STRATEGIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF SCHOLASTIC FAILURE

Report

on

Policies, Programs/Selected Experiences

St. Kitts and Nevis

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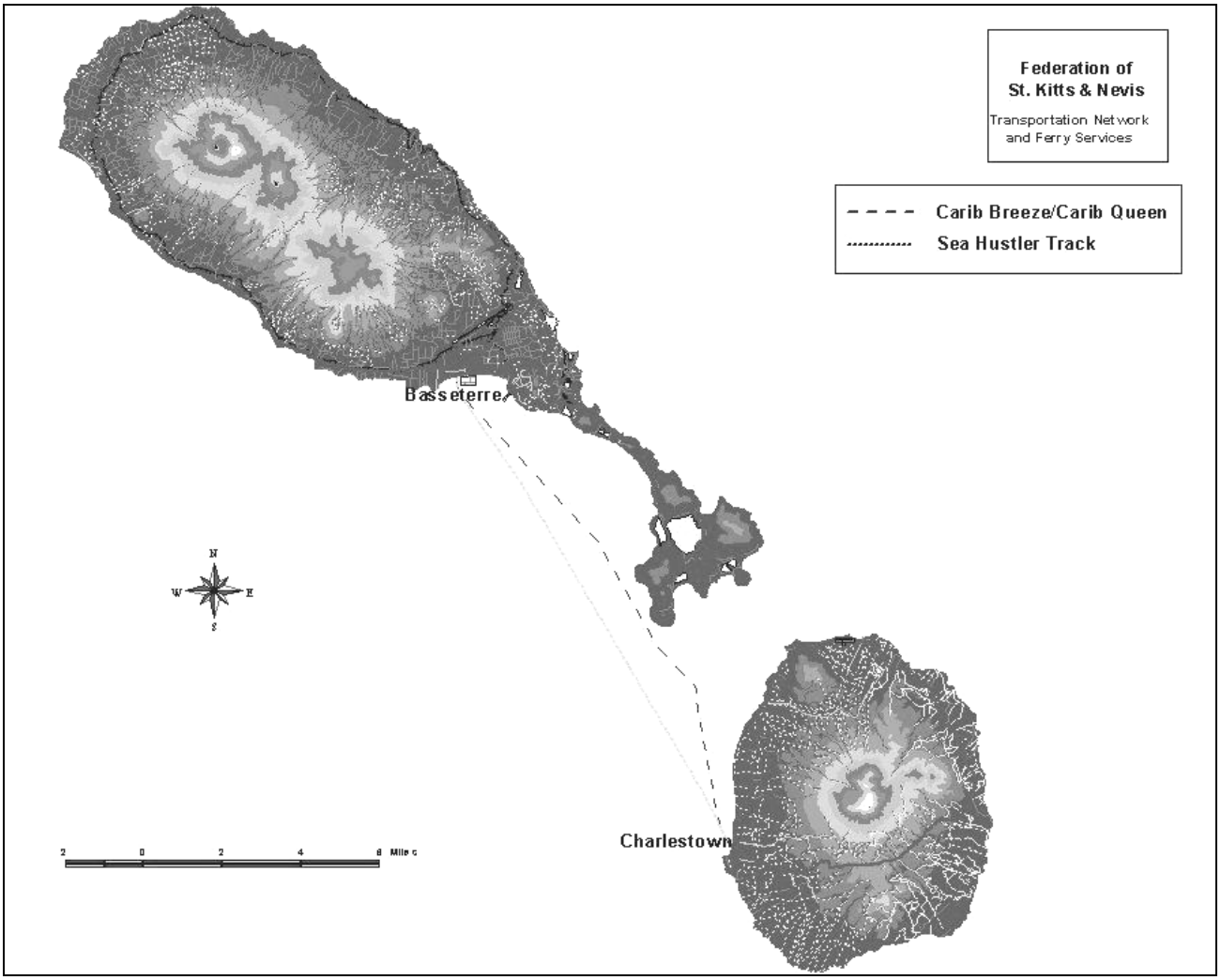
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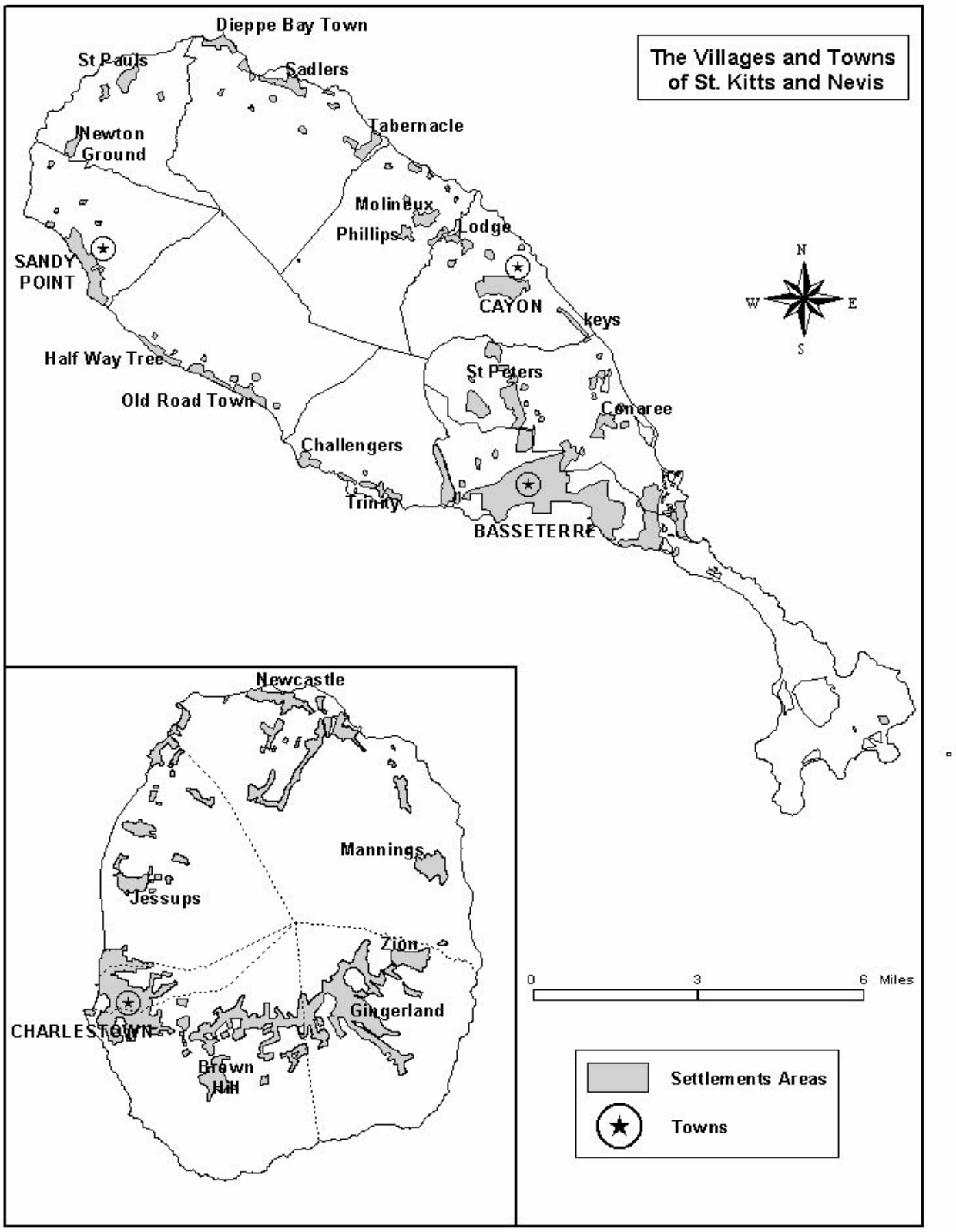
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Chapter 1

Context, Social, Political and Economic Characteristics

a. Context

The two islands forming the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis are separated by a three-kilometre channel, and are situated within the Leeward Group of Caribbean Islands. Nevis lies south east of St. Kitts. Together the islands cover a land area of 261.6 square kilometers (sq km), Nevis having an area of 93.2 sq km, and St. Kitts 168.4 sq km.

St. Kitts and Nevis is readily accessible by sea and air and boasts a modern international airport. Both islands have an adequate network of roads, a modern telephone system, and an improving transportation system.

b. Social and Demographic Characteristics

The Statistics Division of the Planning Unit in the Ministry of Finance, Technology and Sustainable Development estimated the mid-year population of Saint Kitts and Nevis at 46 111 in 2001, with an almost equal distribution of males and females (22 919 and 23 192 respectively). Just over 29% of the population was under the age of 15 years, while about 10.2% were in the age group 60 years old and older, and the remaining 60.8% were in the age group 15 to 59 years.

In 2003 St. Kitts and Nevis had an estimated population of 47 313, with 75.21% of the population residing on St. Kitts and the remaining 24.79% on Nevis. The population figures for the period 1993–2003 (Table 1) show fluctuations, with the largest natural increase occurring in 1994. The country experienced a population growth of 8.7 % during the period 1993–2003. However, there has been a steady decline in natural increase between 2000 and 2003.

