

BELIZE

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**Belize:
A National Report on
the Development of Education,
1994 - 1996**

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SECTION 1: REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN BELIZE (1994 - 1996)

1. Economic, social and political contexts and their effects on the education system

Belize's economy is based primarily on agricultural exports (mainly sugar, citrus, banana and fish), tourism, light manufacturing and subsistence agriculture. Belize ability to diversify it's economic base, will in part depend on a population and labor force which is more highly skilled in technology, business and crafts to more aggressively exploit its natural resources, especially in eco-tourism, fisheries and agriculture. The development of a more highly skilled labor force will require a significant increase in participation in primary education to develop life skills, functional literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate. These is still a significant problem of non-participation and attrition at the primary level--especially in rural areas where culture and lack of ready access to schools mitigate against participation in the educational process and in urban situations where poverty and unstable home situations often compel attrition. At the same time, there is need for a correspondingly greater increase in access to secondary level education--including technical vocational education--as the basis for further education or for employment and life-long learning. There is currently approximately 50% coverage of the age cohort in secondary level education. The objective, however, is not simply an increase in access to secondary education as it now exists but increase availability to appropriate technical and vocational education to support the process of economic diversification. Finally, there is a dearth of availability of appropriate, higher-level professional training, including training in entrepreneurship, culture and technology to support an expansion and a diversification of the current economic base.

Belize also faces the problems of a new multi-culturalism which not only poses its special linguistic problems for the educational process but its requirements for racial and cultural harmony and respect.

2. Educational policies and reform

The broad objective of education is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitude required for their personal development and for their full and active participation in society and development of the country. This objective is elaborated by the articulation of some ten goals incorporating what is considered valuable in terms of knowing, doing, being and relating. Decisions about the process and delivery of education are informed and guided by principles recognizing the rights of the individual to education regardless of gender, religion, language, ethnicity; principles recognizing the uniqueness of the individual and the need for the complete development of each person as an individual; and principles protecting the individual by ensuring that the content and process of education are morally acceptable. The objective and goals of education are articulated in Ministry of Education documents defining the foundations and policies of education in Belize. The principles are embedded in the Education Act and rules made thereunder, principally the Education Rules soon to be promulgated.

Educational policies and reform focus on the primary and secondary levels of education. These policies seek improvement in three areas: access, quality and management. In the case of primary education, the issue of access is one of reducing attrition for which policies are currently being formulated under the Primary education development (PED) Project. In the case of secondary education, an increase in access is being considered in terms of an expansion in the number of spaces, in terms of accessibility and in terms of more efficient use of existing spaces. The Government has announced a policy of free secondary education but the effects of this policy is limited by limitations in access to schools.

The issue of quality in primary education is the main agenda item under the PED Project, with strategies for curriculum reform, pre-service and in-service teacher training, improvement in the assessment and reporting of student achievement, the increased availability of textbooks and other materials and greater focus on the total needs of the child. A similar project is currently being planned for secondary education with a greater insistence on accountability by articulation of standards for certification, accountability to students by insistence on better pedagogy and more relevance and congruence between schooling and development.

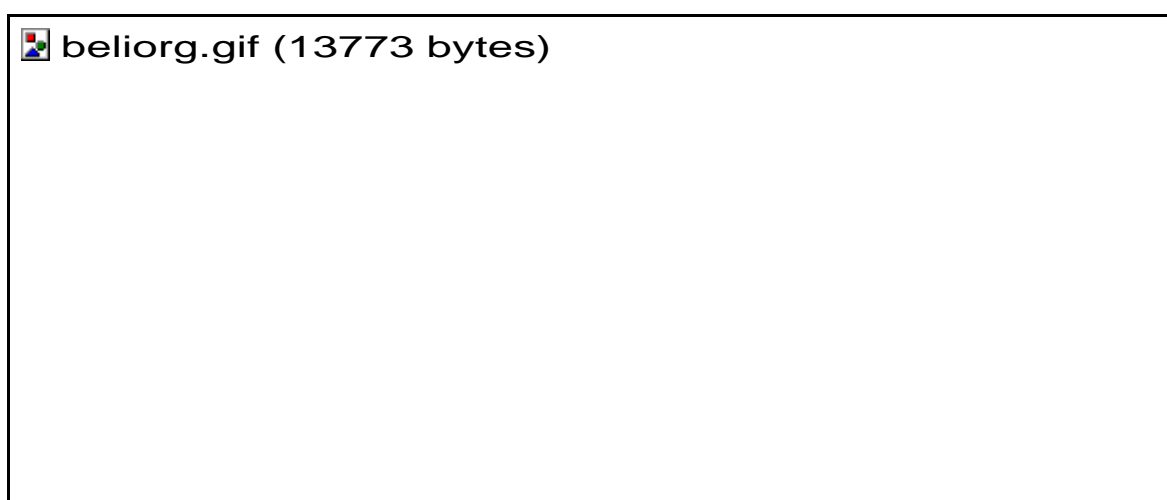
Less palatable within the education community, however, are policies for improved management and efficiency in the delivery of educational services. Policies on management seek to decentralize the management of education system by the creation of District Education Councils and to democratize the management of schools by the establishment of school boards. Policies on efficiency apply to cost-effectiveness factors including student teacher ratio and teacher workload; curriculum factors including course relevance and affordability; and academic factors including reduction of student attrition due to in-school factors, observance of requirements for number of class hours per day and school days per year.

