in terms of sexual abuse, mental abuse, all the different kinds of abuse basically so.

Commented [AJ33]: Information on protection from abuse.

I- What about drugs and crime?

P- Drugs, saying no to marijuana, cocaine all these different things, she even invited you know people to come in school to talk about these things with the students.

Commented [AJ34]: Information on preventing drug use.

I- You feel the guidance and counselling programme has helped you to enhance your relationship skills? Like with your family and friends?

Commented [AJ35]: Lectures from external support agencies.

P- Hmm, yeah.

I-Yeah? Like how?

P- Am I think it encouraging you to be like, sometimes I would use an example again, as teenagers to stray away to lock up yourself in a room. I think it teaching you have a better relationship with your family members, your parents, your siblings and that's just maintaining a good household.

Commented [AJ36]: Improved interpersonal relationships.

Section C

Questions pertaining to the social and personal aspects of the guidance and counselling programme.

I- How has the guidance and counselling programme helped you to deal with any personal or social issue you may have had?

P- Like it all comes down to expressing my feelings because that is something I had a problem with because normally I would just take it and bottle it in but now I able to say I don't like this, maybe we should try this in terms of here.

Commented [AJ37]: More comfortable expressing feelings.

I- And you find that it helped?

P- Yeah it helped.

I- You find that what you did with Miss help you to become stronger and better able to deal with your problems?

P- Absolutely.

I- You find it could help improve your coping skills?

P- Yeah.

I- What you did that helping you with that?

P- Am, ok, so different sessions it would be like dealing with different obstacles that would come in your life and I feel like as I bounce up these different things from these sessions you able to understand about how to go about or how to cope with it. For example am like I said, expressing yourself, stating what you like, what you dislike, how to manage your emotions, anger issues and stuff like that so I that helps in managing the problems and issues that comes out.

Commented [AJ38]: Coping with obstacles in life.

Commented [AJ39]: Expressing true emotions.

Commented [AJ40]: Managing emotions helps with managing problems.

I- You said you comfortable going to the guidance officer? So you said you feel everything would be confidential?

P- Yes.

I- What you like about her?

P- Well, she has good charisma, she is always friendly never disrespectful, always warm and welcoming and I think that is a good thing for am a guidance counsellor, that is what a guidance counsellor supposed to be in my opinion.

Commented [AJ41]: Guidance officer is charismatic.

Commented [AJ42]: Guidance officer is approachable.

I- Ok.

Section D

Questions pertaining to the career aspects of the guidance and counselling programme.

I- Do you feel the guidance and counselling programme is helping you to meet your career guidance needs at this school?

P- Yeah.

I- Like maybe not too sure about what career you want and from what you did with Miss it helping you?

P- Yeah, after the interview I definitely had a clear path as to you know what I must go into this field.

Commented [AJ43]: Interview helped make career decision.

I- What field is that?

P- Medicine.

I- Ok.

P- After doing the interview I was yeah this is how it would feel basically of how it would be like in the world of work and I definitely...

I- But you feel like it helped you when you was choosing subjects?

P- That was before I always wanted to do science so this just basically added to my fuel, added the fire.

Commented [AJ44]: Interview helped reinforce initial career goal.

I- So it didn't really help choosing subjects or anything like that? The guidance and counselling programme?

P- I wouldn't say it didn't help but it didn't have a need to.

Commented [AJ45]: No need for help with subject choice.

I- Or ok, so apart from the career day it had any other activities Miss used to help you all choose your career?

P- Yeah, I feeling so enthusiastic, anyway she came in class and she gave us a list of am a list of careers, a list of requirements for the careers and how to go about getting it so studying, setting a timetable, setting an organization for yuh life so basically you want to reach this career, you want to meet this goal, you want to do this to get that goal so yeah.

Commented [AJ46]: Career requirements.

Commented [AJ47]: Plan to achieve career goals.

Section E

Questions pertaining to the academic performance aspect of the guidance and counselling programme.

I- What are some of the academic problems you have received counselling for? Or have you received counselling for any academic problems you had?

P- No.

I- You know about any of your friends who had to go because they wasn't doing too well in their school work and thing?

P- No.

I- You feel that the guidance and counselling programme could help with academic performance?

P- I'm not sure.

Commented [AJ48]: Unsure if programme helps academic performance.

I- I remember you were talking about study skills and time management and things like that you don't think that those things could help?

P- Yes it could help but then that's one aspect of it. Sometimes what gives into academic performance is your life at home or whatever issue you may have

Commented [AJ49]: Study skills and time management just one aspect to help with academic performance.

could reflect on your academic performance. That is not only like studying and so forth you know in a mental place can affect how you perform.

Commented [AJ50]: Domestic issue could affect academic performance.

I- Ok but you feel from what you did with the programme it could help students to overcome their academic challenges,

P- Yes.

I- Yeah.

P- It could.

I- You could tell of any activities other than the study skills that they used to help improve their academic performance?

P- How about seeing what stemming the performance? So basically they would question the child and ask the child what you think is affecting how you perform? And by that now the child would give reasons about what going on in their life right now and affecting their performance, so that together with the study skills will work together.

Commented [AJ51]: Identification of issues which affect academic performance.

Commented [AJ52]: Combination of study skills and identification of student issues impact performance.

I- So it would work together in a kind of indirect way?

P- Yes.

I- Ok.

Section F

Human Development.

I- So you know a school would be preparing young people for the world of work and to go out into society and help in the development of the country right?

P- Correct.