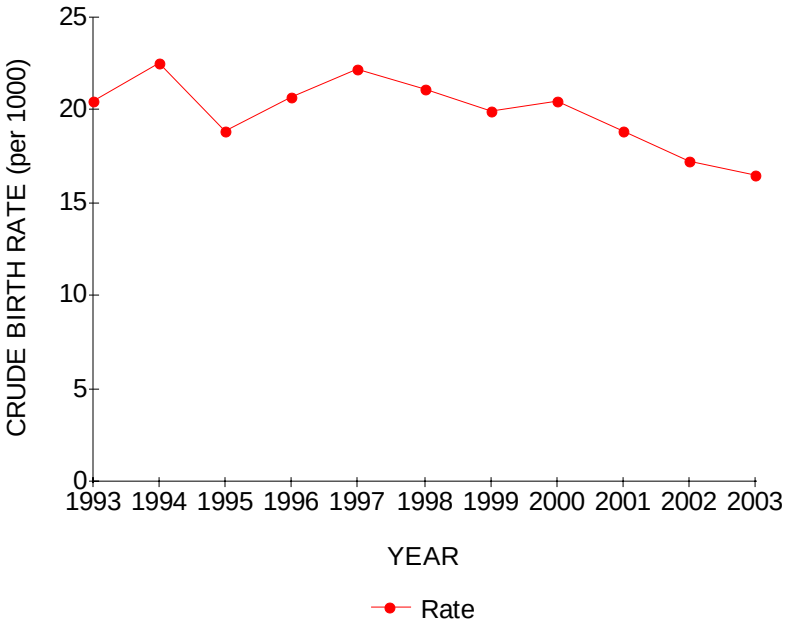
TABLE 1 : POPULATION ST. KITTS & NEVIS
MID-YEAR ESTIMATES 1993-2003

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Population	43 520	43 050	43 530	42 280	40 740	40 130	42 460	40 410	46 111	46 710	47 313
Natural Increase	458	509	412	361	482	473	446	481	451	417	379

Source: St. Kitts and Nevis Statistical Review 2004

The crude birth rate for St.Kitts and Nevis declined from 20.74 per 1,000 population in 2000 to 15.6 in 2003, with an average rate of 19.6 for the period, 1993 – 2003. Figure 1 shows the pattern over the period.

FIGURE 1 : CRUDE BIRTH RATE ST. KITTS & NEVIS
1993 - 2003



The *Unesco World Education Report 2000*, placed the urban population in 1997 at 34%. Available population figures for St. George (Basseterre) and St. Paul (Charlestown) for 2001 place the urban population for 2001 at 32.5%.

The *UNDP Human Development Report 2003* states that 98.0% of the population had a sustainable access to an improved water source in 2000. Based on the Census figures for "Households … and Main Source of Water Supply", the percentage of the population having access to drinking water in 2001 was 99.4%. At present the government is embarking on a programme of full chlorination to address the issue of water quality.

The infant mortality rate (<1 year old) as given by the Statistics Division for the period 1993-2003 is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 : INFANT MORTALITY RATE ST. KITTS & NEVIS
1993 - 2003

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Infant Mortality Rate/1000	22.38	24.20	22.58	24.01	22.86	27.81	12.73	14.32	12.45	22.43	17.62

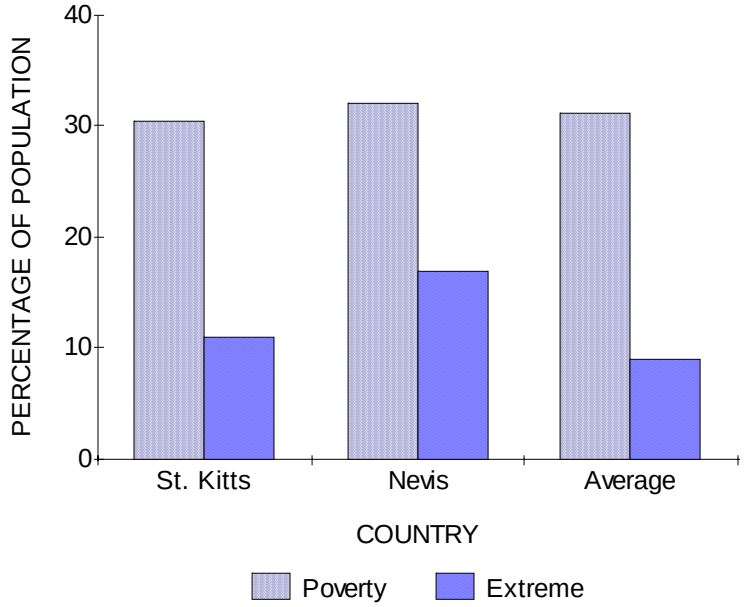
Source: St. Kitts and Nevis Statistical Review 2004

Between 1993 and 1998, the infant mortality rate fluctuated between a low of 22.4 per 1,000 live births in 1993 to a high of 27.8 per 1,000 in 1998. After 1998 rates fell below 18.0 per 1000, except in 2002 when the rate was above 20.0 per 1000.

According to the "Statistical Review 2004", life expectancy at birth for both sexes was estimated at 70 years at the end of 2000; disaggregated figures for that year were 68 years for males and 72 years for females.

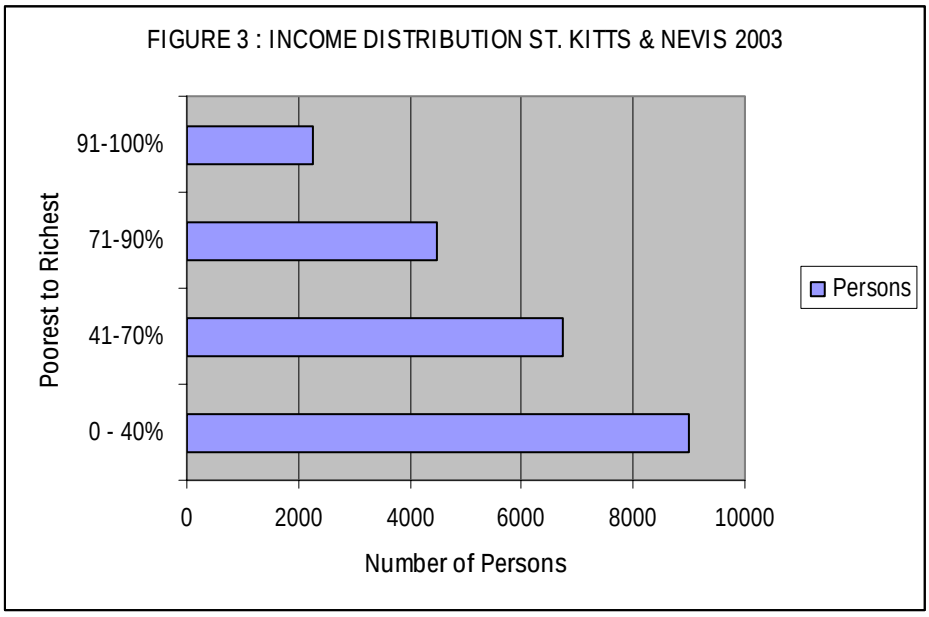
The “Poverty Assessment Report – St. Kitts/Nevis” carried out by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for the period 1995-1999 presents poverty and extreme poverty in the Federation as 31.25% and 9.0% respectively (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2 : PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION POOR ST. KITTS & NEVIS
2000



Unemployment in St. Kitts and Nevis is among the lowest in the Caribbean. According to the 1991 Population and Housing Census Report, only 4.9% of the population were unemployed at that time. A 1994 survey of the labour force, conducted jointly by the Organization of American States and the Government, confirmed an unemployment rate of just 4.3%. In 2000, unemployment in the Federation stood at 5.3%, with urban unemployment at 6.4%. The Gini Ratio which measures the inequality in the distribution of income in the population showed a Gini Coefficient of 0.3816 for both islands, with a 0.3967 coefficient for St. Kitts and 0.3665 coefficient for Nevis.

The income distribution (participation of each of the five quintiles in the total income – poorest 40%, following 30%, following 20% and richest 10%) as at December 2003 is shown in Figure 3. (The statistics as provided by the Social Security Board were based on average weekly wage).



Source: Statistics only from Social Security Board

A human development index value for the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis was placed at 0.808 in 2001 (*UNDP Human Development Report 2003).* St. Kitts and Nevis is classified as an upper middle-income country and ranked 44th in the human development index 2002, and 39th in 2004, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which puts it in the "high human development" band.

c. Political and Economic Characteristics

The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis achieved Independence in 1983 and is governed by a United Kingdom style representative system of government. The Federal Parliament is comprised of fourteen members, eleven elected representatives (eight from St. Kitts and three from Nevis) and three nominated senators. Nevis has a National Assembly which is responsible for much of the running of that island's affairs. The Head of State, Queen Elizabeth II, is represented by a Governor General. There is also a Deputy Governor General with responsibility for Nevis. In the General Election of 2003, the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party was re-elected to office, having retained seven of the eight seats in St. Kitts. The opposition Peoples' Action Movement (PAM) regained the other seat.

St. Kitts and Nevis is a small open economy producing a very small range of goods and services, most of which are exported. The Federation relies heavily on imports to satisfy the demands for consumer and producer goods. The economy has been dominated by the production of sugar since its introduction in the 17th century, but its importance has declined consistently since the 1980s. As a result, some diversification has taken place over the years. Tourism and related services, light manufacturing and non-sugar agriculture are developing as important economic activities. At present the country is faced with making a decision on the future of the sugar industry given the problems associated with production costs.

The economy of St. Kitts and Nevis experienced strong growth for most of the 1990s. The economy expanded by 6% on average per year during 1985-1997 mainly because of increases in tourist arrivals and related construction and service activities. GNP growth slowed down significantly in 1998-2000 as a result of the devastating effects caused by three hurricanes. The main source of economic growth in 2000-2001was the expansion of the construction sector as a result of hurricane devastation.