3. Structure of the Education System in Belize

The formal system of education is divided into four major levels, namely, pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary. Pre-primary education is community

supported and is not compulsory but is becoming more commonplace as its benefits are recognized by parents. Primary education is compulsory for all persons between the ages of five and fourteen. It consists of eight levels (grades) and its completion is marked by a nationally administered examination to determine entry to secondary school based on percentile rank. Most primary schools are church related schools but receive public funding under the church-state system of management. Primary schools follow a Ministry prescribed curriculum in preparing students for the BNSE. Secondary education includes four year schools for general education (in most cases including an element of vocational-technical education) and vocational or trade schools offering short-term courses in basic trades--the more prominent of which are the "centres for employment training." Post secondary institutions include sixth forms which offer two years of post-secondary schooling; institutions for professional preparation in fields including agriculture, nursing and teaching; and university training. Chart 1 presents a diagram of this system.

Chart 1: The System of Education in Belize



The length of the school year for pre-primary, primary and secondary education is approximately 175 school days with a minimum of four, five and five and a half hours of classes per day, respectively. The school year usually begins in September with breaks at Christmas and Easter and goes to the end of June for summer holidays of 9 - 10 weeks. Primary schools usually divide the year into three terms--the end of each corresponding to the Christmas, Easter and summer vacation periods. Secondary schools divide the year into three terms or into two semesters and post-secondary institutions usually divide the year into two semesters, the University College of Belize maintaining a summer program equivalent to a third semester.

4. Administration of the education system

The Ministry of Education, under the general direction of the Minister, works in partnership, consultation and cooperation with the churches, communities, voluntary organizations, private organizations and such other organizations and bodies which the Ministry may identify and recognize as education partners for the sufficient and efficient provision of education in Belize. In discharging its functions the Ministry of Education establishes and sets national education goals and policies; provides support

systems for the effective delivery of appropriate and equitable educational services at all levels of the education system; and monitors the quality and effectiveness of education at the pre-school, primary, secondary and post-secondary levels of the education system.

The National Council of Education embodying the partnership between the state and its partners in education, such as churches, communities, voluntary organizations and other partners in education is also established by law with the specific purpose of advising the Minister of Education on all matters relating to education.

Additionally, District Education Councils are established to assist the Ministry in planning, managing and monitoring the delivery of educational services in each of the six districts of Belize. The management of individual schools is the responsibility of managing authorities. Managers, managing authorities or boards are responsible for the proper and efficient organization and management of schools or institutions and for the adequate provision, with assistance and in partnership with the Government under the conditions for Grant-in-aid as specified in the Education Act or rules made thereunder, of such support systems required to deliver appropriate education to students enrolled in schools under their management.

5. The financing of education

In 1994-95, education was the largest budget sector accounting for 28% of the total recurrent expenditure and 20% of the total recurrent and capital expenditure. Government expenditure on education in 1994-95 was 6% of the GDP.

The breakdown of allocation of expenditure at the various levels of the system for the same year (1994-95) was 1% to pre-school education, 55% to primary education, 24% to secondary education, 14% to post-secondary education and 6% to educational administration and development, including teacher training for primary schools.

Almost all educational institutions in Belize are affiliated with a church these are public institutions under the church state system of education. The major exception is pre-primary education in which most institutions are community or private institutions. There is very little information on expenditure on private education at any level but it is estimated to be less than 1% of the public expenditure.

On the other hand, the statement above refers specifically to expenditure by institutions in the formal education system which are considered as private--that is, those schools which do not receive grant in aid from the government of Belize. The figure, however, does not include expenditures by denominational, grant-aided (public) schools financed from sources other than Government such as parents and community donations. Major capital expenditures by denominational schools are often financed from private donations, fund raising and "head offices." In addition to these all grant-aided secondary schools levy additional "special" fees directly from parents. It is estimated that schools will raise an additional 15 - 20% revenue beyond that which is paid by government as salary grants and student tuition fees.

For public higher education institutions falling within the portfolio of the Ministry of Education, the proportion of financing from government is approximately 70%, with

the remaining 30% derived from fees and other sources. In the case of other government institutions such as the College of Agriculture and the School of Nursing, government provides 100% of expenditure.