I- You find the guidance and counselling programme helping to develop the human resources of the country?

P- Yes.

I- How?

P- Because the guidance and counselling sessions it moulding citizens into what the am the community should be like so when they get exposure to these sessions they would understand ok, it's like socialization in school so they socialize into knowing the norms in society so they get it at home they get it at school and that is what would mould them into the good citizens that we need in Trinidad and Tobago right now.

Commented [AJ53]: Guidance sessions mould citizens.

Commented [AJ54]: Socialization in schools and home prepares students to be good citizens.

I- So you feel the guidance and counselling programme helping students to become productive citizens?

P- Yes.

I-Yeah?

P- Yes.

I- I guess productive in the way it helping them with their career choices?

P- Yeah, productive in terms of career, in terms of going forth in academics, in pursuing a course in a domestic field so it giving them the incentive to do what they possibly can.

Commented [AJ55]: Programme helps students pursue careers.

I- You feel the guidance and counselling programme helping the students to achieve good health and well-being?

P- Yeah.

I- Like you all did anything with say healthy lifestyles, diet, exercise?

P- Yeah.

I- Hygiene?

P- The ERHA came and spoke to us about eating healthily balanced diet, exercising regularly, how to implement fitness into your daily cycle so yeah.

Commented [AJ56]: External support agencies lectured on healthy lifestyles.

I- But what about like say mental health? Talking to the guidance officer, you don't think that helping you mentally also?

P- Yes, like issues with depression, low self-esteem as I mentioned before so when you speak to her you are able to get a clear idea about different types of mental issues affecting teenagers, depression, self-esteem, suicide, all these things we had touched on.

Commented [AJ57]: Programme addressed mental health.

I- You feel that the healthy lifestyles, it had any impact on you made any changes to your lifestyle?

P- Yeah I made changes but you know, make changes stop, make changes stop ...but currently with exams I kinda pause for the while.

Commented [AJ58]: Student adopted health lifestyle.

I- Changes like what?

P- Eating healthily like I started to pack my lunch, I stop too for the while. Exercise I have an app on my phone now I using to exercise, so yeah.

Commented [AJ59]: Increased focus on diet and exercise.

I- You feel the guidance and counselling programme is helping you to provide a quality education to students? Because a school is not just about the schoolwork, right so what role you feel the guidance and counselling programme fulfilling in the school to give students a good education?

P- Am by teaching them things like responsibility and pointing them in the direction of where they want to be so students would be motivated to you know perform to be you know, exemplars in society.

Commented [AJ60]: Teaching students responsibility.

Commented [AJ61]: Guidance helps motivate students to be productive citizens.

Section G

Questions pertaining to youth development.

I- Am, you know as the youth growing up you all supposed to have, developing different skills and more knowledge and things like that right, and all of that is part of youth development, so what do you feel are your youth developmental needs?

P- My youth development needs? You could explain that over in simpler?

I- As a youth growing up today...

P- Ok.

I- What do you feel would be the skills that you feel you need to have or the knowledge that you feel you need to get, so when you go out into society you could be a functioning adult?

P- Ok, am bill payment, bill payment, how to deal with the government right now in terms of like voting and stuff like that, how to manage work life and family life all these kinds of management skills. I think that's what I really need right now.

Commented [AJ62]: Paying of bills.

Commented [AJ63]:

Commented [AJ64]: Work/family life balance.

I- And you feel that the G&C programme is helping youth development at this school? Helping the youth to get the knowledge and the skills that they feel you need for when they go out there?

P- Yeah, each session you learn something new and I think that will bring about the knowledge that is needed in the real world.

Commented [AJ65]: New information is learnt in each session.

I- Do you feel the G&C programme is helping you to develop confidence when dealing with your academic problems?

P- Yes, like I said it teach me how to express myself not only emotionally but academically so yeah.

Commented [AJ66]: Improved emotional and academic confidence.

I- Do you feel the G&C programme is helping you to develop confidence when dealing with your personal and social problems?

P- Yes.

I- How?

P- Am like I said before I have gained the yuh know, what I could say, I've gained the confidence in expressing myself and that's the problem that I always had and always tended in me not having the confidence or insecurities or self-esteem issues, that expression that I gained is now helping in the different situations.

Commented [AJ67]: Improved confidence in expressing views.

I- Do you feel the G&C programme is helping you to develop confidence when dealing with any career problems you may have had like in terms of choosing a career?

P- Yeah.

I- Yeah?

P- Like I said the world of work really cleared up things to me and I stick to the plan that I want to be an oncologist/haematologist.

Commented [AJ68]: Increased confidence in deciding on career choice.

I- Am you feel the G&C programme is helping you to become more competent when dealing with academic problems? Competent meaning you could handle your schoolwork better.

P- Yeah, like the timetable sessions and stuff I really know how to manage my time now and do this at this hour and handle the workload.

Commented [AJ69]: Time management helped improve competence with academics.

I- Do you feel the G&C programme is helping you to become more competent when dealing with your social and personal issues you may have?

P- Yes.

I- How?

P- Am is all about communication and I feel like we learn communication in the am...

Commented [AJ70]: Communication skills learnt.

I- Programme?

P- In the programme so that giving you the opportunity...yeah.

I- You feel the G&C programme is helping you to become more competent when dealing with career problems? Like choosing your career?

P- Yeah well I always had a fixed idea like I want to do this regardless like I still want to do this.

Commented [AJ71]: Always sure about career choice.

I- Do you think it help your friends?

P- I don't know.