Real economic growth was 0.6% in 2003 after contracting 0.3% in 2002. The economy experienced a mixed performance during 2003, with some sectors experiencing positive growth while others experienced varying levels

of decline. The construction sector recorded a 4.7 % decline but continued to be the main contributor to GDP. Tourism, as measured through the 'Hotel and Restaurant' sector, recorded an improvement of 31.2% and contributed 5.5% to GDP. Two other major sectors of improvement were 'Air Transport' and 'Electricity and Water', which showed significant increases of 31.2% and 10.6% respectively. Sugar Manufacturing and Government Services declined by 24.0% and 1.0% respectively. The inflation rate for 2003 was 2.2%. *(Source: St. Kitts and Nevis Statistical Review 2004)*

The present development strategy, as outlined in the *St. Christopher and Nevis 2005 Budget Address*, includes the following key elements: promoting and expanding service industries; encouraging light manufacturing and food processing; reorientation of the operations of the St.Kitts Sugar Manufacturing Corporation (SSMC) to the provision of other agricultural goods and services; implementing a transition programme re the exit of sugar; pursuing and strengthening human resource and technological development; and supporting and strengthening the physical and social infrastructure.

Over the period 1993 to 2003, there has been a steady increase in GDP as seen from Table 3, with a corresponding increase in per capital GDP. Per capita GDP peaked in 2000, with a subsequent decline in 2001. Investment in education has shown an increase over the same period, but has remained at just over 3% of GDP, with an average of 3.5% for the period shown.

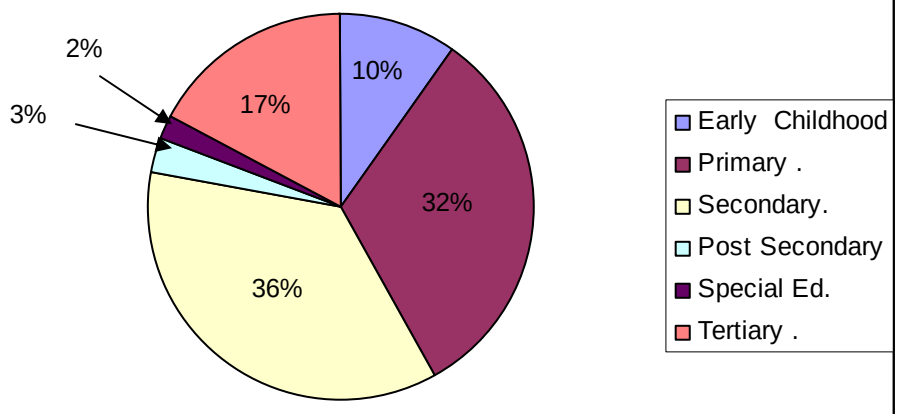
Estimates for recurrent expenditure in education for 2005, at all levels from Early Childhood to Tertiary, show an increase of 22.2% over 2004. Figure 4 shows the proportion of investment at each level. The largest amount (36%) is spent on Secondary Education, with the least (2%) being spent on Special Education. Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education account for 78% of recurrent expenditure.

TABLE 3 : SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
1993-2003

Category (at market price)	YEAR										
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
GDP (US$M)	198.34	221.73	229.96	245.73	274.93	287.52	305.37	329.56	345.06	354.74	369.25
Per Capita GDP (US$)	4557.47	5150.55	5282.77	5811.99	6747.74	7164.72	7191.84	8155.35	7447.44	7594.60	7804.55
Total Recurrent Expenditure in Education (US$M)	6.22	8.40	7.70	7.85	9.54	10.33	11.01	12.21	13.44	13.09	12.99
Education as a percentage of GDP	3.13	3.78	3.35	3.19	3.47	3.59	3.61	3.70	3.89	3.69	3.52

Source: St. Kitts and Nevis Statistics Division
Exchange rate US$1.00 = EC$2.70

FIGURE 4 : RECURRENT EXPENDITURE IN EDUCATION BY LEVELS (2005)



Source: St. Christopher and Nevis Estimates for the Year 2005

Chapter 2

Organization and Structure of the Education System

The 1975 Education Act has been the legal basis for the development of education in St. Kitts and Nevis. This has recently been replaced by the Education Act of 2003. Among other provisions, the Act provides for compulsory education from five to sixteen years of age, and it also stipulates the conditions for the establishment of private institutions and the provision of home education.

With reference to the right to education, the Act states:

> Subject to available resources, all persons are entitled to receive an educational programme appropriate to their needs in accordance with the provisions of the Act. (Section 14)

and

> The Chief Education Officer shall provide to every compulsory school-age person who resides in the island an educational programme consistent with the requirements of this Act and regulations made under this Act. [Section 15(1)]

The Education Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth, Social and Community Development and Gender Affairs is solely responsible for education at all levels. The main administrative units and their respective areas of responsibility are shown in the organizational chart, Figure 5.

The Mission Statement of the Ministry of Education and Youth is:

> To provide for all citizens and residents, in collaboration with other stake-holders, a comprehensive course of lifelong education which would enable individuals to develop and achieve their full potential, allowing them to make meaningful contribution to National Development.

The school year consists of three terms with a total of 39 weeks, and runs from early September to early July. There are two vacation breaks within the school year – three weeks vacation at Christmas and two weeks at Easter. There is an eight-week summer break at the end of the academic

year. At the pre-primary level, government centers close for vacation only at Christmas. The school week lasts from Monday to Friday.

The school day for primary and secondary is from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. At the pre-primary the school day runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. with children arriving from 8:00 a.m. and leaving between 3:15 and 4:00 p.m. The CFB College operates on a semester system, with two semesters running from August to December and January to June.

Government and private schools co-exist at the pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels, with government schools predominant at all levels except the pre-primary. There are three times as many private centers at the pre-primary level as there are government centers.

TABLE 4 : SCHOOLS AT EACH LEVEL ST. KITTS & NEVIS
2002 / 2003

Size of School	Number of Schools / Centers 2002/2003					
	Pre- Primary		Primary		Secondary	
	Government	Private	Government	Private	Government	Private
> 500 pupils	-	-	2	-	4	-
400 – 499 pupils	-	-	2	-	1	-
300 – 399 pupils	-	-	2	-	1	-
200 – 299 pupils	-	-	6	2	1	-
100 – 199 pupils	4	-	5	3	-	1
< 100 pupils	13	56	7	1	-	1
Total	17	56	24	6	7	2

Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) Bulletin 2002 – 2003
Early childhood Development Unit (ECDU)

As can be seen from Table 4, of the thirty Primary Schools, 24 or 80% have rolls below 300 pupils. In the case of Secondary Schools, on the other hand six of the nine schools or 67% have rolls of more than 300 pupils. At the

pre-primary level only four of the seventy three centers (5.5%) have a roll of more than 100 children. These are all government centers.

The structure of the levels and cycles, with their theoretical age groups, is shown in Table 5.

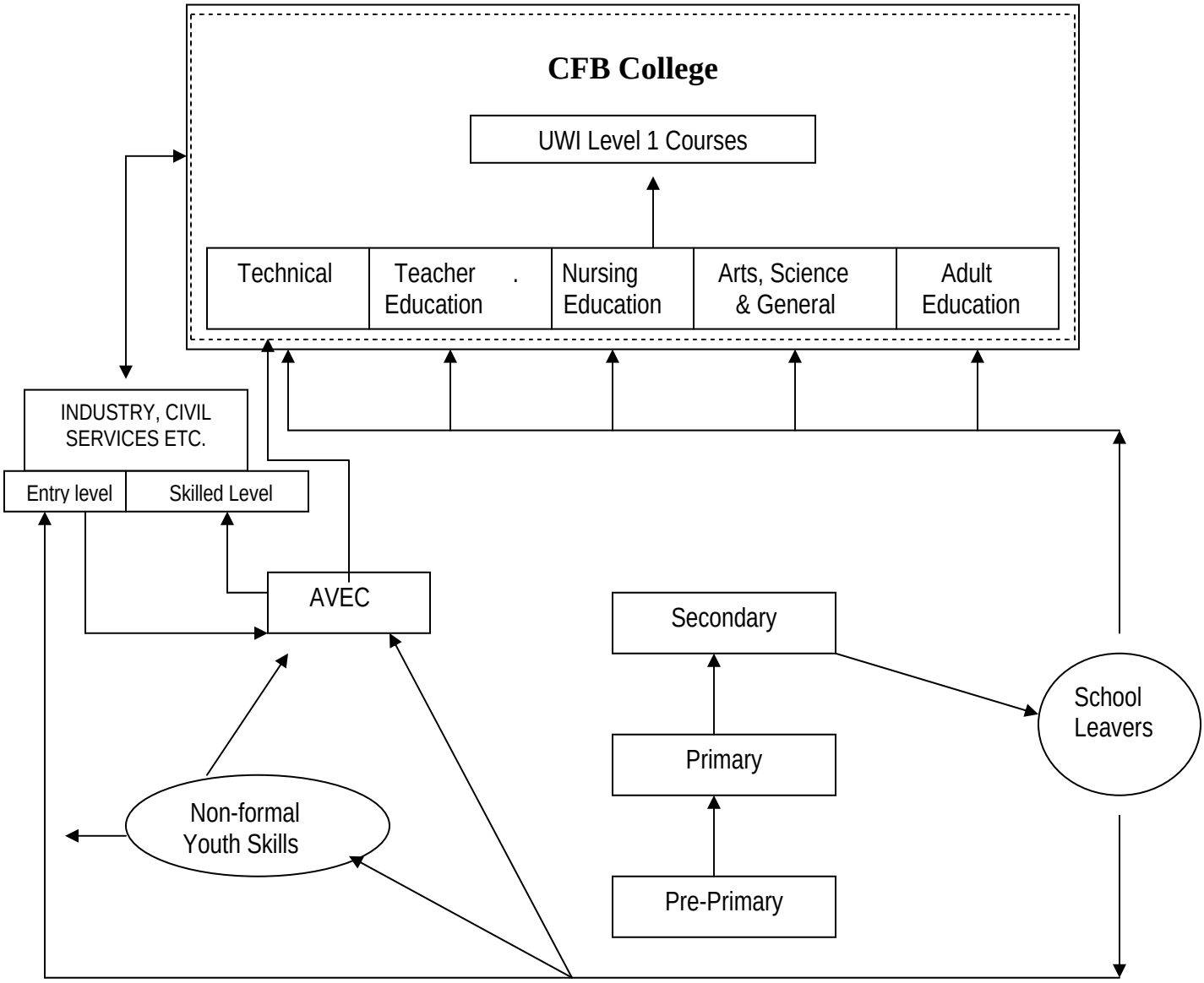
TABLE 5 : STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Level	Cycle / Normal Duration	Theoretical / Normal Age
Pre-primary		
: Nursery	2 years	3 months – 3 years
: Preschool	2 years	3 – 5 years
: Day Care	4 years	3 months – 5 years
Primary Education	7 years	5 – 12 years
Secondary Education	5 years	12 - 16 years