Significant expenditure is also incurred by government for students studying abroad. Students are assisted through partial or complete scholarships, covering costs for tuition and maintenance expenses. The major expenditure is in connection with students studying at the University of the West Indies, to which Belize is a contributing country.

6. The educational process

At the pre-primary education socialization and the development of basic writing, counting and alphabetization skills are emphasized. The primary school curriculum is directed at four core subjects, namely, English language and language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. These receive the greatest emphasis and are considered compulsory. Religious doctrine and/or bible studies is a common feature in denominational schools. Life skills, arts and craft and physical education are also common elements and the emphasis on any one will depend on staff interest. At the secondary level, the curriculum for the first two years of general education is generally made up of English, Spanish, science, mathematics, social studies, religion and literature. During the last two years, students are streamed and the subjects studied will depend on the stream. These are usually three streams, namely, business studies, secretarial studies and academic studies. The latter consists of studies in the sciences, mathematics and the arts. Schools will usually allow a mixture of all three with emphasis in one.

English is the language of instruction at all levels. In some cases where there is a homogeneous class, as in the case of isolated Mayan villages, the mother tongue is partially used as the language of instruction in the early years. The proposed language policy for education seeks oral and written competence in English and Spanish and literacy in one of the mother tongues. This is not yet finalized, however.

Students are formally assessed and evaluated at the end of every term/semester and at the end of each year of schooling to determine promotion. At the end of primary education, students take what is known as the Belize National Selection Examination made up of tests in English usage and composition, mathematics, science and social studies. Based on performance on these tests, the student is issued a percentile rank which forms the basis for entry into secondary schools on a competition for available space basis. The student is also issued a certificate presenting a letter grade (A to D) for each of the four subjects listed using a norm-referenced method of grading. At the secondary education, students are issued a diploma by the institution attesting to the successful completion of "prescribed course of study" based on its own internal assessment and standards. Most students also take examinations set by the Caribbean Examinations Council which often form the basis for employment and further studies. There is no connection between award of the diploma by the institution and performance on the external examination and there is no national standard and assessment of performance at the secondary level similar to the BNSE at the primary level. Sixth Forms and other post-secondary institutions operate similar to secondary

schools in issuing diplomas certifying successful completion of the prescribed course of study.

Figures for attrition vary but the generally accepted national average for attrition between entry and completion of primary school is 25% and between entry and completion of secondary education is the same or slightly greater. At the primary level, attrition increases during the latter half of schooling. At the secondary level, the major attrition occurs early-- usually after the first or second year. There is also a high repetition rate. At the primary level, the average is 10% over the eight grades; at the secondary level, the average is 8% over the four grades.

Student-teacher ratio is 26:1 in the primary schools and 15:1 in secondary schools. At the upper grades of secondary school, however, the ratio is 10:1 because of a proliferation of vocational, science and general interest courses and a reduced student body due to attrition and repetition at the lower levels.

7. Special education

Special education is provided at a central school for persons who are severely challenged physically and in terms of learning ability. The approach to special education has changed from seclusion, to mainstreaming, to inclusion. Support is provided to parents with special needs children at district centers.

8. Private education

The new policies of education set all requirements for the establishment and operation of private educational institutions the same as for the establishment and operation of a public school. The reporting requirement in the case of private schools is significantly less than in the case of grant-aided school.

The curriculum of schools at the primary level is set centrally by the Ministry of Education and the curriculum at the secondary level is prescribed through subscription to the external examination councils.

9. Higher education

The number of students carrying out their studies abroad is estimated to be about 200 at Latin American institutions, including universities in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba; 80 at the three campuses of the University of the West Indies, 100 in North American universities (counting only those going to North America as students and excluding Belizeans living in the United States and Canada); 10 in the United Kingdom and about 10 in institutions in Europe and Asia. Most students are studying at undergraduate level with an increasing number undertaking graduate studies or advanced professional studies in medicine, engineering, environmental science, agriculture, etc.

Belize's single university, the University College of Belize (UCB) is autonomous, established by and functioning according to its Act under governance of its Council. Most other post secondary institutions are community or denominational institutions and are managed by their respective boards of management. The contact with the

Ministry of Education usually comes at the time of budget preparation when a salary grant to the institution is determined. Government institutions are autonomous in determining programs of study and standards. They are not autonomous, however, in the appointment of staff.

Student performance is evaluated using written examinations and an assessment of course work done over the period of the semester. Students are assigned a letter grade which is converted to a numerical equivalent for the purpose of calculating averages. There is no method of evaluating the performance of the establishments, however, other than informal comparisons on the performance of students on external examinations. Not all students from all institutions take these exams so there is no comprehensive basis of comparison.

There is little or no attempt to match the number of graduates in different fields of training with the needs of the employment market. Student enrollment is generally a matter of what has been traditionally offered. There is a preponderance of students enrolled in business administration programs which forms a general education for employment in many fields. This is the single most cause and area of graduate unemployment.