I- They don't talk about "I ent sure what I want to do and I going by Miss and..."

P- No. All of us have this idea like I want to do this, I want to do this, I want to do this and we very determined so I sticking with the plan.

Commented [AJ72]: Peers sure of career goals.

I- Do you feel the G&C programme is helping you to develop your character? Like your morals, your values?

P- Yeah.

I- Like what?

P- Like you might learn certain things, like the average teenager need to know certain things and gain certain knowledge to organize we self out there in the future, so yeah.

Commented [AJ73]: Knowledge to organize self.

I- You feel the G&C programme is helping you to become more compassionate to others? To treat them with more kindness?

P- I have always been quite compassionate.

Commented [AJ74]: Always compassionate to others.

I- But Miss did that in class? How to treat others?

P- Yeah, respect, yeah.

I- You feel that the guidance and counselling programme is helping you to be better able to contribute to society?

P- Yeah.

I- Yeah.

P- I mean as I said before I learned certain things I am able to understand other people situations, put yourself kinda in their shoes yuh know respect them even if you don't know them, yuh know don't bully people, no abuse is still abuse, mental, physical abuse, things like that you gain knowledge of.

I- What about like helping you to contribute to your community?

P- Am clean up, community what you call this again? Community groups you know you could go and even though you young you can make a brilliant effort to beautify or help in your community situation.

I- And the guidance and counselling programme helping with that helping you do that?

P- Well helping me have a better head to know what I is a youth I want to contribute to my society, my community, my development.

Section H

Social Justice.

I- What strengths does the guidance and counselling programme focus on in this school? Like strengths in the students, what strengths in the students it really helping them?

P- I believe is giving them the drive to be better in terms of academically, spiritually, mentally, just being better and put they best foot forward.

I- Ok, how you feel the guidance and counselling programme placing emphasis on helping students deal with social problems they may face? Like say with crime, poverty, discrimination, abuse you feel it helping students deal with these things?

P- I don't know helping but I would say enlightening so you would gain knowledge on these different society issues and we would deal with like am things to resolve it so we would be aware of it more or less so I feel like yeah.

I- What about like Trinidad have many different races and religions and cultures and you know sometimes it might have some tension and conflict based on what you all have learnt in the guidance and counselling programme it helping you all with things like that?

Commented [AJ75]: Guidance officer taught students to respect others.

Commented [AJ76]: Importance of respecting others.

Commented [AJ77]: Young people can contribute to community groups.

Commented [AJ78]: Willing to contribute to community.

Commented [AJ79]: Academic, spiritual and mental improvement.

Commented [AJ80]: Self-development.

Commented [AJ81]: Increased enlightenment on social issues.

Commented [AJ82]: Enlightenment leads to resolution of societal issues.

P- Yes in terms of respect, yes because every creed and race find an equal place so it teaches you how to accept other people's views, opinions, religion, skin complexion and everything like that.

Commented [AJ83]: Respect for other races and religions.

I- You feel the guidance and programme helping students to challenge unfair practices at school? For example supposed they set rules that children find unfair or you find the teachers treating them unfairly you feel the guidance and counselling programme is an avenue to help students deal with things like that?

P- Yeah, at the end of the day is like hearing the needs and the wants of students, well mostly the needs, so if you go by the guidance officer you are able to tell them that, "you know what yes I think this kinda affecting how I learn, or Miss the teacher not really, yuh know," "Miss this person in class in bacchanal in this situation here," so it do help with that.

Commented [AJ84]: Avenue for students to air grievances.

I- You have any specific example that it helping?

P- An example? I can't think of none right now.

I- You feel that the programme could help students to challenge unfair practices when they go out into society, for e.g. you start working but you see all kinds of unfair things happening, the people get discriminated against because of their race, their religion, the boss underpaying them, you seeing all kinds of bad things going on, you feel what you all learn in the programme could help you all make changes in society or challenge things?

P- Yeah, but to be honest, you could be honest in this right?

I- Yeah.

P- I being honest all the time this is like a controversial statement am to be honest, no matter what you learn you still wouldn't go out in the world or in the job and see these things going on and still do nothing about it, so I feel it's all within the person. I mean you could be getting the information and you could still not take it. So like me as a person when I get the information I understand ok this is wrong so I could go to the boss and say am that I notice this unfair treatment or this discrimination going on here and I know we should have ways and means to discuss it all, or ways to work around it so yeah.

Commented [AJ85]: Individual's decision to utilize information gained.

Commented [AJ86]: Self-assertiveness.

I- You feel that all students are treated equally in the programme?

P- Yes each person is given a fair say and a fair opinion to speak what they want and...

Commented [AJ87]: All students treated equally.

I- You think it helps you all treat each other equally?

P- Yeah, because even though it have a sense of fairness in between so Miss would be the mediator you know, we have tensions be like ok, ok you go, you go and ok.

Commented [AJ88]: Guidance officer mediates between students.

Section I

21st Century Skills.

I- Now look at this list here, what are known as 21st century skills. Which of these skills do you feel that the guidance and counselling programme helping you with? Only the ones you really see it helping with.

P- Tick it off?

I- No just tell me, just call it the ones here.

P- Cultural and civic literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration, persistence, leadership, social and cultural awareness, initiative.

I- So which ones you find it helping with to the greatest extent?

P- Communication, I could only pick one?

I- Tell me what you think.

P- Communication, social and cultural awareness, leadership.

I- And how it really helping, what Miss doing to help with those things?