Pupils are admitted into each level at the beginning of the school calendar year, following the year in which the pupil attains the prescribed age for that level. However, if the pupil will attain the prescribed age within the first term of the school calendar year (i.e. between September and December), then the pupil is admitted. Hence, pupils who attain the prescribed age between the period January to August may enter the primary level at age six and the secondary level at age thirteen.

Figure 6 gives a graphic representation of the educational structure in St. Kitts and Nevis. One needs to note, however, that school leavers in Nevis attend the Sixth Form at the Charlestown Secondary School rather than the Division of Arts, Science and General Studies at the CFB College in St. Kitts.

FIGURE 6 : STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM



Compulsory school attendance is from five to sixteen years. At the end of compulsory education (usually at the end of Form four), students are assessed for the National Certificate of Educational Competencies (NCEC). This certification has as its focus the assessment of practical competencies developed by pupils during the 3rd and 4th Form years. These competencies are developed to clearly defined standards, and the elements of competence achieved constitute the individual's profile. The profile along with the final certificate provide the student with a clear record for employers or for further training opportunities. Secondary education for some students terminates at the end of the fourth form year.

Generally, schools seem to be in fair condition from the reports received. However, some schools reported need for repairs to partitions, doors, windows, classroom cupboards, roofs, electrical wiring and fixtures, and bathroom facilities. A few secondary schools cited the need for additional physical space and repairs to specific rooms, for example, computer lab, library, counselling and learning support room. In some cases there is need for additional desks, tables and chairs.

Some primary schools reported the need for computer software, and the replacement of computers and printers. At the secondary level most need centred around equipment for science labs, and for additional computers.

Over the period 1997 – 2003, schools catered for an average of 14 238 pupils, with 2923 at the pre-primary level, 6680 at the primary and 4635 at the secondary levels (Table 6).

TABLE 6 : ENROLLMENT BY LEVEL AND SCHOOL OWNERSHIP
1997 - 2003

Level	Number of Pupils						
	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	Average
Pre-primary							
: Public	N/A	657	785	N/A	N/A	1093	845
: Private		1833	1868			2762	2154
Total	N/A	2490	2653	N/A	2694	3855	2923
Primary							
: Public	5927	5912	5822	5833	5593	5490	5763
: Private	461	1010	1021	1006	966	1041	918
Total	6388	6922	6843	6839	6559	6531	6680
Secondary							
: Public	4478	4482	4480	4485	4494	4440	4477
: Private	210	143	142	140	159	159	158
Total	4688	4625	4622	4625	4653	4599	4635

Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) Bulletins 1997/1998 – 2002/2003

The distribution of school population for 2001-2002 shows that at the pre-primary level the majority of children (>60%) are at preschool age (3-5 years). Day Care is comprised of both nursery and preschool. Primary education, which includes a one-year kindergarten and a six-year primary

cycle, caters to the largest number of school-age children. Secondary education is comprised of a five-year cycle, four years of which is compulsory. Table 7 shows that for the school year 2001 -2002 the number of students enrolled in Form 5 was roughly half of the number enrolled in each of the other forms.

TABLE 7 : DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL POPULATION
2001 -2002 School Year

Pre-Primary		Primary		Secondary	
	No. of Pupils	Grade	No. of Pupils	Form	No. of Pupils
Nursery	453	Kg	963	1	1138
Preschool	1612	1	884	2	921
Day Care	629	2	937	3	983
		3	919	4	995
		4	894	5	516
		5	962		
		6	1000		
Total	2694		6559		4653

Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) Bulletin 2001 – 2002
Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU)

According to the 2001 Census statistics, persons within the age range 0 – 19 years accounted for 38.6% of the population, with an equal number of males and females. Males outnumbered the females in the 10 – 14 age group. This age group accounted for 10.3% of the population.

TABLE 8 : SCHOOL AGE POPULATION ST. KITTS & NEVIS
2001

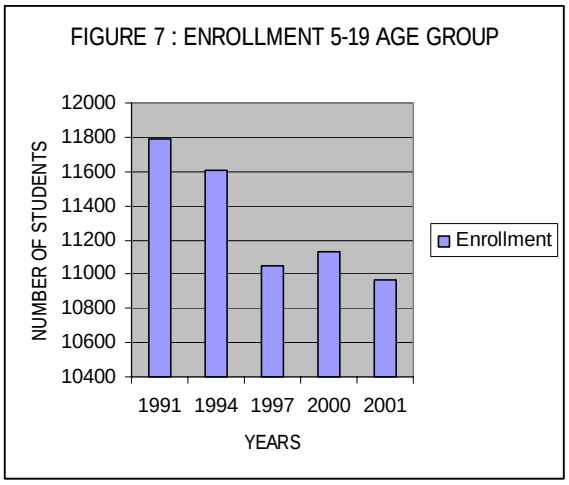
Age Group	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female	% Total
0-4	2 171	2 171	4 342	9.4	9.4	9.4
5-9	2 159	2 184	4 343	9.4	9.5	9.5
10-14	2 435	2 322	4 757	10.6	10.1	10.3
15-19	2 124	2 212	4 336	9.2	9.6	9.4
TOTAL	8 889	8 889	17 778	19.3	19.3	38.6

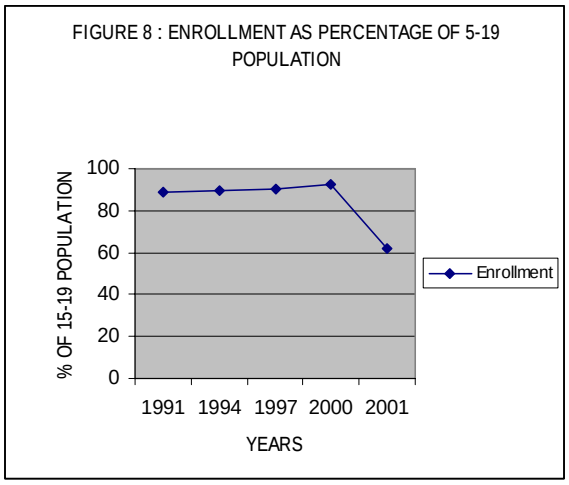
Source : 2001 Census, Statistics Division

Chapter 3

Schooling and Educational Systems : Indicators of School Failure, Coverage and Performance

Even though school attendance is not compulsory beyond age 16, there were 11,789 students enrolled in public and private schools in 1991, representing 88.5% of the country's total population aged 5 to 19 years old. School enrollment for the same age group in 1994 was 11,608 or 89.2% of 5 to 19 year olds. In 2001, 61.7% of the country's 5 to 19 population or 10,967 students were enrolled. A comparison of Figures 7 and 8 show that between 1991 and 1997 although there was a drop in the actual number of students enrolled, a larger proportion of the population aged 5 to 19 were being enrolled in schools. Again, it is noted that there was a decrease in the number of students enrolled in 2001 compared to 2000, and that this resulted in a substantial decline (31%) in the proportion of the 5-19 population.





An examination of the enrollment statistics for the years 1997, 2000 and 2001 show declining numbers in students aged 18 to 19 years. In 1997 there were 128 such students, accounting for 5.8% of the number of 15 to 19 year olds enrolled. For 2000 and 2001 the figures were 79 (4.4%) and 52 (2.9%) respectively. In 2002 there were 53 students representing 3.3% of the enrolled 15 to 19 age group.

Enrollment of students at the CFBC and the Nevis Form 6 shows a steady increase between the period 2000 to 2002. There were increases of 13%

and 10.7% for the years 2001 and 2002 respectively. This may in part account for fewer numbers in the 15 to 19 age group.

As can be seen from Table 9, there is an overlap in the age groupings available from the Statistics Division and the age groups of the various school levels. At the 5-9 age group enrollment figures are seen to exceed that age group. The enrollment of immigrants from Montserrat and Santo Domingo during that period is a likely contributing factor. However, the figures seem to suggest that the whole age group is enrolled. Although it is not possible to state conclusively what proportion of the secondary-aged students (12 – 16/17) are enrolled, it is clear that the enrollment rate in Forms 3-5 is lower than that of Forms 1-2.