Significant work has been done by the University College of Belize towards recognition of degrees in North American, Latin American and Caribbean institutions. The recognition of teacher education diplomas is facilitated through link with the University of the West Indies and nurses diplomas is recognized regionally in the Caribbean since qualifying examinations are set by the regional association of nurses. Sixth Form diplomas are recognized for credit in American institutions. The amount of credit awarded varies with the institutions in question.

10. Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

Textbooks and other required materials for primary schools are available for purchase at the various bookstores. In order to reduce the cost of books to parents, the Ministry of Education maintains a bookstore which sells books and other materials to schools at a reduced rate. Textbooks and other required materials for secondary schools and sixth forms are available for purchase at the various schools and at bookstores. The problem with textbooks is therefore not their availability but rather their affordability. The cost of textbooks and other materials such as workbooks is prohibitive. The purchase of books present one of the greatest obstacles to economically challenged parents. The Primary Education Development Project maintains a Textbook Loan Scheme in which basic books are provided to schools for distribution to students who can't afford to purchase books. The school is responsible for identifying those students who receive books under the scheme and for distributing and maintaining the books. The Ministry of Education provides financial assistance for the purchase of books to approximately 10% of the secondary school population.

Books and other educational material are imported. The BRC Press publishes mathematics and English textbooks and workbooks for use in the primary schools. These materials are generally of lower cost. The jury is still out whether they are of the same educational quality as other materials. They are mostly used in rural Catholic schools and do present an alternative source which is much more affordable. Books

and educational materials for secondary schools and post secondary institutions are imported since these are common to the Caribbean countries subscribing to the CXC examinations.

There is also a shortage compared to needs of audio-visual equipment and other teaching/learning resource equipment and materials including science laboratory equipment and materials, vo-tech workshop equipment and materials, computers and business equipment such as typewriters, photocopiers and other duplicating equipment.

The Ministry of Education provides transportation for students attending primary school beyond a given radius from home. This tends to be the case in rural south of the country inhabited by the Maya Indians. For the most part, there is a school within walking distance of most established permanent villages but the Maya Indian culture often prompts the relocation of settlements in new isolated areas. While there is room for improvement in the transportation provided, it is generally adequate. Transportation is also provided for secondary students in the south of the country. In most cases, however, students attending secondary schools will board in the municipality in which the school is located. Residential accommodation is not a problem since this is often done on a family basis.

Schools do not have proper, if any, facilities for school cafeterias. Food is usually sold using permanent or mobile "stands". There are also no student centres. Student tend to remain in a prescribed classroom except for breaks.

11. Non-formal education

Literacy and non-formal programs are normally organized by voluntary and private organizations. Some of these voluntary organizations are primarily associated with other Ministries of government, such as the Ministry of Human Resources which includes the portfolio of youth and women's affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs which has responsibility for refugees. Some secondary schools also successfully offer "evening division" programs as alternative secondary education. There are also several organizations, such as the Belize Institute of Management which offer professional, management and business training. Continuing education to build upon success is becoming an important ally of and complement to the formal education process--allowing the formal education system to focus on education away from specific training which is often best given while on the job.

12. The situation of teaching staff

See responses to inquiry on the theme "Enhancing the Role of the Teacher in a Changing World" which is appended to this report.

13. Pre-service and in-service training of educational staff

See responses to inquiry on the theme "Enhancing the Role of the Teacher in a Changing World" which is appended to this report.

14. Educational research

Very little high quality educational research is done on a sustained basis. There are sporadic research efforts, usually associated with a student fulfilling thesis or course requirements. The focus of study in the case of such research is usually the classroom or problems in the delivery of education. There are also specific studies conducted under development projects such as the Primary education development Project. In these cases, the focus of study relates to the objective of the project and therefore includes a wide range of issues.

15. Bilateral, regional and international co-operation

Belize benefits from several bilateral agreements and regional and international programs for human resources and capacity development. Until very recently, human resources development initiatives funded under USAID assistance programs from 1983 - 1996 provided the single most ready source of training opportunities. Two charts showing the distribution of such training are given below. Belize also has bilateral agreements with countries of the region, including Mexico under what is known as the "Agreement for Educational and Cultural Cooperation" and the "Scientific and technical Cooperation Agreement". Most of these agreements include human resource and capacity development elements.

In addition to these Belize participates in several regional and international cooperation programs for human resources development. Many of these derive from membership in the Commonwealth and in the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) and from relationship with agencies such as the Caribbean Development Bank and the various United Nations agencies, for example, UNESCO, UNICEF and the UNDP.