P- In communication group activities, stuff to make us so you know am, in the work you have to meet different people with different views, different opinions and I know you had to humble yourself so with the communication you have to understand that ok, this person have this opinion, I have mine, we are both entitled and we could work around it. Leadership, each person is born to be a leader and we must express ourselves as much so now we are given different opportunities to express our leadership skills and yeah. Social and cultural awareness you raise a topic about discrimination, different races so we are able to understand different cultures and different social practices so when we go out there we know what to expect in society.

Section J

Questions pertaining to the G&C programme

I- Ok last section, what are your, we have a guidance and counselling programme eh, what really are your expectations of a guidance and counselling programme?

P- A guidance and counselling programme is like to help the students with different issues, that affects them in different ways and academic, social, emotional, yeah. It's a safe place so when nobody listening to you here we can go and get this person who can help you in the situation.

I- How do you feel the G&C programme at your school can be improved?

P- Am it have a lot of improvements to make in this school to be honest but am the guidance programme could be improved by having like a set place like yuh know, instead of like just popping up like, it could have like a set yuh know...

I- A roster?

P- A roster.

Commented [AJ89]: Cultural and civic literacy

Commented [AJ90]: Critical thinking,

Commented [AJ91]: Problem solving,

Commented [AJ92]: Creativity.

Commented [AJ93]: Communication.

Commented [AJ94]: Collaboration.

Commented [AJ95]: Persistence.

Commented [AJ96]: Leadership.

Commented [AJ97]: Social and cultural awareness.

Commented [AJ98]: Initiative.

Commented [AJ99]: Programme helps to the greatest extent with communication, social and cultural awareness and leadership.

Commented [AJ100]: Communication learnt in group activities.

Commented [AJ101]: Provision of opportunities to show leadership skills.

Commented [AJ102]: Informing students about different races and cultures.

Commented [AJ103]: Assist students with academic, social and emotional issues.

Commented [AJ104]: Confidential discussions with guidance officer.

I- A schedule?

P- Yeah a schedule. At this time you could go to the guidance counsellor room and speak about different topics and yeah.

Commented [AJ105]: Schedule for guidance and counselling sessions.

I- Any other improvements, things that could be done to improve it? To improve guidance and counselling at this school?

P- Am, no to be honest, that's it.

I- No?

P- That's the major problem.

I- Well this brings us to the end of the interview do you have anything else to say which you feel might be important about guidance and counselling at this school?

P- I think it's more about giving the students the opportunity to you know express yourself more here.

Commented [AJ106]: Programme provides students with opportunity to express themselves.

I- You feel they should keep it?

P- Yes because trust me a lot of students going through plenty things in terms of issues, depression, anxiety, self-esteem it is very much needed because teenagers don't know how to...

Commented [AJ107]: Programme should be kept because students deal with many emotional issues.

I- But you think the guidance officers you all have two at this school, you feel that's enough guidance officers at the school?

P- No, I feel it should have about 10.

Commented [AJ108]: More guidance officers needed.

I- Ten?

P- No because a lot of students hide things behind the smile so they need to have...

Commented [AJ109]: Students mask their emotions.

I- Why you think some students don't want to go to the guidance officer?

P- Pride.

I- Pride?

P- That's the major thing pride.

Commented [AJ110]: Pride keeps students from soliciting help.

I- They feel people could laugh at them?

P- Not laugh at, but is like yuh know, is like you have a problem but is like anxiety, you have a problem, you want to talk about it but the anxiety telling you, you know what? Keep it in, so that is it, mental issues have a thing with it.

Commented [AJ111]: Anxiety prevents students from soliciting advice.

I- Ok well thank you very much I really appreciate...

Appendix N - An Example of How Themes Were Created from an Interview.

The themes from this school were then compared with themes from the parents in the other schools to obtain the final themes.

Parent 1- Amy

Parent 2- Asha

Table N1

The Creation of Themes from Parents at School A

Codes	Subthemes	Theme
Amy Guidance programme needed especially for boys Technology. External influences on students. Students need support. Importance of hard work in society. Career choices may change. Importance of giving back to others. Improved camaraderie Asha Many programmes can be done to help students. More needs to be done with programme at school. Support system needed for programme Structured approach to academics. Strategies in school to help students during free time. Improved study habits. Reinforce nutritional advice. Improved social skills with opposite sex. Motivation.		Youth needs

Interschool activities		
Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Amy Guidance officer acts as a confidant. Guidance officer helps parents. Asha Focus on mental health. Improved exposure to career options. Improved focus on social skills. Increased number of activities to aid in development of competencies. Improve mental health of teachers. Improve mental health of teachers.		Parent Expectations
Amy Unable to say how programme helped with personal/social issues Asha Unable to say if programme is helping son with personal/social problems. Amy Classroom discussion with guidance officer. Handouts giving them career options. Career fair. Positive view of career fair. Unable to recall other career guidance strategies. Asha Exposure of students to different professions	Personal/social guidance Career guidance	Limited knowledge of strategies

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Inviting qualified professionals to talk to students. Information is helping student be aware of professions. Amy Fliers. Study habits. Timetable. How to focus. Asha Unable to say if study tips were provided.	Career guidance Academic guidance	Limited knowledge of strategies
Amy Guidance officer readily available. Down to earth. Good rapport with parents. Guidance officer is a confidant for students. Guidance officer/parent collaboration. Guidance officer acts as a mediator. Trusting student/guidance officer relationship. Asha Guidance officer is doing a good job. Guidance officer relatable. Guidance officer encourages parental involvement. Guidance officer provide extra support for parents. Guidance officer readily available. Guidance officer performs parental role.		Students' Rapport with guidance officer

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Amy Increase number of guidance officers. Increased staff would lead to greater impact on children. Asha Increase in guidance staff. Increase time guidance officers have in the school. Share information and topics covered in class with parents.		Recommendations

Appendix O – An Example of a Coded Observation Protocol

Observations Schedule

1. **Date:** 18.01.19
2. **School:** School E
3. **Class:** Form 4
4. **Domain:** Academic
5. **Topic to be discussed:** Learning Styles and Techniques.
6. **Objectives of lesson-** Students will be able to identify:
 - What particular learning styles best suited to them and apply specific techniques in enhancing their learning.