TABLE 9 : ENROLLMENT RATE PER LEVEL ST. KITTS AND NEVIS (2001)

Age group	Level	Geographical Area	Number of Pupils					
			M	% of Age Group	F	% of Age Group	Total	% of Age Group
0-4	Pre-primary	Urban & Rural Urban	1308 706	66.0	1386 814	69.3	2694 1520	67.7
	Primary	Urban & Rural Urban	125 75		119 59		245 134	
5-9	Primary	Urban & Rural Urban	2210 1000	102.3%*	2242 1107	102.6%*	4452 2107	102.5%*
10-14	Primary	Urban & Rural Urban	995 454	98.3	867 399	99.3	1862 853	98.8
	Secondary	Urban & Rural Urban	1399 624		1439 726		2838 1350	
15-19	Secondary	Urban & Rural Urban	884 509	41.6	931 470	47.1	1815 979	41.9

Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) Bulletin 2001 – 2002; Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU); 2001 Census, Statistics Division

Data for the 1997 to 2002 cohort of pupils at the primary level (Table 10A), and the 1999 to 2000 cohort of pupils at the secondary level (Table 10B) were used to calculate possible repetition rates. Statistics for the exact number of students repeating a grade or form level were unavailable.

At the secondary level, the Form 4 was used rather than the Form 5, since a number of students complete their secondary schooling at the end of that year.

TABLE 10A : POSSIBLE REPETITION AT PRIMARY LEVEL PER CYCLE
1997-2002

	1997 Kg			1998 Grade 1			1999 Grade 2			2000 Grade 3			2001 Grade 4			2002 Grade 5		
# of students enrolled	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
	484	431	915	489	459	948	463	461	924	454	452	906	450	444	894	442	473	915
Possible # repeating	0	0	0	24	0	24	9	9	18	4	8	12	8	0	8	0	21	21
Possible Repetition Rate	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.5	0.95	0.95	1.9	0.4	0.9	1.3	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.3	2.3

TABLE 10B : POSSIBLE REPETITION AT SECONDARY LEVEL PER CYCLE
1999-2002

	1999 Form 1			2000 Form 2			2001 Form 3			2002 Form 4		
# of students enrolled	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
	479	490	969	457	461	918	498	485	983	472	496	968
Possible # repeating	22	29	51	0	0	0	41	24	65	0	0	0
Possible Repetition Rate	2.3	3.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	2.4	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

The data suggests that repetition at the primary level took place mainly at Grades 1 and 5, and at Forms 1 and 3 at the secondary level. However, repetition rates are very low, <3% at primary and <7% at the secondary level, due to the policy of automatic promotion by age. Effective promotion rates by cycle is possibly between 97-100% at the primary level, and 93-100% at the secondary level.

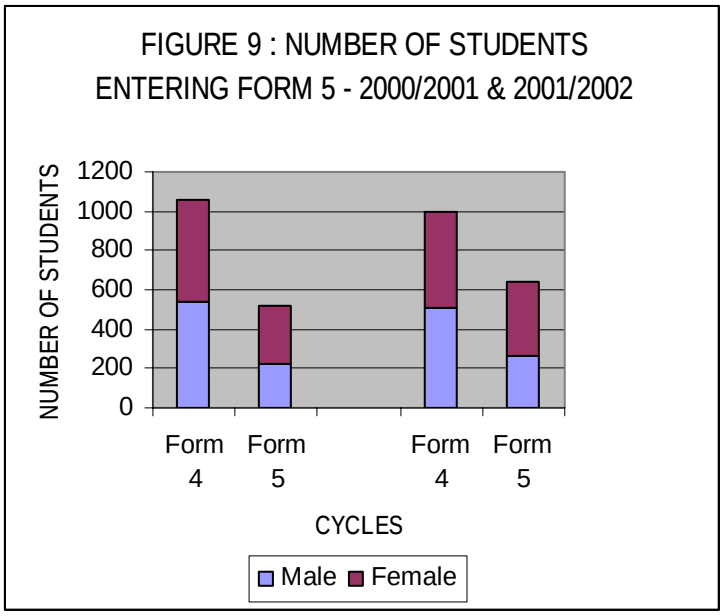
Schooling delay from pre-primary to primary was calculated using the number of students enrolled in Kindergarten who were aged 7 years or older. For Primary to Secondary, delay was calculated using the number of 14 year olds entering Form 1.

As can be seen from Table 11, there is no schooling delay at the secondary level, thus there is a 100% graduation rate from primary to secondary. At the primary level, delay was <1% for three of the years shown, and 1.09% in 1997. The other two years showed no delay. In addition the pre-primary statistics do not reveal any repetition of students. Delay in entry to primary seems to be among children who were entering an education institution for the first time, or who may have been referred to the Special Education facility on early detection of a problem. Hence, graduation rate from pre-primary to primary is 100%. (Table 9 indicated that approximately 33% of children 0 -4 years old, do not attend pre-primary institutions.)

TABLE 11 : SCHOOLING DELAY AT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS
1997 - 2002

Level	Geographical Area	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001		2002	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Pre-Primary to Primary	Urban	N/A	N/A	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
	Rural	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	Urban & Rural	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Primary to Secondary	Urban	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rural												

Data for inter-annual dropout per level and cycle are not available. Figure 9 shows the difference between the number of students enrolled at Form 4 and Form 5 of the secondary level. This gives an idea of the percentage of students, who at the end of compulsory education, do not remain in school. In the majority of cases, these students are deemed not academically able to pursue the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) programme. At the end of this cycle students would have completed an average of 11 years of schooling.



Of the 1062 students enrolled in Form 4 in 2000, only 516 or 48.6% were enrolled in Form 5 in the following year. In 2002, only 645 or 68.8% of the 995 enrolled in Form 4 the previous year were enrolled in Form 5. If the number of students completing Form 5 having offered subjects at CSEC is used as the number graduating from the secondary level, then the graduate rate based on the average for the years 1999 -2002 is 56.6%.

According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census Report, the highest educational level attained by most residents of Saint Kitts and Nevis is secondary school education (43%), with less than half that number reporting having completed only primary school or basic level education (20%). Just 7.6% of the population had a pre-university/post secondary /college education, and 5.1% had completed a university education. A comparison with the 1991 Census Report, shows increases in the number of persons attaining a secondary, pre-university and university education (3.8%, 5% and 2.5% respectively), and a decrease of 18.1% in the number completing only primary education.

The “Househod Educational Climate” is defined as the average number of school years of all the household members aged 18 or more, given in three categories. A low educational climate refers to households with less than six school years on average, middle educational climate between six and eleven

school years on average and high educational climate an average of twelve or more school years. An analysis of the "Household Educational Climate" for St. Kitts and Nevis in 2001 (Table 12) reveals that the country has a high educational climate.

TABLE 12 : HOUSEHOLD EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE ST. KITTS & NEVIS
2001

Educational Climate	2001							
	Male		Female		Total			
	15-19	20+	15-19	20+	15-19	20+	Overall Total	% of Population
Low	3	245	1	186	4	431	435	1.3
Middle	35	2996	18	3016	53	6012	6065	18.2
High	2016	9484	2130	9885	4146	19369	23515	70.7
Other	37	450	33	608	70	1058	1128	3. 7
None	8	190	2	184	10	374	384	1.2
Not Stated	25	719	28	405	53	1124	1177	3.6
Total	2124	14084	2212	14885	4336	28969	33305	98.7*

Source : 2001 Census, Statistics Division

Note: Statistics were not available for the age group 18^{+} only hence data was presented in two age groups 15-19 and 20^{+}

* Due to rounding off

Chapter 4

Policies implemented to fight against school failure

"… the attainment of international competitiveness is not only about adjusting production facilities and processes. It is primarily about the development of people. It is about providing educational and training opportunities to enable every boy and girl, every man and woman of this Federation to identify and enhance his or her own strengths and capabilities and thereby play an even more effective and productive role in building this beloved Nation of ours."

- Prime Minister, St. Kitts and Nevis in his Budget Address 2005

Several initiatives have been introduced in St. Kitts and Nevis over the past three decades aimed at combating school failure, and improving the level of achievement of school leavers. This chapter will look at policies and strategies implemented at primary, secondary and pre-primary levels, the attendant difficulties/problems, the results achieved and the present plans for continuing the effort of addressing school failure.

Primary Level – policies and strategies

At the Primary Level an annual centrally administered test in the core subjects Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies was introduced in 1978. This test known as the *Test of Standards* is written by all Primary School pupils of Grades 3 to 6 (ages 8+ to 11+) at the end of the third term of each academic year. The general objectives of these tests as outlined in the document '**Development of Education : 1984 -1986 National Report of St. Christopher and Nevis**' (Halliday 1986) have been:

- To give teachers a plumbline by which to gauge pupils' performance, that is to assess pupils' strengths an weaknesses;
- To provide a more informed base by which the Department of Education would undertake future curriculum development activity;
- To provide a data bank for requisite remedial action.

Hence the *Test of Standards* is not a standardized test but a mechanism by which the Department of Education is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system, and take necessary action.

From an analysis of these tests, a report of the findings is made available to schools, and follow-up action taken with regards to weaknesses noted. These activities have included workshops and staff development sessions at school, zonal and national levels. Some of the problems noted have also been addressed in the teacher training programme with teacher trainees, who in some cases have carried out experimental research into problem areas as part of their requirements for certification. The research involved identifying a specific problem encountered by pupils, and employing possible approaches and strategies to bring about a solution.

