

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

Series Editor: Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina

**Belize Primary Education Development Project
Improving Quality in the Provision of Education for All in Belize**

An Examination of the Impact of a Basic Education Project

J. Alexander Bennett

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FOREWORD

Education for All in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000 is a remarkable output, which is the culmination of intensive collaborative efforts between the countries of the Caribbean sub-region, the Regional Advisory Technical Group and the EFA Forum Secretariat, and relevant agencies and institutions.

The Country Reports, Monograph Series, and Case Studies highlight and pinpoint, in an extremely effective manner, some of the issues and concerns that drive education policy and action in the Caribbean. At the same time, the documentation presents a balanced and informed overview of the rich and varied educational and cultural experience of the sub-region; a knowledge which is critical to the understanding of the unfolding social and economic developments.

UNESCO is pleased to have been associated with this endeavour, particularly through our regional office in Kingston, Jamaica which, as co-ordinator of the Regional Advisory Group for the Caribbean Sub-region, was integrally involved in every aspect of the exercise. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Caribbean on activities of a mutually rewarding nature as the consequences and implications of the EFA Assessment become manifest.

Colin Power
Deputy Director-General for Education
UNESCO

SERIES INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

Foreword

Series Introduction

Acknowledgements

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Preface

Abstract

Introduction

Origins and Rationale

Aims and Objectives

Research Design and Methodology of CSIE

The Context of Schooling in Belize

Learning from the Case Studies

The Nature and Quality of Teaching and Learning

Teacher Education

Curriculum Development

Assessment and Evaluation

Textbooks and Materials

School Facilities

Planning and Management

Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond

Policy Implications of Findings

Conclusion

References

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The various researchers who participated must be acknowledged for the excellent case studies they produced, which were embodied in the Synthesis Report.

The consultancies which Dr. Michael Crossley provided, as the Bristol University-based head External Consultant during the life of the CSIE, were very critical to the successful outcome of the CSIE. For his critical inputs and his friendship the author is highly gratified.

Finally, the author wishes to acknowledge Ms. Catherine Rudon for the excellent work she has done in word processing the present manuscript.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEU	Assessment and Evaluation Unit
BJAT	Belize Junior Achievement Test
BNSE	Belize National Selection Examination
BPEDP	Belize Primary Education Development Project
BTTC	Belize Teachers' Training College
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CODE	Canadian Organization for Development through Education
CSIE	Case Studies and Impact Evaluation
DECs	District Education Centers
DEMT	District Education Management Team
DEOs	District Education Officers
DEP	Distance Education Programme
EDC	Education Development Center
EFA	Education for All
EPU	Education Planning Unit
ESS	Education Sector Strategy
GoB	Government of Belize
JBTE	Joint Board of Teacher Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCE	National Council for Education
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
SAR	Staff Appraisal Report
SFIP	School Facilities Improvement Programme
UCB	University College of Belize
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UWI	The University of the West Indies

About the Author

J. ALEXANDER BENNETT is a former Curriculum Development Officer in the Ministry of Education in Belize, and was Head of the Curriculum Development Unit. He has had teaching experience at many levels of the educational system, including teacher training at the Belize Teachers' College and the University College of Belize. Between 1990 and 1995, he served as an adviser with the Ministry of Education particularly in connection with the World Bank-supported Belize Primary Education Development Project. He is a graduate of The University of the West Indies and holds an M.A. (Education) from the Institute of Education at the University of London. He recently contributed a section on the educational system of Belize for the *International Encyclopedia of Education*, and was Chairman of the Research Committee when the study discussed here began. While serving in an advisory position in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Bennett also played a prominent role in the Case Studies and Impact Evaluation for which he was the Lead Local Consultant. He is the author of the Synthesis Report of the CSIE as well as the writer of the monograph based on the Synthesis Report. At present, Mr. Bennett serves as a part-time lecturer at the Belize Teachers' College and is occasionally engaged as an educational consultant, mainly by the Ministry of Education.

PREFACE

This monograph is essentially a synopsis and, at the same time, an interpretative treatment of the Synthesis Report, written by the author, of a set of 11 case studies of primary schools in Belize, out of a sample of 16 identified for study under the auspices of the Belize Primary Education Development Project (BPEDP), which was partially funded by the World Bank (1992–1999).

The Case Studies and Impact Evaluation (CSIE) brought together professional staff from several sections of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to collaborate in an activity of qualitative research and evaluation, relating to the quality of teaching and learning in the schools and the impact of BPEDP on the schools at which the research was carried out.

Despite the limitations of the case study approach to research, certain useful findings emerged, which were synthesized in the overall Synthesis Report. This report drew on the submitted case studies and related documents to present, in an interpretative manner, the strengths, weaknesses, and needed change in the primary educational system in Belize. It is out of all this research and documentation that this monograph has emerged.

It is hoped that this monograph will make a useful contribution to the series of monographs, which will have emanated from the whole project, *Education for All in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000*.

ABSTRACT

This monograph aims to condense the main points of the arguments contained in the Synthesis Report of the CSIE, and to interpret it in light of the message of the *World Declaration on Education For All*. The Introduction serves to describe how the CSIE originated and the extent to which it was influenced by the BPEDP. It also indicates the impact an international external lending agency may have on a borrower's endeavour to effect useful educational change in a country. Most importantly, the nature of a first, in the form of a collaborative, qualitative research project is indicated. A brief introduction to the educational system in Belize is then presented in order to provide a reference point for an understanding of the process and output aspects of the CSIE. In the section on "Learning From the Case Studies," the findings of the CSIE are condensed, but highlighted, to elicit the process and output aspects of the research in relation to the evaluation of the impact of the various components of the BPEDP. Not surprisingly, the impact is shown to be modest at best. However, it needs to be realized that positive educational change often takes a good deal of time. Finally, the CSIE research is placed against the background of the stated ultimate goal of EFA which is declared in the words "Education for all is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults." This part deals with prospects for the future in the Belizean endeavour, which is similar to that of our Caribbean neighbours, who are engaged in the struggle to empower their citizens through education.