Outcomes: Students will be able to:

- Identify specific learning styles.
- Identify one strategy to utilizing in enhancing memory.

7. Sequence of strategies /activities utilized by guidance officer.

- i. The guidance officer gives out handouts with learning style test.
- ii. The guidance officer reads a short story to the class.
- iii. The guidance officer explains the learning styles test to the students.
- iv. Guidance officer asks students to do the learning style tests for students to identify their learning style.
- v. The guidance officer explains the different types of learners and learning strengths.
- vi. The guidance officer gives students strategies to use such as the use of pictures and visual aids for visual learners and the use of music for auditory learners. She also mentioned the use of memory cheats and the S3QR method.

Commented [AJ1]: Handouts.

Commented [AJ2]: Storytelling.

Commented [AJ3]: Activity- Learning styles test.

Commented [AJ4]: Different types of learners.

Commented [AJ5]: Learning strengths.

Commented [AJ6]: Learning style strategies.

8. Questions asked and comments made by the Guidance Officer:

How has form 4 been?
 Good stress motivates to study.
 Remember the S3QR method?
 You can utilize it for yourself.

Commented [AJ7]: Knowledge.

Commented [AJ8]: Knowledge.

9. Questions made by students to ascertain what seems to be interesting them about the topic:

Miss what we have to do?

10. Comments made by students to ascertain what seems to be interesting them about the topic:

Few comments were made by the students. The comments centred on how stressful academics were such as, "All stress make yuh kill yuhself," "If the stress kill yuh?" "He was a slow learner," and "I don't like to talk to people."

11. 21st century skills mentioned or taught:

- Critical thinking/problem solving.	Commented [AJ9]: -Critical thinking/problem solving.
- 12. Adaptation of lesson to cater for differences in learning abilities of students: No adaptations were observed to be made to cater to different learning abilities of the students. It may not have been necessary because of the topic that was being discussed.	Commented [AJ10]: No lesson adaptations.
13. Resources used by the guidance officer: White board and marker, handouts.	Commented [AJ11]: Resources.
14. Guidance officer's rapport with students: Guidance officer had a good rapport with students.	Commented [AJ12]: Good rapport.
15. Challenges encountered by students during the session: Students did not encounter any challenges during the session.	Commented [AJ13]: Absence of student challenges.
16. Challenges encountered by guidance officer during the session: No challenges were encountered by the guidance officer.	Commented [AJ14]: Absence of guidance officers challenges.
17. Observations about general classroom setting: The guidance session was held in a classroom. The students appeared comfortable in the setting. There was some noise outside from someone cutting the lawn.	Commented [AJ15]: Classroom setting. Commented [AJ16]: Students comfortable.
18. Students behaviour during session: Students were well behaved, they were engaged during the session.	Commented [AJ17]: Students well-behaved. Commented [AJ18]: Students engaged throughout session.
19. How do I feel about making observations during this session (reflexivity): I felt that the session was short and simple. The students were able to do the task in a timely manner. The task was aligned to the objectives of the lesson.	Commented [AJ19]: Timely completion of tasks.
20. Other notable observations: Nothing of not occurred during the lesson.	

Appendix P - Theme Formation from the Observations Protocol

Table P1

An Example of How a Theme Was Formed from Observations at School D.

Code	Subtheme	Theme
Academic domain Class activity Career domain Lesson introduction-recap. Personal/social domain Lesson introduction-recap.	Set Induction	Lesson Delivery
Academic domain Questioning. Class discussion. Handouts. Storytelling Activity- Learning styles test. Different types of learners. Learning strengths. Learning style strategies. Career domain Class discussion. Student activity. Career options. Identification of post-secondary options. Provision of information. No lesson adaptations. Large amount of information. Personal/social domain Class discussion. Storytelling. Activity-stress test. Stress management tip. Handouts. Memory techniques. Identification of sources of stress.	Strategies	
Code	Subtheme	Theme

Academic domain No evaluation Career domain Guidance officer collected information at the end of the class. Personal/social domain Questions asked throughout discussion. Lesson summary. Oral assessment.	Evaluation	Lesson Delivery
Academic domain Knowledge Lack of students asking questions. Career domain Knowledge Absence of student questions. Personal/social domain Knowledge Comprehension Evaluation. Lack of student questions.	Classification of questions.	
Academic domain Critical thinking. Career domain Adaptability. Personal/social domain Critical thinking. Adaptability Persistence/Grit.	21 st century skills.	
Academic domain Absence of student challenges. Guidance officer- Lack of time	Challenges	Theme

Code	Subtheme	
Career Domain Absence of student challenges. Guidance officer- Lack of time Personal/social domain Absence of student challenges. Absence of guidance officer challenges. Some students disengaged. Session too long		Lesson Delivery
Academic domain Basic resources. Classroom sessions. Career domain Basic resources. Classroom sessions. Personal/social domain Basic resources. Classroom sessions.	Resources	
Academic domain Good rapport. Classroom setting. Students comfortable. Students well-behaved. Students engaged throughout session. Timely completion of tasks. Career domain Good rapport. Students comfortable. Personal/social domain Classroom sessions. Students comfortable. Some students disengaged. Student enjoyment of lesson. Student participation.	Classroom atmosphere.	