One of the outcomes of this annual assessment was recognition of the need for systematic review and development of curricula. For some years the responsibility of curriculum monitoring was that of the Teachers' Training College. In 1995, under the Basic Education Project, a Curriculum Development Unit and Teacher Resource Centers were established. The mission statement and goal of the Unit are as follows:

Mission

> The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of St. Kitts and Nevis will develop, monitor, and evaluate school curriculum based on National goals; within this framework, the needs of students, teachers, and parents will be given priority.

Goal

> The Curriculum Unit will facilitate the full actualization of each student's potential through the creative use of carefully crafted curriculum.

Two Teacher Resource Centers (TRC) were established – one in St. Kitts and the other in Nevis, the main purpose being to improve teaching. Their mission and goal are stated thus:

Mission

> The TRC will provide support for improving teaching and learning in the form of resource materials, workshops, and other relevant services to teachers in the school system.

Goal

The TRC will serve as a location for sharing ideas, making teaching aids, and promoting exemplary practices in the implementation of curriculum. Further, the TRC will encourage teacher creativity by interfacing with stakeholders.

Since 1997 the Test of Standards has been the responsibility of the CDU through its Measurement and Testing Unit. This involves collaboration with classroom teachers in the setting, marking and analysis of the tests. The findings of the analysis have been used by the Unit to initiate support activities for teachers in an effort to improve student learning, as well as to inform the re-assessment and modification to existing curricula. Through meetings / discussions with school principals and staffs there has been heightened awareness of the critical link between assessment, teacher preparation and student learning.

One of the main problems with this test was the reliability of the marking at school level, since even with a prepared marking scheme, some teachers tended to be more lenient than others in their marking. To address this problem a CXC-style marking was introduced in 1998 for the Grade 6. This proved to be a very worthwhile experience for teachers of both Grade 6 and Form 1 with regards to 'objective' and not 'subjective' marking. Teachers recommended that this approach be extended to the other three grades so that teachers could improve their skills.

This approach has been practiced for the past seven years. However, within recent years two main problems have arisen:

(i) some teachers not turning up to mark scripts, thus the need to lengthen the marking period;

(ii) difficulties associated with insufficient teachers to cover classes at school, when teachers are involved in central marking of scripts.

Teacher Resource Centers as a means of improving teaching

Since inception, teacher trainees have been making most use of the TRCs. However, the slow start in the use by classroom teachers has been improving, particularly in the preparation of teaching aids, and borrowing of charts, videos, models and other teaching materials. Much use is also made of the laminating and photocopying facilities. The greatest problem, however, remains the access for teachers in the rural schools.

Secondary Level – Policies and Strategies

At the Secondary level, the School Leaving Examination written by those students who did not remain in school after the end of compulsory education was replaced by the National Certificate of Education (NCE) in 1989. The intention was that this latter examination would be taken by all school leavers, since in some cases students who offered 'O' level subjects at the GCE level did not receive certification, and therefore did not receive any certification of their secondary education.

A review of the NCE statistics for 1996 – 1998 indicated that the NCE programme was not fulfilling the expectations of a school leaving certificate, since in some schools about 24% of the student did not write the examinations. Further, the percentage of students receiving 'ungraded' status in English and Arithmetic in some schools was high (48% in English and 75% in Arithmetic). The certificate had little currency within the Federation. The programme was not valued by many students, teachers or employers. Employers indicated that potential employees with this certification only, did not have the necessary skills for employment. Also it was not recognized as an entry qualification for further study or training.

Yet another attempt was made in 2001 to ensure that all students at the end of their secondary education had some means of providing employers or training institutions with a clear record of the skills which they had achieved. The new *National Certificate of Educational Competencies (NCEC)* was instituted

"to provide opportunities for all 3rd and 4th Form students to develop competencies to clearly defined standards. The focus will be on the assessment of practical competencies, and the elements of competence achieved will constitute the individual's profile ..."

The aim of the programme is to ensure that all students complete 4th Form having achieved basic numeracy skills, oral and written communication skills, increased self confidence, the ability to plan and carry out tasks, and positive attitudes to training and employment. Assessment of the programme is formative throughout the two years, and evidence of the students' work along with their marks are retained for moderation.

TABLE 13 : OFFERINGS FOR NCEC ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
2003/2004

SCHOOLS	# of Subjects Available	Subjects with Recorded Competencies and as % of Available Subjects
1	14	Communication, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Secretarial Skills, Clothing and Textiles, Technical Drawing, Electricity, Agricultural Science 50%
2	14	Communication, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Information Technology, Home Economics, Technical Drawing 42.9%
3	15	Communication, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Health and Family Life, Home Economics, Technical Drawing, Visual Art and Craft, Electricity, Agricultural Science 60%
4	11	Communication, Integrated Science, Social Science, Health and Family Life, Home Economics, Technical Drawing, Agricultural Science 63.6%
5	12	Communication, Integrated Science, Social Science, Secretarial Skills, Home Economics, Technical Drawing, Visual Art and Craft, Agricultural Science 66.7%
6	14	Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Science, Information Technology, Secretarial Skills, Home Economics, Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Visual Art and Craft, Electricity, Metalwork 78.6%
7	10	Communication, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Information Technology, Home Economics, Woodwork, Agricultural Science 70%

Source : Based on NCEC Report 2003-2004

The indication from Table 13 as well as from reports from the coordinator, is that the programme has not really taken off. Of the seven secondary schools which participated only two examined competencies in 70% or more of the subjects available for examination. Subjects in which competencies

were tested appear to be those that are naturally skill-based, and in which teachers most likely feel more confident testing. Close examination of the 2003/2004 report shows that for the most part students for whom competencies were observed and recorded were those of the higher ability classes. This means that students who are not offering subjects for CXC, the lower ability students, will still not have any record of their achievements at the secondary level.

The problems seem to focus around the difficulties encountered by teachers in making the necessary observations and the record keeping associated with this. Additionally, there seems to be problems associated with storing individual records for each student over a 2-3year period. The general attitude of teachers towards low achievers is also a critical factor in the success or failure of the programme.

Youth-at-Risk - Policies and strategies

In 2002, an education development project spearheaded by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) was carried out in St. Kitts and Nevis to identify existing programmes targeted at youth-at-risk and to suggest improvements (Sewell 2002). The Objectives of the mission, which aimed at assessing the current programmes and support services, and making recommendations to guide and improve them in order to reduce the number of at-risk students at the Secondary level, were specifically:

- To identify major issues, concerns or problems regarding low achievers and remedial students
- To look at existing good practice in voluntary sector and ways that this could be linked to mainstream school
- To modernize existing programmes both in and outside of school
- To review existing government support services, looking at the best ways they can be joined to other agencies
- To look at staff training and induction for all staff, and in particular training for Behaviour Management

- To recommend policy changes at the school level to support good behaviour and the emotional welfare of students

According to the observations of Sewell (2002), “in general, the curriculum is not serving secondary school students as well as it should.” He points to such factors as

- students’ perception of the curriculum having ‘insufficient relevance to their lives’
- the effect of streaming, based on academic ability, on student dissatisfaction and loss of self-esteem
- the desire of students in remedial streams for a technical vocational curriculum and extra-curricular activities which will keep them engaged in the schooling process.

Further, Sewell (2002) recommends :

- use of a student-centred curriculum which has strong elements of vocational training and social skills acquisition (communication skills, conflict management and careers advice) with small groups
- more flexibility in terms of provision for slow learners
- extension of school-based school improvement projects and extra-curricular activities, for example, ‘boys to men projects’, farming/agriculture and sports and arts/music, and programmes for parents
- improving behaviour policies in schools through assessment of behavioural environment, and the emotional and behavioural needs of individual student, as well as a transition programme for students entering the Secondary level.

Unhappy with the quality of education with which many young people are leaving school, in January 2005 education officials and principals came together in a Retreat, to brainstorm strategies for a way forward to address

this problem. It was stated that approximately half of the students are not meeting the required standards. The retreat was therefore geared towards the 30% or more of students, who do not have the opportunity to write CXC Examinations or who write only Basic Proficiency Level Examinations at CXC, or who write and do not pass sufficient subjects to enable them to compete for jobs in an increasingly competitive job market. In his address to the participants, the Minister of Education challenged the educators to become trail blazers by breaking from the norm and seek out new styles of teaching, non-traditional methods as they work to reach their students. Alluding to the possible link between the number of under achievers and the crime situation in the country, he pointed out the necessity of bringing together not only those persons in education, but also those in Youth, Social and Community Development, and the department of Gender Affairs.

In considering the prevention of school failure, the group put forward a number of strategies and identified the possible stakeholders with responsibility for formulating policy. Some of the areas addressed, strategies and responsible agent(s) are outlined in Table 14.

At present a Plan of Action with regards to the time frame and required resources is being worked out.