Introduction

Origins and Rationale

The Case Studies and Impact Evaluation (CSIE) originated in discussions relating to the setting up of the Assessment and Evaluation Unit (AEU) as a component of the Belize Primary Education Development Project (BPEDP) (Bennett, J. A., 1997, p. i). The BPEDP itself was initiated following a World Bank Sector Review conducted in Belize in 1988 (World Bank, 1989). That Sector Review identified three major needs relating to education in Belize:

- (a) the improvement of the management, operation, and efficiency of the education system;
- (b) the need to give highest priority to the improvement of the planning capacity of the Ministry of Education, and
- (c) the need to improve the management and financing of primary schools among other levels of education.

The BPEDP was designed to give attention to the three prominent needs identified and, to that end, project preparation commenced in 1990 focusing on strategies to achieve the aims and objectives relating to the improvement of primary school education in Belize in the areas of teacher education, curriculum development, the provision of textbooks and materials, examination and assessment, and planning and management. The question of devising academic achievement tests to measure the performance of primary school children led to the suggestion that a study was needed to assess the quality of education in the primary schools of Belize. However, this component was not specifically provided for within the framework of the BPEDP. Nevertheless, the idea of a “quality study” remained alive from 1991 to 1994, when a breakthrough was made following discussions with representatives of Belize-Bristol Link, which had been formed as part of the contribution from the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom Government to BPEDP.

Dr. Michael Crossley of the University of Bristol became directly associated with the project, which came to be known as the Case Studies and Impact Evaluation (CSIE). It was designed as a qualitative study intended to assess the impact of the BPEDP through case studies of some 16 schools. Funding from the British Government enabled Dr. Crossley to serve as the lead external consultant for the duration of the life of the CSIE, thereby ensuring that the conduct of the research received the needed expert guidance. The writer of this monograph served as Dr. Crossley’s counterpart in Belize.

Aims and Objectives

Pre-appraisal of the project was carried out in April of 1991 and appraisal was undertaken in June 1991. Both exercises involved representatives of the ODA and the Ministry of Education (MoE), as well as officials of the World Bank.

The broad aims that resulted from the work carried out during the one-year preparatory stage are contained in the Staff Appraisal Report (SAR) (World Bank, 1991):

1. to introduce a new system for the training of primary school teachers in order to improve the quality and relevance of teacher training and increase the number of teachers with professional certification;
2. to improve the quality, availability, and efficient use of educational facilities and resources for teaching, learning, and assessment in primary schools; and
3. to strengthen the planning and management of education to enable the government to develop policies and implement programs to improve the cost-effectiveness of its expenditures on primary education.

The components of the BPEDP, as identified in the SAR, contain the specific objectives of the BPEDP embedded in them. They are the components of school facilities, teacher education, curriculum development and application, textbooks and teaching materials, examination reform, and planning and management.

Research Design and Methodology of CSIE

The CSIE was planned to be carried out in four phases, each involving a process of collaboration (J. A. Bennett & M. Crossley, 1997). Early in 1994, research teams were agreed upon and a Steering Committee formed comprising members of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), the Belize Teachers' Training College (BTTC), officials from the MoE including the AEU, the Education Planning Unit (EPU) of MoE, and the University of Bristol. Once established, the Steering Committee was largely responsible for directing and supporting the course of the CSIE.

Once the Steering Committee was established and participants of the initial planning meeting volunteered to join the research team, a list of criteria was established for the selection of case study schools. These criteria included district and location, management agency, enrolment size, extent of BPEDP involvement, and urban/rural characteristics. The aim was to include schools from each of the six districts and to have a range of different types represented. Attention was also given to accessibility of the schools relative to the location and position of the researchers. After some modifications and additions had been made, 14 case study schools were confirmed. As three of the rural schools were in very close proximity it was decided to include all three as one case study. Two of the total number of schools were included in the final year of the research to address the problem of representation in relation to denominational schools and Belize City, the largest township in the country.

Essentially, the list included at least one school from each of the six administrative districts of the country, rural and urban schools, small and large schools, those with or without major building programmes being carried out by the BPEDP, some of which belonged to varying church managements as well as a number which were managed by the MoE.

Once the organizational structure was established and the research teams were identified, preparations were made for the commencement of the study. The plan was for it to be carried out by an initial enquiry into the context of each study school, followed/accompanied by in-school research. It was estimated that each team of researchers would be able to spend five full days per school term in their case study school, and it was accepted by the MoE that the work done would be regarded as an aspect of their duties.

The entire study was planned to be conducted in four phases:

- * *Phase 1 – Context and background:* This first phase concentrated on the gathering of data related to the context and background of each school selected for the study.
- * *Phase 2 – In-school research:* This phase required the researchers to visit the schools in order to document the impact of the BPEDP at the school level, and the nature and quality of teaching and learning. Specifically, the task of this documentation was to concentrate on the six components of the BPEDP and on carrying out classroom observations. The six components specified were: (a) school facilities, (b) planning and management, (c) teacher education, (d) curriculum development, (e) textbooks and teaching materials, and (f) examination and assessment.
- * *Phase 3 – Writing up case study reports:* This phase would include a writing workshop at which the researchers would use their termly reports and field notes to produce at least a first draft of each individual case study report, with a deadline set for the final submission of ready-for-publication manuscripts.
- * *Phase 4* of the CSIE represents the Synthesis Report, which was envisaged as the culminating activity of the CSIE.

The aims which evolved out of all the considerations stated so far were:

1. to document the nature and quality of primary school education (and changes over time) in selected schools;
2. to contribute to the evaluation of the impact of the BPEDP at the school level;

3. to contribute to the development of Belizean research capacity, most notably within the BTTC and the CDU.

The specific expected outcomes relating to the broad aims of the study were:

1. to produce well documented school case studies containing descriptions of school context and history and the nature and quality of teaching and learning relating to each school;
2. to carry out a close study of the impact of the BPEDP relating to its six components, the conclusions drawn in relation to these to be included in each study;
3. to improve the status of research capacity among the participant researchers and, therefore, that of their institutions through training workshops and through learned skills in qualitative research applied to the actual fieldwork and writing involved in the study.