Table 1: Number of Training Initiatives by Level of Training and Sex

<u>Level</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ph.D.	2	0	0
Master	16	9	25
Bachelor	262	171	433
Short-term	695	382	1077
Totals	975	562	1537

Table 2: Distribution by Field of Study by Sex

<u>Field</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Agriculture	220	25
Arts & Science	235	148
Business/Mngt	155	107
Education	227	146
Environment	25	7
Forestry	8	1
Health	39	82
Population	9	1
Other	57	45

Source: USAID publication

SECTION 2: INQUIRY ON THE THEME OF "ENHANCING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN A CHANGING WORLD"

1. Problems and developments in education, especially basic education

Since late 1991, the Ministry of Education has focussed its attention on improving the quality of primary education through what is known as the Primary Education Development (PED) Project. Primary education begins at age five and spans a period of eight years or grades leading to secondary education at age fourteen. The PED Project is addressing what have been considered to be the main problems in the delivery of quality primary education in Belize. These are:

- a curriculum which did not strategically link with clearly defined goals of primary education, which to a large measure was out of synchronization with the present and future requirements of basic education--mainly constructed around factual knowledge of subject-matter content and with little social relevance;
- an inadequate supply of textbooks, teaching equipment and resource materials and poor physical conditions; an inadequate system for assessing student achievement and reporting to schools areas of weaknesses and other problems;
- a teaching force which was largely unqualified and untrained; severe overcrowding in some cases and multigrade situations; poor management and supervision of the education system and of schools; and
- an insufficient focus on the participation of challenged students.

In addressing these problems, some of the major problems encountered have been:

- the lack of a management system with the capacity to monitor system performance, to adequately identify and diagnose problems, to plan interventions and to provide the overall leadership and directions for development;
- the lack of clearly articulated policies and procedures for operations and insufficient accountability;
- the lack of a sufficient awareness and commitment to the importance of education in some segments of the population; and
- a system which is too highly centralized--with insufficient school autonomy and local authority over the operation of the schools--and insufficient involvement of parents and the community in the conduct of schooling.

Perhaps the most serious problem now confronting education in Belize is a high level of repetition (about 10%) at the primary level and a limited access to secondary education. A study has recently been completed identifying country-wide the different in-school and out-of-school factors contributing to attrition in the primary schools--many of which are social, economic and cultural problems. Recommendations for policies and further actions to improve retention and successful completion of primary education are currently being formulated. A project is now under preparation to address the problem of access and quality at the secondary level which will include focus on the needs of that element of the school population traditionally not gaining access to academic secondary education.

Efforts and plans to address the above problems have been welcomed--especially those which seek to put greater control over the content and process of education in the hands of local authorities and the communities and to improve access to and participation in the education process.

2. National policies for the improvement of the level and standing of primary school teachers

The salary and status of secondary school teachers have traditionally far exceeded those of primary teachers. Secondary teachers have always been given professional status--although professional has been on the basis of area of specialization as opposed to "professional teachers". For the most part the terms and conditions of service of primary school teachers are legislated under the Primary Education Rules, 1972 . The Education Act 1991 is at present being revised to allow for the introduction of updated education rules. The education rules are being revised through a process of consultation with representation from teachers, principals, managements, and the community and will legislate the management and operation of schools at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education, including the terms and conditions of service of teachers at these levels.

The terms and conditions of service of teachers are the same as and in some parts better than the terms and conditions of service of public officers. The salaries of teachers were increased through a series of pay raises over the past fifteen years or so to the point where teachers are now paid on the same scale as public officers. While the revised rules will seek to maintain or improve these conditions of service, there will also be greater emphasis on "professionalism" in the teaching force, including the need for licensing reflecting requirements for professional training and personal qualities necessary to protect the rights and well-being of children in the schools. It is arguable that improvement in the professional quality of teachers will not only result in improved education but also improved standing of teachers.

To support the requirements for professional training a program has been implemented by the University College of Belize offered on an in-service and pre-service basis. This program will reduce the prevalence of secondary school teachers without any formal training in pedagogy and will foster an attitude of professionalism among teachers at this level.

To support the requirements for professional training among primary teachers, a program of extra-mural training has been implemented to provide on-site training for teachers at the basic level required for certification. To date, persons have been recruited as teachers with little or no regard for the requirements for professional training and development. The percentage of teachers who have received professional training has remained low. To some extent this has been because of the absence of any legislation connecting employment as a teacher and professional training and development as a teacher. At the same time training offered on an in-service basis, has also involved the hardships of relocation during training. The result is the existence of a significant percentage of untrained teachers--some of whom are inappropriately employed.

A program for the training of primary school principals has also been implemented in anticipation of a more decentralized form of school management with the principal assuming an enhanced leadership role and greater school autonomy in determining teaching strategies and learning experiences in a curriculum with greater social relevance. Although not directly intended to, this will also give the teacher greater links with and community responsibilities.