Appendix Q- An Example of a Coded Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan: School B

Theme: Preparation for the Next Level of Education

Commented [AJ1]: Theme

Lesson Topic: Adjusting to Change

Commented [AJ2]: Topic

Form: 1

Commented [AJ3]: Form

Time: 35 minutes

Commented [AJ4]: Time allocated.

Component: Academic Development

Commented [AJ5]: Domain,

Standard B: Students will be equipped for transition from on one level to the next in the education system.

Commented [AJ6]: Standard.

Session Objectives: Students will learn to:

Commented [AJ7]: Objectives.

- Tell the differences between primary and secondary school and be aware of how they can approach the change.
- Identify fears of anxieties that they may be experiencing in their new school.
- Recognize that other students may be experiencing fears and anxieties.
- Think of what can be done to eliminate these fears.

Session Outcomes: At the end of this lesson students will:

Commented [AJ8]: Outcomes.

- Identify at least one [1] fear they may be experiencing.
- Identify at least one method of coping with their fears or anxiety.

Materials/ Resources: Whiteboard, whiteboard markers, paper/index cards, bag.

Commented [AJ9]: Basic resources.

G.O. will introduce self and discuss with students the objectives of the activity.

Commented [AJ10]: Introduction.

Opening Activity:

Jenny received her SEA results and was happy to be going to secondary school, but was anxious to be going to the school in which she was placed. Firstly, she had heard several negative rumours about the school, People said that the school has many fights, that students make low grades. Secondly, she was concerned about how she was going to cope with secondary school or being among the youngest at her new school. How would she manage this big new, big school compound. Would she be able to make new friends? Would she get along with her new teachers?

Commented [AJ11]: Set Induction: Vignette

G.O will ask students under mentioned questions and solicit responses to introduce topic.

Commented [AJ12]: Questioning.

1. How many of you have ever heard talk like that about a secondary school?
2. How many of you felt like Jenny about starting secondary school?
3. What challenges do you think you are likely to face at this school?

Commented [AJ13]: Questioning.

G.O. will:

1. Discuss with students that it is normal for them to have a similar experience to Jenny and that change is normal and part of life. Explain that change can bring with it feelings of happiness as well as anxiety/fear.

Commented [AJ14]: Class discussion.

2. Ask students to identify the main differences between primary and secondary school. Among these differences are:

Commented [AJ15]: Questioning.

- a. More subjects/workload.
- b. Different teachers for different subjects.
- c. Less supervision.
- d. Use of multiple classrooms.
- e. Larger school population and compound.
- f. School rules.

3. Introduce, "Fear in a Hat" activity: Tell students that we will be doing an activity to help them recognize and cope with fears and anxieties that they may have. Distribute paper and ask students to write down at least one fear they are currently experiencing regarding their new school. They can be asked to complete a sentence such as "In this school, I am most afraid that"....or "In this school the worst thing that could happen would be...."? Collect papers and read a sample of responses aloud. Enquire how many other students and share these fears.

Commented [AJ16]: Written activity.

4. Highlight general challenges identified in the previous activity and reinforce that they are all experiencing fears/anxieties/challenges at this time. General responses may include:

Commented [AJ17]: Evaluation of responses from activity.

- a. Bullying
- b. Conflict
- c. Peer pressure
- d. Sexuality
- e. Academic performance
- f. Friendships
- g. Embarrassment

5. Discuss coping strategies to help alleviate fears. Allow students to identify which strategies they currently use/are aware of. Use the information below to guide discussion.

Commented [AJ18]: Class discussion.

How to cope

Don't panic! Remember that you are not the only person who is starting secondary school and that nearly every student starting secondary school is feeling like you. Here are some ideas that may help to ease the stress!

Commented [AJ19]: Identification of strategies to ease stress.

- Stay in contact with your "old" school friends, particularly while you haven't made close friends at secondary school.

- Give it time. Everybody starts off with no friends but soon you will have a new group of friends that you hang out with and have fun with.
- Introduce yourself to someone you don't know – they will probably appreciate it and then you will know someone.
- Ask the guidance officer or one of the teachers to help you if you are struggling with school in any way-maybe you can't manage the workload to start with or can't find your way around the new school. Help will be there if you ask.
- Get involved in school activities (music, sport, debating) and you will meet new people with the same interests.
- Look at the positives of being at secondary school-new school facilities, more independence, more variety in classes, learning how to study so that schoolwork is more manageable.
- If you feel like you are being harassed by anyone at your school, talk about it with someone you trust.

Conclusion

When you're in primary school, you get to hear all the myths about secondary schools. That's what the stories are-myths, which mean they are not true. Of all the children who G.O. to secondary school each year, a few may have problems settling down, a few may have problems getting themselves organized or making friends, but most children take advantage of everything their school has to offer. With a positive attitude, you'll be okay too.

Evaluation

Ask students to respond to the statement below:

What are two strategies you can use to cope with anxiety in your new school?

I will _____

Commented [AJ20]: Lesson closure.

Commented [AJ21]: Reassure students.