The study was not without problems. One problem was the absence of satisfactory financial support during its gestation period. Another stemmed from the “voluntary” status of most of the researchers, a situation which did not provide enough incentive for researchers who had their own substantive duties to carry out, apart from serving as “volunteer” researchers. Still another problem derived from the constraints of changes in leadership in membership of the Steering Committee. The research was also impacted by changes of position on the part of a number of researchers, which made it difficult, or even impossible, for them to carry on.

On the positive side, the CSIE contributed to stronger collaboration among several educational agencies. Through such collaboration, a good deal of success was achieved both from the process and product perspectives. Eleven substantial reports were completed, providing useful information on the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools and on the impact of the BPEDP.

The Context of Schooling in Belize

Schools in Belize are maintained and managed by a church-state partnership which, in practice, means that the financing of schools is shared by the Government of Belize (GoB) and the churches which operate schools. At present, the Government is wholly responsible for the payment of the salaries of all primary school teachers in accordance with a staffing schedule issued annually by the MoE, which lists the approved staff of every government and government-aided school. The Government also undertakes the financing of the training of the teachers towards certification, the supervision of the schools, and the establishing of educational objectives and the administrative structure. The Government provides 100% of salaries of teachers and contributes to the maintenance of schools, and 50% of the capital costs of building construction.

The church-state partnership was put firmly in place by pieces of legislation which remained unchanged, except for amendments over the years, until 1962 when, with the introduction of a ministerial system into the colonial administration, an Education Ordinance (British Honduras, 1996) was passed reducing the Board of Education from being an executive body directly responsible for the management and administration of the educational system to that of being an advisory body. In 1967, a National Council for Education (NCE) was set up as an advisory body with several standing committees. However, to date it has not functioned as a strong advisory agency within the management and administrative structure of the MoE. However, the church-state partnership remains very much in place.

The BPEDP aimed to make improvements to the quality of primary education in six areas in which there was clear recognition that there were deficiencies--school facilities, planning and management, teacher education curriculum, textbooks and materials, and educational assessment and evaluation. Merely citing these six components provides a hint as to what schools are like in Belize today. Of course there are schools where all, or most, of such deficiencies are absent, but they are in the minority. The primary education system provides for eight years of compulsory schooling between the ages of 5 and 14 years. A preschool level of education has been emerging although the number of preschools is limited. Following primary school, some 60 to 75% of the boys and girls who leave primary school enter one of some 30 four-year secondary schools. Beyond this, limited tertiary education is provided in-country by a variety of institutions including Sixth Form colleges, Junior colleges, the School of Nursing, Belize Teachers' Training College (BTTC), and the University College of Belize (UCB). The School of Continuing Studies of The University of the West Indies (UWI) also offers university level courses. A number of sixth form level graduates travel abroad each year to enroll at universities.

In 1996, there was a total of 256 public primary schools, 204 being grant-aided, and the remaining schools being wholly government institutions. The enrolment in these schools was 53,110 pupils, 27,349 males and 25,671 females, representing 84.7% of the age group overall. These schools range from situations in which a church-managed school complex in a town contains an infant school, a middle school, and an upper school to a large all-age urban school to smaller all-age schools in towns and villages, the smallest being multigrade schools of 60 pupils, for example, and staffed by two or three teachers including the principal. There are 76 urban schools and 176 rural schools in all. There are also 34 private and specially assisted schools.

The components of the BPEDP are suggestive of the deficiencies found in primary schools in Belize. There is overcrowding, sometimes accompanied by dilapidated school facilities. Management varies from the strongly autocratic to those which, if not entirely democratic, allow the principals, their staff, and community members some voice in the decision making process. At the same time, denominational management is becoming less supportive of their schools financially, at a time when the Government is faced with having to engage in stringent budgetary adjustment policies. A relatively large number of the teachers who staff the schools are still not graduates of a full course of teacher training at BTTC or elsewhere. For instance, in the sample of 16 case study schools with which this report is concerned, not only is there a significant proportion of the teachers not trained but 4 of the 16 principals in the sample are untrained. There has not been any satisfactory curriculum development programme in the schools, so much so that the World Bank team, in its 1995 mid-term review of the BPEDP (World Bank, 1995), called for a halt to the

existing efforts at curriculum revision and for a completely new curriculum construction effort. Similarly, there has not been sufficient textbooks and teaching/learning materials, and the pupils who sit the Belize National Selection Examination (BNSE) have not been doing very well.

On the opposite side of the coin it is possible to note that, on the whole, the staff of the primary schools of Belize are a dedicated group of professionals who give of their all in support of their schools and their pupils. Their regular attention to preparing their weekly and daily lesson plans, and their contributions to school fund-raising and church and community work are to be classed as heroic. Alongside the efforts of school staff, various agencies work to make it possible for school facilities to be built and for the schools to be equipped with teaching/learning equipment and materials. These agencies range from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and local business donors to external agencies such as the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Rotary International, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, the ODA of the UK Government, and the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE). All these agencies collaborate with the GoB as their partner.

Learning From the Case Studies

The Nature and Quality of Teaching and Learning

The BPEDP was mounted in an effort to improve the quality of education in the primary schools of Belize through the outcomes of its six components. The CSIE focused on the impact of the BPEDP in the schools at which the CSIE was carried out. Special attention was given to observing and learning about the nature and quality of teaching and learning at these schools, aspects of education which are very much related to the vision and commitment of Education for All (EFA). Article 1 of the *World Declaration on Education for All* states: “Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from education opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs” (World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), 1990, p. 43). Again, Article 4 - “Focusing on Learning Acquisition” states: “Whether or not expanded opportunities will translate into meaningful development – for an individual or for society – depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of these opportunities i.e. whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values” (p. 45). And under Article 5 - “Broadening the Means and Scope of Basic Education,” primary education is accorded special importance: “The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling” (p. 46). Clearly, the planners of the BPEDP were cognizant of the importance of what takes place in relation to learning in the classroom in their selection of the six components of the project for its central focus.