3. Characteristics of the Teaching Force

Pre-school education is in an early state of evolution. There are 90 pre-school centers, 7 maintained fully by the Ministry of Education and 83 community and private pre-school centers. The pre-school centers are generally small with enrolment ranging from 103 to 1662 with the large majority of teachers (usually female) being untrained i.e. have not been certified following the completion of a formal institutional program of teacher training.

Primary school education has been well regarded as the foundation of educational advances on all other fronts and consequently has been the subject of several externally funded educational projects during the last sixty years, the present on-going one being the Belize Primary Education Development Project. Nevertheless, there is still an insufficiency of trained teachers (those certified after completing a formal program of teacher training). At present there is an enrolment of 51,377 pupils in some 244 primary and infant school staffed by 398 uncertified teachers 373 certificated teachers and 1205 trained teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio is 26.0 and 44.4 for fully trained teachers. The thrust over the last four years has been to increase the proportion of trained teachers in our primary schools to a level of at least 80% by 2000 to meet the manpower needs of the schools, whose enrolment has been increasing by some 2% each year.

As with primary education, secondary schools suffer from an insufficiency of appropriately trained teachers. There are 30 secondary schools with a total enrolment of 10,147 students and a total staff of 740 teachers. The teacher needs of the secondary schools are influenced by the continuing increase of the primary school enrolment which impact on the output of the primary schools and consequently on the social demand for secondary school placements. These needs are also influenced by general insufficiency of teachers qualified to instruct at the secondary as well as the shortage of specialist teachers in the various disciplines which comprise the curriculum of Belizean secondary schools.

There is now at least one sixth form or junior college in each of the six administrative districts operated within the administration of a secondary school or providing tertiary level education as an institution with its own administrative structure. The total enrolment is calculated at 1300 with a total teaching personnel of 121. This works out to a student/teacher ratio of 10.7 which in reality varies with enrolment of individual institutions with what is considered an adequate qualification to teach at the tertiary level as well as to teach specific discipline.

The total enrolment at the University College of Belize which offers two degree programs (business administration and teacher education) secondary education is 570. Its full-time teaching staff is 24 supplement by 29 part time lecturers.

4. Teacher working conditions

Between 1989 and 1993, primary school teachers were awarded two salary increases under a Government - BNTU agreement that there would be a total increase of teachers' salaries of 10-12% over a three year period. The third salary increase did not take place on date due but the teachers, after due demonstrations, agreed to a 5% increase. At present the salary scales of teachers are in line with the salary scales of the Public Service, and although teachers carry a demanding workload they enjoy a benefit which is not enjoyed by employees in the public service: schools are closed for three weeks at Christmas time, two weeks during Easter and for the long school vacation lasting some nine weeks. At present no school in Belize runs a double shift although there have been trials of these alternative in the past and a contemplation of its feasibility in the present.

There are variations in which teachers are recruited. These variations are not linked to any clear-cut national criteria. At the primary level recruitment of teachers has been traditionally linked to the pupil-teacher system. Under this system a primary school leaver (fourteen years of age) may be recruited as a candidate to the first Teachers' Examination which is usually sat two years following admission to the school's teaching staff. Subsequently, such a teacher studies and sits the Second Class Certificate Examination and finally the First Class Examination. At this point the teacher is officially recognized as a fully certificated but not as trained teacher. Someone may also be recruited after completing three years of secondary education in which case that person must sit the two final certificate examinations, or as a high school graduate, exempted from certain academic subjects but having to qualify for the award of the First Class Teachers' Certificate. Finally, a person may be hired as a trained teacher who has completed a Teachers Training College Certificate or diploma course or as a university graduate, or even as someone holding a post-graduate degree or diploma. Within the Church-State system of educational administration the religious faith of the recruit may also influence the decision to hire him or her. Once hired, opportunities for promotion occur with the opening of new schools or with vacancies arising from the departures or transfers of principal teachers. At the secondary and tertiary levels opportunities emerge with the expansion of the curriculum which necessitates new specialism or department heads. In these regards in-service training providing for the professional development of teachers is highly important. Much of this is provided at the primary school level, by the Belize Teachers' College, since its full time teacher training program includes student-teacher who are already certificated teachers on study leave. At present there is an expanded training program conducted through the distance education mode. There is also a newly launched principal's training program being offered through this mode. The Education Development Center provides short-term in-service training of a few days duration in the areas of curriculum development and testing and measurement. Besides, the National Teachers' Union mounts a three-week in-service program of training for primary school teachers annually. Specialized workshops and on-site training are also offered by the National Drug Council, the Belize Zoo and Tropical education Center and a few other NGO's in the interest of promoting their own programs through the schools.