Commented [AJ22]: Written evaluation of lesson.

Table showing organization of codes into subthemes and themes for the guidance officer's lesson plans in School C

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Class discussion. Use of work sheets. Individual sharing. Individual counselling. Use of ICTs. Pamphlets and charts. Activity- Identification of friendships. Provision of information. Written suggestions to control mood swings. Fear in hat activity. Make lists. Questioning.	Strategies	Lesson delivery
Topic. Target group. Class. Skills. Duration. Domain. Standard. Objectives. Outcome. Resources. Set Induction. Procedure. Activity.	Structured format of lesson plan.	
Oral summary.	Closure	
Oral questions.	Evaluation.	
Written evaluation.		

Table showing codes and themes which emerged from the guidance officer’s workplan.

School C.

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Class. Number of students. Component/Domain. Number of sessions. Theme. Topic. Baseline. Success criteria. Evaluation.	Format of termly programme.	

Appendix R - Organization of Lesson Plan Codes into Themes

Table R1

The Creation of a Theme from a Lesson Plan at School C

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Class discussion. Use of work sheets. Individual sharing. Individual counselling. Use of ICTs. Pamphlets and charts. Activity- Identification of friendships. Provision of information. Written suggestions to control mood swings. Fear in hat activity. Make lists. Questioning.	Strategies	Lesson delivery
Topic. Target group. Class. Skills. Duration. Domain. Standard. Objectives. Outcome. Resources. Set Induction. Procedure. Activity.	Structured format of lesson plan.	
Oral summary.	Closure	
Oral questions. Written evaluation.	Evaluation.	

Appendix S - The Audit Trail

Data Collection

Before embarking on the data collection process, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) which is an internationally recognized course designed to teach ethics in research. On completion of this course, I applied to Campus Research Ethics Committee of The University of the West Indies for permission to collect data. Permission was granted on 14/11/18. Forms for the parents to give consent for their children to participate in interviews and for all participants to give consent can be found in Appendices K & L. The Ethics Committee also informed me that due to minors being involved and the nature of the study I should conduct individual interviews rather than focus groups. This was subsequently adhered too.

Data was collected by primarily using semi-structured interviews, and observations, document analysis, a reflexive journal and data from emails were used to triangulate the data. I also **developed criteria** for my evaluation (pp. 80-84). which was used in constructing my data collection instruments. The CIPP model checklists, my research questions, the literature, and feedback from participants in my pilot study were all used when creating my evaluation criteria. A **case study** approach was used in my research design.

I developed an **interview protocol** while waiting for approval from the university to collect data. The protocol was divided into five sections, each section aligned to an aspect of the CIPP model and a section with general questions. The protocol was reviewed by my thesis supervisor on 26/02/18 who said:

Satisfactory except for the students' questions. They are treated just as the adults' questions whereas there may be terms they are unfamiliar with. In addition, there are words they know generally the meaning of such as deficiencies, strategies, utilize – but they have never really used them or thought about the issues you are raising. It seems then that the questions here should be more global rather than specific and targeted as the ones for the adults – and the responses should give you clues close to the real questions you wanted to ask.

Her comments resulted in me making changes to the interview questions to simplify some of the questions for the students. The participants selected can be seen in Table 9 (p. 92). Interviews were conducted in different school types, Table 11 (pp. 104-106). My criteria for selecting participants can be seen on pages 106-107.

I conducted a **peer review** by asking my PhD colleagues to review my interview protocol. They felt that it was too long, so I made efforts to decrease the number of questions especially for the students. I made changes to the protocol (Appendix H) and subsequently interviewed 37 participants (a senior guidance and counselling official, guidance officers, teachers, parents, and students). Interviews were conducted from 19/11/18 to 18/09/19. I then transcribed the interviews and stored the data in multiple forms. A transcript of an interview can be found in appendix M.

My **observations protocol** (Appendix C), was sent to my supervisor for approval and on the 5/7/18 after reviewing, one of the comments she made was:

This is a lot of activity/logistics for you to be trying to record and follow at the same time. Have you read up on how to conduct observations in a live setting? Would audio taping help somewhat though there would be much background noise? Anyway, a pilot is good experience of learning what works and what doesn't.

After the pilot study things which were added to the protocol include “*challenges encountered by the guidance officers and students during the sessions.*” An observation was held for each domain (personal/social, career and academic) in each school so in total 12 observations were conducted from 19/11/18 to 18/09/19.

Document analysis was conducted using the written guidance and counselling programme, the guidance officer’s work and lesson plans and the referral forms. The document analysis instrument can be seen in Appendix J. A comment made by my supervisor was, “*Are there categories/criteria outside of this schedule that may apply to analysis of*

documents? It may only occur to you as you begin the coding..."

I used my **reflexive journal** to make entries during my study. For instance, journal entries were made after each school visit. An example of a journal entry is: On the 28/01/19 at School A, during the lesson on Time Management:

I was surprised how talkative the students were and that the guidance officer had to admonish them constantly. I then realized that this also happened in Schools C and D with form 1 students. I guess younger students tend to be more disruptive. I find it very interesting that I have only observed this with Form 1 students, I guess this shows the lack of maturity at this age...or is it that the issue really is that more engaging strategies need to be used to hold their attention?

On completion of data collection **member checks** were done with all participants. Most participants responded and indicated that they were ok with it. Debra was concerned that the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and she was concerned about her use of dialect. She indicated that she wanted to make changes to the transcript to use standard English however, she did not do so. Several participants did not respond to my request for feedback on the transcribed interviews.