The in-school research of the CSIE led to the overall conclusion that the method of teaching most often used, especially in the presentation of new units of learning, was that of the whole class approach. The teacher stood in front of the class, or moved around (as much as classroom space allowed) and presented the topic being taught, interspersing statements with question and answer interaction. Exposition or explanation was followed by class assignment.

Whole class teaching is not peculiar to Belize. It is widespread in the world for a number of reasons, one being that it has been the traditional method of teaching to which teachers have been exposed; another is the very limited space for pupils to spread out in small groups; and still another relates to the scarcity of suitable books and other learning materials for small groups and individualized activities.

While the typical approach was teacher-centred, punishment was not prominently resorted to by teachers. Classes did allow for pupils to answer questions and undertake some group and individual activities. However, there was little evidence that teachers, as a rule, used the enquiry approach to encourage learning. Nevertheless, there was some evidence that children were taken on educational trips and visits in different class groups during the school year.

Officially, teachers are expected to display a timetable, which provides for slots of instructional time amounting to 1650 minutes weekly for the middle and upper levels of the primary school classes and 1350 minutes for the infant level. The compartmentalized timetable is closely related to an academic subject orientation, although some attention has been given to encouraging a more open timetable and to integration in certain facets of the content areas. Nevertheless, tradition can and is expected to change given positive changes in the conditions under which the schools operate, and given the availability of and accessibility to certain supports. For instance, one CSIE researcher states that the supports needed relate to four general systems: teaching strategies, curricula, organization, and facilities. Furthermore, the same researcher points out that changes are very much dependent on a certain spirit in the educational environment which creates “the climate of expectation of change and which provides a process of ongoing evaluation aimed at improvements in the learning environment” (Elrington, 1997). The BPEDP was directed towards making some key inputs intended to bring about change in the school tradition, and there is some evidence that these inputs are beginning to effect a cultural change in the school tradition, albeit slowly.

Teacher Education

Teacher training is considered important to the educational enterprise. Completing an adequate programme of teacher education is necessary for teachers to acquire fundamental principles and techniques of teaching. The CSIE

research provided evidence that teachers are aware of the educational value of the child-centred approaches to teaching and the need to appeal to the interests of their pupils. They also understand that the different content areas require different methods of teaching and that, generally, children must be given every opportunity to participate in their own learning through activities which allow them to investigate and observe. It was with the foregoing stated issues of teaching and learning in mind that the BPEDP set out to contribute to a restructured programme of teacher training, aimed at improving the competency of primary school teachers as well as to increasing the proportion of trained teachers in the primary school system, from an estimated 50 to 80%, during the eight-year life cycle of the project.

The staffing of all Belizean primary schools with adequately trained teachers has been a longstanding national aspiration. In 1964, a UNESCO Educational Planning Mission (UNESCO, 1964) had estimated that fewer than 25% of the teachers of the primary school system had completed a teachers' college training programme. In 1990, the estimate of between 50 and 60% of trained teachers was seen as a very slow improvement. The strategy for a quicker pace of improvement was that of restructuring the existing programme of training within the BTTC, consisting of two years of intra-mural instruction followed by an internship of one school year, to a one-year Level 1 programme, the completion of which would allow teachers to gain a trained teachers' certificate and be returned to the classroom. After a period of practice (an average of two years), such teachers would be qualified for admission to the final Level 2 course of one academic year which, if completed, would qualify them for a more advanced diploma. They would then be considered to have completed the requirements for recognition as fully trained teachers, both nationally and by the regional Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE).

In 1994, the Level 1 full-time intra-mural programme became the Level 1 Distance Education Programme (DEP), to some extent, for budgetary reasons. At the time of writing, only the Level 2 training programme is conducted intra-murally. With the Level 1 mode staged for completion in three years instead of in one, the prospect of having 80% of the teachers trained, at least up to Level 1, seemed quite likely to be slowed down. However, in a recent interview held by the writer with the officer in charge of the extra-mural programmes, a positive outlook was expressed. It appears that the 80% mark has been almost reached in a number of districts.

The officer explained that in the initial stage of the DEP some weaknesses were evident. Materials had to be prepared and writers had to be trained to produce distance materials. However, more planning has been taking place with regard to courses and materials have been made more relevant to what is necessary and applicable in the classroom. Trained teachers on special assignment are being brought in to supervise the teachers-in-training. Some limitations indicated include:

- Only one day per month is generally allowed for supervisors to meet with students.
- The delivery of the courses is not always of the best quality.
- Standardization of assessment is needed and is being worked on.
- Teacher trainers themselves need training, for example, how to supervise at distance; expertise in the courses taught.
- Available time to monitor the program is limited.
- Students need more support, morally and academically.
- There is not enough continuity between the Level 1 and the Level 2 programmes.

One specific limitation that needs to be highlighted is the absence of a module on teaching. There is a module on Teaching Methods and one on Classroom Organization. However, there is a need to consider teaching as a process, a process that requires a career-long effort to master.

Much of what the Head of the extra-mural programmes stated in the interview is corroborated by the evaluation undertaken of the DEP programme at the BTTC (Verbakel, 1997). That report contains comments on the advantages and disadvantages of the programme as follows:

Advantages

- * Almost all teachers, principals and supervisors who participated in the evaluation stated that trainees could apply what they learnt in the programme in a practical setting and had the added advantages of studying at home and benefiting financially.
- * One principal reported the advantage of less change in staffing.
- * The general view was that the DEP trained more teachers than the intra-mural programme.
- * The DEP enables new ideas and teaching strategies to be brought into the school and tends to motivate all staff.
- * The face-to-face summer programme contributes to its quality and encourages trainees to develop confidence.

Disadvantages

- * The teachers must face a good deal of pressure and stress from combining a rigorous programme of study with their full-time work as classroom teachers.
- * Principals feel they have no say or input in the planning of the programme, which is carried out regardless of the plans they have for their schools.
- * The DEP contributed to relatively little professional knowledge compared with the full-time face-to-face intra-mural programme.