Generally, educational technology in schools is largely of the conventional category. Teachers plan on a yearly and weekly basis setting out long term as well as short term

and specific objectives and techniques and strategies for individual lessons as well as for units of activities and projects. The chalkboard is very prominent supplemented by textbooks, worksheets and activity cards. At present, there is an on-going project on the use of television for teaching at the primary school level and there is another at the secondary school level. The Belize Teachers' College includes computer education within the curriculum, although the distance mode for teacher training is still confined to the use of printed modules for self-tuition backed by short periods of student-lecturer contact. However, the large majority of schools still must depend on traditional instructional technology and in this regard some are very under-resourced. This situation militates against the teachers' efforts to give of their best and contributes to some wastage of trained teachers. The large majority, however, maintain a tradition of courage in the face of difficult conditions such as lack of resources, dilapidated schools and overcrowding.

The majority of teachers at the primary school level are females. This is less so at the secondary and tertiary levels. There is no discrimination within the teaching profession relating to sex and no evident difference in the performance and dedication of teachers related to their sex except that at primary school level male teachers are more frequently assigned to less accessible, small rural schools than females.

5. Major problems facing teachers

In Belize, teachers have experienced a gradual improvement in their professional life as a group over the years. Today, their salary scales are comparable to those of public officers and employees in some parts of the private sector. There is a strong Teachers' Union to which a large number of primary school teachers belong and although as a rule secondary school teachers do not become members of the teachers' union, in great numbers they seem to develop healthy employer-employee relationships within their individual schools. At the tertiary level the situation is similar to that which prevails at the secondary school level. Socially and psychologically, teachers are members of their community and are well respected both within their classrooms and in their community. At present, under a situation of austerity on the part of government there are some material problems because of budget cuts resulting in a diminishing of scarce resources. However, teachers are resilient and resourceful and therefore find ways to cushion their difficulties.

6. Aligning the professional and human characteristics of teachers with the requirements of society

No systematic and comprehensive study has been done to date relating to professional efficiency and performance of teachers in Belize other than the annual exercise at the Belize Teachers' College and the University College of Belize to assess student-teachers for the purposes of their certification. During their supervisory visits to schools, Education Officers also include a qualitative assessment of the teaching staffs of primary schools. However, there are no supervisory visits to schools at higher levels. It follows that so far there are no well established standards for evaluating teachers and no standardized method of evaluation. Similarly, no profound discussion has yet been undertaken regarding a profile of the type of teacher who would most closely satisfy the needs of the Belizean society. Nevertheless, through the many presentations made at conferences, seminars, workshops and formal teacher training

courses, and teachers and others within the school service and the public in general do have some commonly shared perceptions as to what kinds of skills, knowledge and human qualities teachers ought to have if they are to serve well the children and youth of the pluralistic, multi-ethnic developing country of Belize. Among the criteria which Belizeans share regarding the qualities of a good and capable teacher are.

1. Knowledge and love of Belize and its people;
2. Commitment to their profession;
3. Adequate preparation for the practice of their profession;
4. Display of subject mastery;
5. Adequate communication and teaching skills;
6. Display of effectiveness in classroom management and humanness in the conduct of their classes;
7. Good inter-personal relationship with their pupils, their colleagues and the community as a whole.

7. Teachers in private educational establishments

There are very few private schools in Belize. Belize has an established church-state system of education and thus church schools and schools run by various voluntary organizations receive public funding and are declared as public schools. The staff of such schools are generally of the same calibre, of personal material circumstances and workload as teachers in public schools but since such schools are established to cater to the interests of the more economically advantaged parental support is generally much greater in two respects that significantly increase the efficiency of the teacher. The first is the support given through availability of textbooks and other school materials and equipments and other forms of parental assistance and support at home in providing an environment conducive to learning--the things money buys. The second is a greater involvement in the educating of the child at home often creating a situation of harmonious support in terms of the child that is brought to school for educating by the teacher.

8. Teaching staff in the non-formal education system

During the last five years the Literacy Council of Belize has emerged as an arm of the Ministry of Education which has the responsibility in conjunction with the Adult and Continuing Education section of the Ministry of Education to conduct literacy programs. Some secondary schools also undertake their own evening schools for those who wish to upgrade their education. Various NGO's also conduct training programs relating to their particular missions and objectives. Among the most prominent are the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) which has focused particularly on Spanish-speaking immigrant communities, the Belize Family Life Association (BFLA) whose mission is to educate women in the areas of health and family planning. The Belize Red Cross which focuses on first aid

training. The YWCA and the YMCA which run classes for young people in the usual school subjects and in vocational training areas. Today there is a growing number of smaller organizations focusing on non-formal education especially for young female school leavers and dropouts, including, the Youth Enterprise Services (YES). The Belize Institute of Management, the Belize Enterprise for Sustained Technology, the Belize Tourism Industry Association and the Belize Chamber of Commerce provide training and technical assistance services in the area of management and enterprise development.