In his Budget Address the Prime Minister also cited plans for dealing with 'Youth-at-Risk'. He stated:

> *"… in 2005, we will commence the construction of a Co-ed Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre as part of a comprehensive Youth-At-Risk Project. This project would, among other things, provide extensive training for Parents, Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Child Protection Officers, Probation Officers and Magistrates who handle matters in relation to juvenile offences. The project will also provide consultants to develop diagnostic kits for the early identification of children with learning or behavioural difficulties, so that expeditious remedial action could be taken to correct these deficiencies and bring such children within the mainstream of the education system."* - *Excerpt from Budget Address 2005*

TABLE 14 : SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING SCHOOL FAILURE

Area	Strategies	Responsible Agent(s)
Selection of teachers	1. Establish qualifications for all pre-school teachers 2. Selection of teachers be based on interest, attitude and motivation	Division of Teacher Education (CFBC)
Induction & Training of teachers	1. Carry out the induction process for all teachers for at least 4 weeks 2. Train all teachers before entry into the classroom 3. Provide full-time training locally for early childhood teachers 4. Ensure that all teachers receive training in basic Educational Psychology and Conflict Resolution	Ministry, Division of Teacher Education
	5. All teachers be provided with a copy of the Teachers' Handbook to ensure understanding of their responsibilities	Ministry of Education
Curriculum	1. Establish mechanisms to promote mastery of the curriculum in core subject areas	Education Planner
	2. Health and Family Life Education be a critical component of the curriculum from Pre-Primary to Tertiary level	CDU
	3. Grade 8 or Form 2 curriculum should include enterprise and skills training	CDU
	4. The Arts (drama, music, art) be an important part of the school curriculum	CDU
	5. Technical Vocational Education training be introduced at the Primary level	CDU, AVEC, Youth Skills, Social and Community Development
Standards/ Benchmarks/ Progress Reports	1. Develop literacy and numeracy policies and standards for every grade level	CDU
	2. Develop policies for assessment of student strengths and weaknesses 3. Develop systems for recording student progress (review of present forms recommended)	CDU and Division of Teacher Education
Class size	1. Establish appropriate class size for all grades from Kindergarten to Form 5	Education Planner and CDU
Intervention	1. Develop strategies for intervention at all grade levels o Programmes to improve reading and numeracy o Support programmes for teachers o Adequate resources for all schools	CDB Project
	2. Design policy which provides an opportunity for students to advance or repeat classes as the situation demands	Education Planner
Collaboration with other Departments/ Ministries	1. Collaborate with Social and Community Development and the Youth Department to develop and implement early intervention strategies (beginning with Early Childhood and Special Education)	Social and Community Development, Youth Department, Early Childhood and Special Education Units
	2. Create a National Mentoring Programme	
	3. Collaborate to expand Project Viola Summer Programme	Youth Skills and Gender Affairs
	4. Establish systems to monitor buildings, furniture and equipment to ensure comfort, safety and appropriateness e.g. lighting and ventilation, height of desks and chairs	Ministry of Education and Public Works

Early Childhood Education – Policies and Strategies

Based on the premise that Early Childhood education is "education to foster and nurture the cognitive, social, emotional, moral and physical development of young children" perhaps the most effective early intervention strategy used in the St. Kitts and Nevis to fight against school failure is the Early Childhood programme.

The Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) is responsible for early childhood education, and as such supervises the operation of nurseries, preschools and day care centers, both public and private, in St. Kitts and Nevis. The Mission Statement of the Early Childhood Development Unit is:

> *To provide high quality care and education to the maximum number of children in their early years of life and facilitate collaboration between the family, community and those who are providing early childhood care and education in order to prepare the children for Primary school and life in general.*

In order to achieve this mission the Unit focuses on increasing access and improving quality. In January 2000, the Unit produced and circulated a document 'Minimun Standards for Early Childhood Centres and Services', which outlines the requirements for the operation of Early Childhood Centers in the Federation. It stipulates that Centers be visited and inspected regularly, and license presented annually. A license is only issued after the Center is inspected by the officers of the ECDU and member of the Probation and Child Welfare Board, and they are satisfied with the level of service offered.

As noted from Tables 6 and 9, although the number of children being registered in pre-primary education has been increasing (54.8% between 1998 and 2003), the enrolment rate is 67.6% of the age group. In its continued efforts to provide high quality service to the maximum number of children in their early years, the ECDU in 2004 continued its *Reaching the Unreached (RTU)* project started in 1997. This project, which at its inception had two components, the Preschool Extension Project (PEP) and the Reaching Children Where They Are (RCWTA) project, now focuses only on the latter component, RCWTA.

The RCWTA project seeks to reach children 0 – 3 years of age without requiring them to attend institutionalized centers. Instead they are reached where they are. This requires that Early childhood educators visit children in their homes, or visit homes where children are cared for by grandparents, guardians, or other caregivers. The home visitation programme involves planning stimulating activities for the children, the lending of toys and manipulatives, and the training of parents and care givers in their homes to give them ideas of how they could effectively care for, and stimulate the children in the home environment.

The objectives of the RCWTA therefore are:

- To improve the early childhood skills of parents and care givers with a specific concentration on those who have no access to any Early Childhood Development facilities
- To provide early stimulation to children 0-3 years, 60 minutes per week in their home environment, at a time convenient to the family.

A module was compiled for the project, containing ten sessions for the children and ten sessions for the care givers. At the end of each session, manipulatives and activities are left for the care givers to work with the children until the next visit by the EC educators. Two homes are visited during a morning session, one from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. and the other 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. with adjustments when and where necessary. On completion of the ten sessions at each home, the educators then move on to another two homes, but pay fortnightly visits to those completed to check on the progress of children and care givers.

The actual age range planned for is 6 months to 3 years. The typical schedule for the children's session is outlined below.

9:00 – 9:05/10:30 – 10:35	Arrival song and Devotions
9:05 – 9:40/10:35 – 11:10	Free Play using toys and manipulatives. Clean up
9:40 – 9:55/11:10 – 11:25	Group Activity
9:55 – 10:00/11:25 – 11:30	Circle Time/Culminating Activity

Following is an outline of the training module for caregivers.

Session One	Infant Development – Birth to twelve months Your Child's Growth – Birth to twelve months
Session Two	Infant Development 12 – 24 months Your Child's Growth 12 – 24 months
Session Three	Infant Development 24 – 36 months Your child's Growth 24 – 36 months
Session Four	Standards for Day Care/Nursery
Session Five	A high quality Infant Care Giver
Session Six	Some 'Don'ts' for Care givers
Session Seven	The Emergence of Language – Communicating with Children
Session Eight	Learning Through Play
Session Nine	Observing Children and Record Keeping
Session Ten	Songs and Rhymes for Nursery Children Daily Activities – an example of what a Daily Routine should be like

The EC educators carry out evaluations of the home visits, and also complete assessments for each child based on (a) the child's action with materials, and (b) strategies used by the educator for support and encouragement. A sample assessment is shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15 : SAMPLE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE RCWTA PROGRAMME

Child's Name	Child's Action with Materials	Strategies for Support and Encouragement
Child A (2 years)	o Initially he was quiet o Held on to materials o Observed everything that was going on around him	o Encouraged him by modeling some ways of using materials e.g. cubes o Held his hand hand encouraged him to build a tower. He smiled at his actions each time.
Child B (3 years)	o She was very shy o Did not choose materials on her own o Did not communicate verbally	o Lots of encouragement, physically and verbally e.g. had to do a lot of physical contact e.g. touching to assure and comfort her, hugging, praising
Child C (1 year)	o Cried a lot o Would close his eyes to avoid adult eye contact o Would lie listlessly on the floor o Gave half smiles eventually	o Comforted him by touching, patting, hugging, talking and smiling o Rattled a toy to get his attention etc.
Child D (1 year)	o Loves working with materials o Withdrew from adult touch	o Gave adequate materials o Encouraged and praised effort
Child E (2 years)	o Very active o Tries every action modeled o Loves to sing, clap, laugh o Worked with materials for a long time o Worked constructively with materials o Engages in conversation with resource teachers	o Praised her actions especially her singing o Initiated conversation with her o Modeled stacking which she repeated willingly, then she would laugh

Source: ECDU Module for Reaching Children Where They Are

In relation to the *Reaching Children Where They Are* project, the 2004 Plan of Action for the ECDU focused on increasing to twelve the number of homes being served by the programme. These would be from both urban and rural areas and serviced by Unit staff and selected trained staff members from public Early Childhood Centers, targeting 150 children. This would bring the number of children being reached to 270.

The report of the RCWTA programme carried out in 2004 shows that there has been a high level of achievement on the part of the Unit with respect to its objectives, as seen form the following statistics:

Number of officers carrying out programme	12
Number of homes visited	12
Duraton of programme	24 weeks
Number of sessions per home	48
Number of children reached	145
Number of care givers who received training	22

The impact of the programme on children, care givers and officers was evident. The children's expressive language was enhanced as they learnt new words and concepts derived from the activities planned and the high level of verbal interaction which occurred between them and the officers. Their fine muscles became more developed and they acquired the necessary skills in manipulating the toys. The children looked forward to these sessions and greeted the officers with excitement as the programme progressed.

The caregivers appreciated the innovative programme which provided them the assistance they needed in managing the children through the use of developmentally appropriate toys and activities. They became more aware of the importance of early stimulation. The officers embraced the opportunity to enhance their childcare skills. Through the activity they improved their competence and confidence as nursery workers. They also experienced a sense of satisfaction in being able to make a positive impact outside of their normal routine.

The delivery of the RCTWA programme was enhanced by the acquisition of a vehicle made possible through a donation by the Japanese government under the 'Grass Root Project'. Funding for the programme, as for all other programmes, is a joint effort of Government, UNICEF and fund raising by the ECDU.

To ensure that the quality of service continues to improve the 2004 Plan of Action also focused on training, monitoring and supervision. This involved:

- Training of six teachers overseas
- Training of workers locally – a 2-week Orientation Workshop for new nursery workers
- Seminar for public supervisors and their assistants
- Training for teachers in puppetry and story telling
- Expansion of the Toy Lending Library to meet the needs of the increase in the RCWTA programme
- Monitoring and licensing of Early Childhood Centers

In these other areas of focus, there was also a high standard of achievement. Six teachers (St. Kitts 4; Nevis 2) began training at the Servol Regional Training and Resource Centre in Trinidad in September 2004. Local training took place with 36 participants in the Orientation Workshop for new nursery workers, and 58 participants in the Puppetry and Story Telling workshop.