No evaluation has been done on the Level 2 programme. Generally, however, it seems overloaded and limited in the aspect of advancing training in teaching.

One facet of the BPEDP teacher training component has been that of the Principals' Training Programme. It is the first certificate level one-year programme to be run in Belize that is specifically aimed at training school principals in effective leadership and management styles. It commenced in September of 1996 and was scheduled to run for two years. Those who were enrolled were principals who held trained teachers' certificates. In the first run, 98 principals started the programme of whom 88 completed. In an evaluation of the programme (Verbakel, 1997), the following findings were identified

:

- * Principals were satisfied that the knowledge they acquired provided them with the tools to set clear goals for their schools and to manage their schools skillfully.
- * Among the problems encountered were:
 - lack of enough monthly supervision;
 - too few supervisors relative to the number of trainees;
 - the need for standardization of assessment;
 - the difficulty of working and studying.

Curriculum Development

Effective teaching is closely related to the school curriculum, which provides the content of school education. In Belize, attempts at curriculum (in the present day sense of the term) in the primary schools has been ongoing for the last 60 years, but the outcomes have not brought about clear reform. One of the components of the BPEDP was Curriculum Development, principally aimed at the revision of the existing core curriculum guides and the preparation

of a primary school curriculum policy. However, at the Mid-Term Review of BPEDP in early 1995 (World Bank, 1995), the consultants from the World Bank were clearly dissatisfied with the progress in the implementation of the curriculum revision component. There were two principal sources of dissatisfaction: One was the seemingly unending efforts at revising the core curriculum guides; the other was the apparent neglect of attention to the principle of subject integration. The curriculum activities of the BPEDP were stopped and a new plan proposed--that of the construction of an integrated primary school curriculum.

The new curriculum has now been drafted along the traditional subject lines, but with an effort to organize lessons based on the principle of integration. There are sets of expected outcomes for every content area at the varying levels of the primary school course, and piloting is being carried out at the Infant level (5-8 years). The curriculum is to be required to be used at the infant and middle levels nationwide during the 1999-2000 school year, while the upper level curriculum is being piloted with the expectation that it will become the adopted curriculum before long.

In the meantime, those schools which have not been included in the piloting of the new curriculum continue to use the existing curriculum guides and other related teaching-learning materials. No disastrous results are expected from the continued use of the outgoing curriculum materials in the classroom, as the new curriculum has retained a good deal of the conventional curriculum content of the core areas, and the classroom situation remains much as it was during the conduct of the CSIE study. One researcher (Verbakel, 1997) visited 11 of the case study schools and in relation to the core curriculum guides observed that:

- * The curriculum guides were being used in four main ways: (a) to plan lessons, (b) to choose materials, (c) to structure lessons, and (d) to pick topics.
- * The curriculum guides were used less flexibly by untrained teachers than their trained colleagues.
- * There were some confusion about the way the curriculum guides fitted into the three terms of the school year;
- * Some teachers doubted that the curriculum guides met the needs of the children they were meant to serve because of three main problems: (a) the relevance of the topics, (b) the difficulty level of the topics, and (c) the scarcity of resource materials in the schools.

Clearly, the above-cited problems will not disappear with the production of new curriculum plans and units. One very important issue that must be addressed is whether a workable strategy is going to be developed to ensure the successful implementation of the new curriculum, a part of which is providing the needed support over the life of the curriculum development cycle now that the BPEDP has come to a close.

Assessment and Evaluation

The AEU of the MoE was set up as a component of the BPEDP to strengthen the educational system in aspects of assessing and evaluating student learning and achievement. The initial focus was on the objective of introducing diagnostic achievement tests at the primary school level. Subsequently, attention was turned to improving the BNSE and to establishing a (Belize) Junior Achievement Test (BJAT) for the Middle Level of the primary school. At the time of the CSIE study, the focus continued to be on the construction and administration of the BNSE and the BJAT and the reporting of the test results.

Three major problems have been identified in relation to the AEU. They are:

- * The need to improve the capacity of the AEU to carry out its functions;
- * The need to improve the tests in relation to their specification and validity;
- * The need for improved administration of the tests.

At the classroom level, the CSIE study paid attention to classroom assessment of learning and achievement. It was observed that teachers were expected to provide regularly set "paper and pencil" tests in the core content areas of the curriculum. These tests provided the individual grades for the pupils for use in the preparation of termly average grades

and for the yearly promotion decisions. However, teachers are not always adequately prepared in testing and measurement. Besides, every school had its own grading scheme and policy.

With regard to the BNSE, principals and teachers varied in their interpretation of the test results. The BNSE is a norm-referenced test and, consequently, there is no pass mark, only a ranking of the candidates according to percentiles.

Textbooks and Materials

Over many years, the policy adopted within the church-state system of primary education has been that parents are expected to purchase the basic textbooks which individual schools require the children to use. Equally longstanding has been the problem of getting all parents to provide their children with their schoolbooks. The BPEDP was to mount a textbook loan scheme to alleviate the problem of insufficiency of individual textbooks in the schools.

The findings of the CSIE are that in all the schools in the sample parents were required to buy their children's books. At the same time, most of the schools were participating in the textbook loan scheme, but not on a uniform basis. Nevertheless, all the principals and their staff reported an improvement in the pupil/book ratio from as low as 30% to about 75/80%. However, it is not satisfactory that between 20 to 30% of the children in these schools did not have the books they were required to have. The percentage of children not equipped with the required school materials, to a great extent, represents the sector of Belizean families in which the parents are poor and uneducated and who live under rather difficult circumstances.