After the data was collected, it was analysed for triangulation.

Data Analysis

Interviews were first read a few times to get a sense of what participants were saying, then open, axial and selective coding was done (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). An example of a coded interview can be found in Appendix M. After coding was completed, the codes were compared to form patterns and grouped according to categories. The different categories were compared to form themes (Appendix N). This method of creating codes, and themes was also used for analysis of observations (Appendices O & P) for document analysis (Appendix Q & R) and for coding emails.

During the data analysis process, I compared themes within each school and then I compared the themes from the categories of stakeholders in a particular school to themes from stakeholders in the

other schools. The themes from observations were also compared across the schools as well as those which emerged from analysis of the guidance officer's work and lesson plans. Data analysis entailed reviewing themes and, in some cases, subsuming some themes into another. This also led to data reduction.

A journal entry which I made with respect to the data analysis process on 17/05/20 was:

I understand now why they say qualitative research is “messy” the constant back and forth comparing codes and themes, is tedious. I find it quite interesting that repeatedly comparing them has helped in data reduction. It feels like I am putting the pieces of a puzzle together. I revisited my data months after and as I reflected on it I decided to re-code transcripts, documents, and observations because my interpretation of the findings changed.

On completion of my data analysis, I presented my findings in chapter four. As I wrote this chapter, I felt that I was a bit repetitious, so I had to review my data analysis procedures to further reduce the data. This sometimes entailed subsuming some subthemes into themes and removing themes because it was not possible to present all.

Appendix T - Job Description, experience, and qualifications for being a guidance officer in Trinidad and Tobago.

Received from Ms. Mary Bastien on 05.06.21.
Coordinator, Guidance and Counselling
Student Support Services Division
Ministry of Education

9904

GUIDANCE OFFICER I

Kind of Work

Professional work in the field of guidance and counseling.

Distinguishing Features of Work

An employee in this class assists in providing guidance and counseling services in schools and similar institutions. Work involves organizing and conducting seminars and sessions on a wide variety of guidance oriented topics, advising and counseling individuals and/or groups of students on particular or common problems. Work also involves devising appraisal methods for assessing students' ability and aptitude in various areas of endeavour, compiling and collecting relevant records and information analyzing same and maintaining liaison with Principals, Teachers and other community resources related to the guidance service. Work is performed with considerable initiative under the supervision of a superior, and within prescribed guidelines and is reviewed through discussion and reports.

Examples of Work

Organises and conducts guidance services for young persons at Primary, Junior Secondary, Senior Secondary and Comprehensive schools, Technical Institutes and Youth Camps.

Prepares and conducts seminars and sessions on subjects such as orientation on secondary level education, development of study habits and programmes, career guidance, self awareness, use and abuse of drugs and other subjects relevant to youth development.

Counsels individual students and/or parents on particular issues and makes referrals where necessary.

Counsels groups of students on common or contemporary problems.

Assists with placement into school courses.

Devises or adapts appraisal methods to acquire information for assessing students' scholastic, occupational and other aptitudes and abilities and keeps records of same.

Compiles and collates information for analysis and for the development of guidelines for structuring guidance problems.

Acts as a Consultant to other staff members in guidance and related matters.

Collects and compiles educational and other relevant information and texts for general distribution.

Establishes and maintains liaison with government agencies and institutions and other community resource centers on matters relevant to the guidance service.

Submits periodic reports on the progress of the Guidance Programme.

Performs related work as may be required.

Required Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of the principles and techniques of guidance, including personal and occupational guidance.

Knowledge of the education system of the country.

Knowledge of educational psychology as it relates to guidance.

Knowledge of contemporary social problems and possible solutions and deterrents.

Ability to relate to people and gain their confidence.

Ability to extract, collate and analyse data.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with students, staff and parents.

Minimum Experience and Training

Training as evidenced by the possession of a recognized University Degree with major courses in Guidance and counseling or a Diploma in Guidance and Counselling with experience in the field of Guidance and Counselling or any equivalent combination of experience and training.

P.D. 2/13/29 T.

Appendix U - The Major Strengths and Weaknesses of the Guidance and Counselling Programme.

Programme strengths

- It has a holistic approach to guidance and counselling.
- Human and youth development are central tenets.
- A variety of strategies are used in its implementation.
- Its implementation is structured in approach.
- It is aligned to international standards.
- It helps develop 21st century skills especially competencies and character qualities.
- It empowers students.
- It improves the quality of education by being supplemental to the curriculum.
- It is adapted to a certain extent to meet the needs of students in different school types.
- It serves to develop student strengths.
- It strives to promote diversity, equality, and inclusiveness.
- It is data driven.
- The guidance officers serve as student advocates.
- It helps students to contribute to society.

Programme weaknesses

- The programme may not meet the current needs of all students as their needs have evolved since it was instituted.
- The programme's implementation has a measure of isolation since many parents and teachers are unaware of its content and scope.
- Guidance officers' views are sometimes not taken into consideration by the schools' administration which compounds programme isolation.
- There is limited stakeholder collaboration in some schools.
- The programme may be too closely aligned to international standards resulting in it not being culturally relevant.
- An inadequate guidance officer to student ratio.
- Limited programme funding.
- Inequitable distribution of resources
- The location of guidance officers' offices results in a lack of privacy.
- Training courses are not always provided in a timely manner.
- Guidance and counselling class sessions are sometimes not scheduled.
- Student indiscipline
- A lack of lesson differentiation.
- The programme is subject to the negative influence of parents.