In an effort to aid the smooth transition of children from pre-primary to primary level, the Unit initiated a Transition Programme through which Kindergarten teachers from primary schools participated in the Orientation Workshop. This was in an effort to expose these teachers to the preschool programme, so that they could create in their classrooms a similar setting to make the transition to primary easier for the children. A supply of teaching/ learning materials funded by UNICEF will assist teachers in creating Learning Centers in the kindergarten classes.

Another major aspect in the improvement of the Early Childhood Education which has the potential of addressing school failure, is the curriculum. The present curriculum, developed and piloted over the past three to four years, is an integration of the High/Scope and the Thematic approaches. The High/Scope Key Experiences form a major component of its content. The curriculum is designed around seven units, related sub-units and organized under five curricula elements – Objectives, Content, Activities, Resources and Evaluation. The seven units, their major objectives and links to the Primary curriculum are shown in Table 16.

Table 14 shows that the Early Childhood Education curriculum dovetails into the curriculum at the Kindergarten level of the Primary level, thus assisting the smooth transition between the levels, and lessening the possibility of school failure at the primary level.

The curriculum also describes for teachers the teaching methodology to be used, how to use the curriculum guide, the role of the teacher, and a listing of the themes to be used as the content of the curriculum. These are:

A. General Themes

- Myself
- My Family
- My Home
- My Community
- Food and Nutrition
- Communication
- My Environment

B. Special Events

- Independence, Christmas, Carnival, Valentine, Easter, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, other events as necessary.

TABLE 16 : EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM OUTLINE AND LINKS WITH PRIMARY CURRICULUM

Units	Major objectives	Links with Primary curriculum (Kg)
Social and Emotional Development	o Developing awareness of themselves o Developing an awareness of their relationship with others o Ability to function as a member of a group and to form relationships o Developing a sense of responsibility and independence o Developing an understanding of the environment	Social Studies curriculum covers growing awareness of self as an individual, relationships, and the environment. The content of the programme is similar to the themes covered by the pre-primary curriculum
Physical Development	o Ensuring/encouraging the total physical development of the child through effective body movement and rhythmic expressions o Developing healthy attitudes towards a healthy and active life o Developing gross-motor and fine manipulative skills, coordination, and spatial awareness o Prepare for music and movement games, sports, gymnastics	Although physical education is time tabled, there is no set curriculum.
Language and Literacy Development	o Improve children's ability to communicate through words, both spoken and written o Speaking and Listening : talking with others about personally meaningful experience; describing objects, events and relations; having fun with language listening to stories and poems, making up stories and rhymes, dialogue; and dictating stories o Writing : writing in various ways – drawing, tracing, scribbling, letter like forms, invented spelling; representing speech and thoughts in the written form o Reading o : reading in various ways – reading story books, signs and symbols, one's own writing	The Languae Arts curriculum aims at developing confidence in the use of language, developing skills of free and fluent expression, communication skills, listening to and respecting opinions of others, sharing personal ideas, developing skills of critical listening, making sense of the world and of complex ideas
Aesthetic and Creative Development	o Creating patterns and designs o Imitating actions and sounds o Dramatizing a story o Moving in non-locomotor ways (anchored movement : bending, twisting, rocking, swinging one's arms) o Developing melody, rhythm and repeat musical patterns o Expressing feelings through music	Art and Craft is time tabled but there is no set curriculum. One is being developed at present
Moral and Spiritual Development	o Develop positive values and attitudes of reverence, love, appreciation and gratitude and to encourage healthy relationships in these areas o Recognize differences and similarities in people o Be sensitive to other people's needs, cultures, race and religion as well as feelings and experiences, their skin colour, speech etc o Encourage an appreciation of beauty in their environment and the world at large	Same objectives addressed in Moral and Religious Education curriculum
Mathematical Development	o Develop adequate concepts, skills and abilities related to mathematics, through discovery, counting, playing, building, spinning, cutting, pouring, digging, shapes, space and time, measuring and problem solving	The Mathematics curriculum focuses on number, shape and space, patterns and relationships statistics and probabilit
Science and Technological Development	o Ffinding out and making sense of the world in which we live o Using skills of observing, predicting, interpreting and exploring o Using tools and materials appropriately o Developing curiosity and an enquiring attitude o Observing people, places and things for a spatial view point o Interpreting spatial relations in drawing, pictures and photographs o Discriminating between plants, animals and non-living things	The Science and Technology curriculum uses a process skills approach to studying the topics weather, water, matter, making things move, living things. Process categories include problem finding, collecting information and hypothesizing, experimenting, decision making, recording and communicating

An example of a macro plan, micro plan, and lesson plans for small group time, Physical activity, and Circle Time based on the theme “Myself” are also included in the curriculum guide.

One activity of the 2005 Plan of Action (already in progress) is the training of preschool teachers to implement the curriculum, to ensure its effective use by all teachers, thus enabling children to gain maximum benefit from it.

Chapter 5

Challenges

A number of initiatives have been carried out and/or planned by various sectors of the Ministry of Education in an effort to address the problem of school failure. Initiatives undertaken at three levels – pre-primary, primary and secondary – as well as the provision of assistance to teachers in preparation for teaching were presented in Chapter 4. These have had varying degrees of success. The data available seem to suggest that there has been some progress made in early intervention through early childhood education, and at the primary level. The greatest problems seem to occur at the secondary level particularly beyond Form 3. However, in order to more accurately assess the impact of the early childhood programme, a study to compare student achievement based on attendance or non-attendance at a preschool, and following them through the various levels would have been ideal, but time did not permit this. Also, to get an accurate picture of school dropouts research at the school level would have been beneficial, since the EMIS does not record such data.

From the available information and from my own experience in the system, the major challenges seem to lie in the areas of teacher induction, selection and training, motivating the large majority of secondary students to go beyond basic education, changing teacher attitudes towards 'slow' or 'less academic' students, changing attitudes of parents and employers to non-CXC qualifications, need for dialogue and collaboration between teachers at the various levels to facilitate smooth transition for students.

(a) Teacher Induction, Selection and Training (for all levels)

It has been observed (and it is only natural) that young and inexperienced teachers, teach the way they were taught. Hence, the quality of teaching among beginning teachers vary considerably based on the type of teaching to which they were exposed most. In addition, teachers cannot teach content or skills which they themselves have not mastered. Often those with higher capabilities do not enter the teaching profession, and teaching is for many a last resort to gain employment. Some pre-training or initial

training of teachers is desirable before they are placed in the classroom for several reasons :

(i) to prevent the possibility of irreparable damage brought about by 'bad' teaching

(ii) it is difficult to change poor teaching styles once they have been mastered, as evidenced with some teachers, who after training resort to their old teaching styles

Challenges: To improve quality of teaching and prevent school failure a rigorous induction programme for prospective teachers covering at least 4 weeks needs to be developed.

Selection of teachers should come from among the participants of the induction programme.

Pre-training for beginning teachers should include basic psychology and pedagogy, and methodologies for coping with differing abilities.

(b) Motivating secondary students to go beyond basic education

The focus of the secondary school should be to provide the best possible education for all students. All students should be helped to acquire some level of achievement. Hence secondary education should not just be geared towards success in examinations, but emphasis should be placed on the preparation of students for day to day living. Such an emphasis would bring relevance to the school curriculum, and would therefore benefit not only those students who are academically inclined, but also the 'slow' and non-academic students. Improvements in this direction should not only equip school leavers with the skills and work ethic necessary become employable, but will also build self esteem particularly among the non-academic group of students.

Challenges: Need for flexibility in terms of the minimum number of subjects which students are allowed to offer at CXC level.

Less able students be allowed to follow a programme offering fewer academic subjects complemented by skills training including such areas as music, art and craft, sports.

Development of curricula to aid aesthetic and creative development, without an exam orientation. (Also at the primary level to ensure continuity from pre-primary and link to the secondary)

Scope for remedial work in weak areas to lessen failure

(c) Changing teacher attitudes towards 'less academic' students

Teachers are often very hasty to 'write off' students. Although the secondary system is supposed to be a comprehensive one, in reality some teachers seem to be operating within a 'grammar school' mode. Thus students who cannot achieve at a certain level are required to take only the NCEC programme. The problem is further compounded when teachers perceive their CXC classes to be more important.

Challenge: Changing the mindset of teachers and the 'culture of the classroom'

(d) Changing parents' and employers' attitudes towards non-CXC qualifications

Very little value is placed on National certification by employers. As a result students do not see it as worthwhile. However, if this attitude is to change, then Principals and teachers need to 'buy into' the NCEC programme and ensure that the necessary assessments and recording of competencies are completed.

Challenge: To convince parents and employers of the value of the NCEC

To provide training for teachers in the observation and recording of competencies

To develop a format whereby the task of recording is less daunting to teachers.

(e) Need for dialogue and collaboration between teachers at the various levels to facilitate smooth transition for students

There is dialogue and collaboration between secondary schools and their feeder primary schools with regards to the placement of students moving from the primary to the secondary level. This, however, is based mainly on the results of the Test of Standards.

In moving from primary to secondary level students must adjust to a number of differences – subject teachers rather than one class teacher, use of a number of textbooks each with its own vocabulary, and different teaching styles.

The ECDU has implemented a transition programme to assist the ease of movement of children from preschool to primary.

Challenge: The collaboration of teachers at primary Grade 6 and Secondary Form 1 to ensure a smooth transition for students

Preparation of a profile for students moving into the secondary level, to provide teachers with some background information which could assist in the transition.

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