School Facilities

One of the ongoing tasks that has to be confronted by the educational authorities and, more immediately, by the principals and staff of Belizean primary schools has been the annual increase of the number of school age children relative to school space. Despite continuing efforts to build schools there are still many overcrowded and dilapidated schools. Cognizant of this situation, the BPEDP was planned to include a School Facilities Improvement Programme (SFIP). At the close of the project in June of 1999, all the schools targeted for assistance (some 30 to 35 schools), either by having structures erected or by having existing structures expanded or repaired, had received the projected improvements. For the total number of the schools in the CSIE sample this amounted to 31%, which is a reflection of the impact of the BPEDP in this regard. Of course, the percentage would be much lower when the total number of schools in the school system is taken into account. With regard to the problems of school facilities, the CSIE brought to the fore several facets of the overall problem. They include:

1. the church-state arrangement for the provision of schools;
2. the tendency to plan mainly to cope with the immediate school population;
3. the lack of a well organized and financed maintenance programme for school building and repairs;
4. the very strong social demand for school places.

The changes produced by the SFIP relating to the improvement of school facilities have been modest. This is to be expected since the intention was not to solve the entire problem once and for all but to contribute to its solution and to demonstrate, to some extent, the strategies that may be needed to reduce the magnitude of the problem.

Planning and Management

Over the years attention has been drawn to the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system of Belize, especially in relation to planning and management within the educational system. A component of planning and management was, therefore, unavoidable in the BPEDP. This was very much in keeping with the Principles of Action proposed in the EFA *Framework for Action*:

Addressing the basic learning needs of all means: early childhood care and development opportunities; relevant, quality primary schooling or equivalent out-of-school education for

children; and literacy, basic knowledge and life skills training for youth and adults. It also means capitalizing on the use of traditional and modern information media and technologies to educate the public on matters of social concern and to support basic education activities. These complementary components of basic education need to be designed to ensure equitable access, sustained participation, and effective learning achievement. (WCEFA, 1990, pp. 53-54)

Clearly these are principles relative to educational planning and management.

Within the BPEDP, activities were undertaken to strengthen the management structure, improve the flow of communication, and increase the skilful use of delegation and authority through a process of decentralization. The CSIE focused on the relationship between school managers and principals, and between principals and their staff in the management of the schools. One of the main problems identified in the church-state educational system is that the church authorities are finding it difficult to meet their portions of the financing needs of their schools. Instances of this problem are reflected in the very poor physical condition of a number of church-managed schools, and the regular undertaking of school fund-raising in order to provide for the improvement of the physical facilities of the schools and the provision of needed supplies. Similarly, the GoB is becoming hard-pressed to find the resources for capital expenditure within the school system to accommodate the annual increase of school-aged children as well as sources for recurrent expenditure within the school system. The CSIE finding is that the traditional system of planning and management at the various levels did not change over the period within which the BPEDP was being implemented, except for the amalgamation of two clusters of schools and the attempt to decentralize the system through the institution of a District Education Management Team (DEMT) at each administrative centre of the country. However, the mounting of a one-year course for school principals was certainly a good move towards improving the managerial skills of the senior officials of the schools.

Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond

The foregoing very sketchy analysis of the findings that emanated from the CSIE leads to the conclusion that the achievements of the BPEDP over its life cycle were modest but that the effort was clearly related to the targeted goals of EFA. As the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* explicitly states: “The *ultimate goal* affirmed by the *World Declaration on Education for All* is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults” (WCEFA, 1990, p. 52). However, it is acknowledged that this long-term goal will be attained through an endeavour to work towards the attainment of intermediate goals. The BPEDP’s sights were set on the attainment of certain intermediate goals.

Furthermore, it was recognized that the impact of the project would not be suddenly felt during the eight years of the life of the project, and it was during the latter part of this particular project cycle that the CSIE was conducted. Consequently, it could not be expected that there would be dramatic developments in the schools on a whole, even where there were repairs, extensions, and even new structures put in place. Besides, as has already been indicated, the intention was not to solve the serious problem of shortage of school places but to make a relatively small contribution to its amelioration. Perhaps, more importantly, through SFIP, what could be done given the will and the cooperation of the partners in education, for example, through the amalgamation of schools which are very close neighbours.

The change in the structure of the teacher training programme at the BTTC has resulted in many more teachers completing at least the Level 1 teacher qualification, thereby improving the capacity of the teachers serving in Belizean primary schools. This is certainly related to the EFA goal of improvement in learning achievement. Similarly, the endeavour to introduce a comprehensive national primary school curriculum, national achievement tests, and a much better ratio of textbooks to pupils are all related to the improvement of learning achievement, although there are still problems to be solved and issues to be resolved in the effort to achieve the objectives set in these areas of primary education in Belize.

Under the BPEDP, much consideration was given to improving the management capacity of the MoE and, through this level of improvement, to impact the management of the entire system of education. Again, the achievements and changes have been modest. However, the single most important impact has been the increased awareness that there needs to be greater efficiency and productivity within the MoE, thereby providing for greater access to education and to an enhancement of the quality of education in our schools.

At the time of writing, an Education Sector Strategy (ESS) is being formulated which will set out intermediate and longer-term goals. Among others, 20-year goals are being set to be accomplished by 2020:

- * Provide universal access to primary education.
- * Increase gross enrolment rate of 13–16 year olds in post-primary education from 34% to a much higher percentage.
- * Expand access to technical-vocational education.
- * Remove inequalities of educational provision at all levels.

These are laudable goals, but they are goals which require appropriate policies and the will to see them through.

Policy Implications of Findings

In order to consider the issues of policy raised by the findings regarding the nature and quality of teaching and learning, it is important to bear in mind that teaching and, more importantly, learning are the essential reasons for existence of schools; that learning implies the acquiring of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and that teaching has to do with interventions made by teachers to promote learning. Ideally, teaching needs to be individualized but, generally, in the primary schools of Belize a teacher has to manage a group or several groups of learners in a classroom setting.

Where such groups exceed a certain pupil-teacher ratio, problems arise and strategies of coping must be devised. Several factors contribute to effective teaching which, by extension, result in meaningful learning on the part of the pupils. They include: (a) the children themselves, who are usually heterogeneous in terms of maturity, intellectual

capacity, and socio-economic backgrounds; (b) the teaching skills and interest of the teacher; (c) time management; (d) space and other physical facilities; (e) the curriculum; (f) learning materials; and (g) the general support provided for the teacher by the school and the wider community. The findings of CSIE indicate that these factors have not been contributing strongly to the quality of teaching in the schools included in the sample under discussion. The following is a summary of the findings:

1. School enrolments have been increasing resulting in crowding in practically all the schools. Some schools are quite dilapidated.
2. Only one school (an amalgamated institution) has been built with funding from the BPEDP and another has had an upper floor constructed; through the efforts of school principals, the communities, and Government various agencies have contributed to the provision of school facilities.
3. Of the total number of teachers, including principals, in the case study schools, some 33% were trained under the previous programme (2+1) of the BTTC, and 15% have been trained under the new staggered programme, leaving some 42 untrained teachers (among whom are three university graduates--two trained in education).
4. Despite the staffing of the schools with nearly 50% of trained teachers, the traditional approach of whole class teaching within an authoritarian situation is still prevalent.
5. Schools are not well supplied with learning materials and books, and what is available is garnered through the efforts of the school with the help of the community and other donors.
6. The BPEDP has been instrumental in mounting a textbook loan scheme with a specific plan, but not all schools have participated in the scheme, and those that do utilize the books in various ways.
7. The schools have been supplied with curriculum guides but there has hardly been any curriculum development in the sense understood in the curriculum field. Teachers select portions from the guides they prefer and use textbooks without much reference to the guides.
8. The AEU has been set up to perform a service of quality control but it is still undergoing "teething" problems. Efforts are largely directed at the improvement of the BNSE as it is, and there has been a delay in reporting the results of the BNSE to the schools.
9. Some other structures have been put in place to provide support to the management of the educational system and, as in (8), they are in the process of evolution. These include the Education Development Center (EDC), the District Education Centers (DECs), the Planning Unit of the MoE, and the DEMA; at present a new structure is being contemplated--the National Educational Institute for Educational Development.

Priorities for educational development and quality primary education in Belize

The CSIE research to contribute to the evaluation of the impact of the BPEDP on the primary schools of Belize has identified a number of priorities for consideration, which certainly have implications for the endeavour to attain the goals and objectives of EFA, not only in Belize but also in the wider Caribbean, particularly the Commonwealth Caribbean, the territories of which share a similar history of colonialism as well as similar educational problems and issues. In all countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean, resources for education are in very scarce supply relative to the social demand for adequate school places. Related to this basic situation are widespread inefficiencies in the school systems, and unequal opportunity of access and of provision of satisfactory environments which are conducive to learning.

Given the unsatisfactory educational environments, those involved in the educational enterprise are hard-pressed to attain the EFA goals with a high degree of success. However, these goals are not unreachable. They require the pursuit of those basic principles of action, the establishment of appropriate policy goals, and the use of the right kind of managerial and planning skills. They will also require all school authorities to collaborate with the MoE in plans for construction and extension of school facilities, to ensure that such developments pay attention to certain criteria intended to provide adequate facilities. The Planning Unit is the agency to undertake these activities.

The national level

The BPEDP has initiated the movement towards the institution of the policy framework. Nevertheless, steps must be taken to ensure the continued pursuit of the policy goals even after the BPEDP completes its cycle. Some structures have been established, but they must be strengthened and made to work effectively to the benefit of the school system. These include the EDC, the BTTC, the DEC's and the improved management system of the MoE, which includes the Planning Unit. However, as one case study report referred to proposes "that to overcome the inertia first of all the management and the Ministry of Education would have to become dissatisfied with the present situation and seriously seek opportunities to change dissatisfaction to satisfaction." (Elrington, 1997)

The district level

The major issue at this level relates to the supervision of schools. The weaknesses of the supervisory system have been cited repeatedly over the years. It was to make some inputs into its improvement that three DEC's were constructed and Assistant Education Officers appointed. What has taken place in the districts where these inputs have been made need to be provided in the remaining districts. Whatever else happens, however, there is a dire need for better supervision of the schools. Supervision at the district level must be directed towards giving moral and material support to principals and teachers, and to ensuring that the four systems proposed in the case study of Calvary Temple School are developing within a context of class interrelationship.

School level

One of the assumptions frequently made is that teachers who are trained know how to teach and should be able to demonstrate their knowledge in actual practice. This is not necessarily so. Skill and general expertise in teaching come with appropriate practice and experience and, ultimately, with acquiring certain habits. If bad habits are learnt and not rooted out soon enough the teacher fails to advance in his or her teaching profession. Consequently, much support needs to be provided to newly trained teachers and staff development needs to be ongoing. This should clearly focus on teaching strategies and curriculum. All the educational leaders in charge of teacher education, curriculum construction and development, and teacher supervision must become fully aware that teaching and learning in the formal educational system take place in a school culture and in the context of cultivated habits. Long-standing teachers and principals have already become established in the culture and have cultivated certain professional habits. New teachers tend to learn their job within this context. Culture and habits shape practice. Consequently, there must be change in the context if teaching and learning are to improve, and it would seem sensible to direct attention to the practicing teachers as much as to those who undergo formal training. The following are a few suggestions which reflect the findings incorporated in the case study reports:

- * The efforts which have been made through the BPEDP to strengthen the infrastructure of the schools must continue as teacher development programmes would be futile unless the basic infrastructural conditions are met.
- * The educational authorities must endeavour to ensure that classrooms are not overcrowded. This will involve ensuring that classroom space is sufficient and that the pupil/teacher ratio does not exceed 30/1, for unless the numbers are kept down teachers will not change their teaching approaches for the better.

- * Teachers and principals must be given opportunities to really experience positively different approaches to teaching and learning, and leading.
- * Such opportunities may be created through the organization of school clusters and networks which allow teachers and principals to work together to affect school change.
- * The BTTC as well as District Education Officers (DEOs) could provide what has been called the “third eye,” playing the role of the “critical friend” helping to design and lead programmes of professional development.
- * Provide national and local support which encourages change and which assures teachers and principals that they are not alone and isolated.

The CSIE research to evaluate the impact of the BPEDP on the primary schools of Belize through the implementation of its six components, and to study the nature and quality of teaching and learning in these schools has identified a number of priorities for consideration in the evaluation of the BPEDP at the school level and for ongoing attention beyond the BPEDP. They are as follows:

1. *Improvement of quality.* Improvement of the quality of education in the schools calls for the setting up of an interrelated programme of the four general systems of teaching strategies, curricula, organization, and facilities which promotes the improvement of the quality of education in the schools. This suggests effective planning to ensure that there is a proper relationship among all four systems. This broad framework of planning and organization would take into consideration the remaining priorities, which stand out in the CSIE reports.

2. *School facilities.* The provision of the kinds of school facilities which promote healthy and educationally effective interactions between teachers and pupils is given high priority. The two main ingredients in this provision are space which is not characterized by crowding and furniture which is appropriate for a variety of learning situations. There is also the need for adequate lighting, ventilation, clean water supply, and proper, well-functioning toilet facilities. The BPEDP’s objective was not to completely solve the problem of school facilities. Other agencies are participating, including parents and community members. What is needed is a national school facilities policy, which requires the MoE to identify schools which are in need in this regard and to target them for assistance.

3. *Competent teachers are important.* Teachers are still considered as vital agents in the process of school interaction intended to have appropriate educational outcomes. There is no doubt that the quality of teacher education in Belize needs to be given close attention. The vast majority of trained teachers in our schools today have been trained at the BTTC through a consecutive two-year course followed by an academic year of internship. At present, there is an ongoing experiment with a staggered two-year programme. The first level of this intra-mural programme has been put on hold and is being substituted by a distance training programme, which takes some three years to complete. This teacher component of the priorities being cited calls for a careful examination of this programme to ensure that the BTTC is adequately staffed for it to deliver its intra-mural and extra-mural programmes efficiently and effectively. Specific proposals contained in the reports include:

- (a) The continuation of the Principals’ Training Programme since school principals are, by definition, the leaders in the educational enterprise at their schools.
- (b) The freeing up of principals, as far as is possible, to enable them to carry on their responsibilities without being overburdened.
- (c) The monitoring of trained teachers over a five-year period following their certification to ensure that they continue to apply and develop their teaching skills.

(d) Refresher courses for those teachers who were trained some time ago. This implies ongoing staff development some of which can be undertaken by principals.

4. *Supervision.* This aspect of the educational enterprise has had a problem relating to regularity and effectiveness over many years. This is, to a large extent, because DEOs have never had the kind of support structure and the supervision of their own work for them to be encouraged to carry on their work with the needed motivation. DEC's have been constructed as multi-purpose structures in three districts. The remaining districts need to be similarly supported. The ongoing evaluation of the educational enterprise at the primary schools urgently demands attention to school supervision.

5. *Curriculum development.* The main finding of the CSIE research with regard to this component is that all the schools have the curriculum guides which have been issued, but that the guides are not all of the same year of issue, implying that they are revised guides of different dates. Consequently, they may not have the same content nationally. Besides, none have reached the stage of national adoption. Furthermore, the research has led to the conclusion that curriculum development efforts up to 1995 have not had the kind of impact expected of such endeavours. This criticism has led to a completely new curriculum construction programme at the primary school level. It is projected that this programme will result in the implementation of a quality and relevant primary school curriculum.

6. *Textbooks.* One point of view sometimes put forward by educational theorists is that improper use of textbooks can detract from the promotion of active learning on the part of the pupils. However, textbooks are very important in a situation where teachers are untrained or only modestly trained. Ironically, it is these same categories of teachers who may use textbooks wrongly. All in all, however, the premise laid down in the BPEDP is that individual children need textbooks to ensure their academic success. To this end, a textbook loan scheme has been mounted. It is now in its closing period and consideration has to be given to its improvement and continuation beyond the BPEDP.

7. *Testing and measurement.* At the school level, all the staff dutifully prepare regular tests and set final examinations termly and annually. They use these means of assessment to measure pupil progress and for promotion. They also use them to prepare the pupils for the BNSE and BJAT. With regard to internal testing, there needs to be staff development in this area and the time seems appropriate to establish a national grading system. The AEU is undergoing growth and development which needs to be nurtured.

8. *Suggestions have been made for the training of managers.* This need has been recognized for some time and at least two workshops have been held on administration in recent years, which selected managers have attended. The aim for all managers to attend some course especially designed for them is mentioned in at least one case study. At present, the general managers of the larger church management bodies often participate in workshops, particularly the Roman Catholic general manager. A school manager's manual should be the aim of any such programme mounted.

9. *Parents.* Parents and the village and parochial communities have been invaluable contributors to primary school education, and the pattern of enabling them to make inputs into the aspects of development in education cited in this study should definitely continue. Specifically, PTAs should be more than fund-raising entities although fund-raising is very important where schools everywhere are under-financed by management bodies.

Conclusion

The CSIE research illustrates quite well the potential for educational research which is locally directed. The researchers who volunteered to carry out the research were all professional educators attached to the BTTC, the EDC, or serving as DEOs. One was the principal of a high school in a large and growing village. These were well-trained persons, all holding senior positions. What they needed to become involved was a call to serve. However, two problems stood out prominently. Initially, there was no funding allocated to the research project and, at the same time, all the researchers were already carrying heavy workloads. The project was finally completed, and with a good deal of success, because of the inputs of funding from the ODA as a part of its contribution to BPEDP, to engage an external consultant from Bristol University as well as local consultants to assist in bringing the CSIE to a successful completion. These problems are likely to prevail but the potential, nevertheless, exists for other similar pieces of research to that of the CSIE.

Students at the BTTC are being trained in research methods and are required to produce pieces of research reports as part of their certification. The students of the Principals' Training Programme must also undertake pieces of research. The training and practice acquired by such students prepare them for a variety of school research. Education Officers who work in the field should be provided with an opportunity to carry out research and evaluation at the school they serve, providing they are facilitated in these undertakings. The potential is here. It just needs to be actualized.

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