So far, there are no strict criteria relating to the specific characteristics and qualifications of teachers who participate in non-formal education program. Each agency attempts to obtain the services of the most qualified teachers or those of the persons with the most appropriate knowledge and skills in the subject (s) being taught. Most essential are communication and inter-personal relations skills. Due attention is also paid to the amount of time which individuals can spare to devote to volunteer teaching after their regular-working hours. Generally, those who volunteer do not expect much by the way of salary. Regular teachers from the formal school system do participate in non-formal educational programs but no study has been made as to the number and the conditions under which they work. However, what has been stated regarding the criteria for engaging instructors hold for teachers from the formal system.

9. The professional autonomy of teachers

Teachers at the primary and secondary levels of education have very little professional autonomy. In the case of the former, there is a centrally developed national curriculum with associated curriculum guidelines specifying what is to be taught at what levels and sometimes how. At the secondary level, the curriculum is dictated by the syllabuses of the various external end-of school examinations, such as the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations and the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations.

In the case of the primary schools, a new curriculum currently being developed under the PED Project will give significant freedom to principals and teachers to determine the actual content and classroom strategies and teaching sequence. The curriculum is designed around the UNESCO four pillars of education and seeks to identify learning outcomes, especially in the areas of "Learning to be" and "Learning to live together" rather than specific content and sequence. In the case of the secondary schools, a significant number of teachers were involved in determining the syllabuses of the various CXC subjects, which was a form of autonomy.

Given the large percentage of untrained and unqualified teachers in the system, however, lets not be too hasty to lament the ills of providing teachers with guidance--some would not be able to function without it.

The responses to sections 10 - 16 of the inquiry provide detailed information with respect to the recruitment and training of primary school teachers where development efforts under the PED Project is now concentrated.

In the case of secondary teachers, the program of recruitment and training (pre-service and in-service) is straightforward. Persons with degrees in the required subject area, e.g., chemistry are recruited to teach. In most cases, the persons have only an associates degree (two years of junior college) in the subject. In these cases, the person will seek to gain a bachelor degree in the subject at a university abroad or will seek to complete a bachelor degree in education at the University College of Belize (UCB) by taking two additional years of studies in education. The completion of this degree reflects more the salary benefits of having a degree rather than recognition of the importance of teacher training--since persons who already hold a bachelor degree in a subject matter do not enroll for teacher training. It is anticipated that this situation will change with the introduction of regulations requiring teachers at the secondary level to undergo training in teaching as in the case of their colleagues (perceived weaker cousins) at the pre-primary and primary levels.

10. Recruitment of Teachers into the Teaching Profession

There are two basic (minimum) requirements for admission into the Belize Teachers' College, the only teacher training institution for primary school teachers. The first is three CXC passes at the general proficiency level, one of which must be English; or successful completion of the First Class Teachers' Certificate, a local examination which caters to those persons who may not have completed high school or for those who completed high school but did not obtain the minimum score required in the CXC examinations. The second requirement is successful completion of an entrance examination in English and Mathematics. Paradoxically, admission to the teaching profession requires only a high school diploma and in some cases only a primary education certificate. It is worth noting that admission to the profession is regulated by the Ministry of Education while admission to the college is regulated by the Joint Board of Teacher Education. (UWI, Mona) to meet the standards of the region. This paradox exists because of the country's historical developments in education which in the past relied on the Pupil Teacher system of training for teachers. This situation is fast changing now that the Ministry of Education has established a policy that requires training before entry into the profession and has put increased emphasis on the upgrading of teachers currently in the profession through the efforts of the Primary Education Development project. Entry of high school graduates into the teaching profession without teacher training qualifications is now controlled to meet current demands, so the core of untrained teachers in the profession is currently reducing.

With only one training college located in Belize City, and with the core of the untrained teachers in the schools having families to support, teachers from the district have found it increasingly difficult to attend the college. To meet this need, Belize Teachers College (BTTC) launched an extra-mural program in 1994 which allows teachers to study and qualify in their districts. This program utilizes distance learning materials which were developed by the college. This move has had a significant impact especially on the two southern districts where enrollment in the college has increased from under ten per year to 15-20 annually from each district.

11. Organization of pre-service teacher training

In its true sense, **pre-service training** for primary school teachers began in 1988 with the admission of high school graduates into the Belize Teachers' College. Prior to that time, such a program did not exist given the fact that only teachers who were in the profession were able to pursue training. Between 1954 and 1988 the college offered a program for teachers already in the profession which provided **initial training** rather than **pre-service training** for teachers. The pre-service program continued from 1988-95, but with limited intake because of the paradoxical situation referred to earlier. Candidates found it more 'profitable' to first secure a job teaching before seeking admission to the college. This afforded them the privilege of 1) having a job secured for them until they completed training, and 2) receiving full salary while they are in training.

The decision to offer the first level of training purely by the extra-mural mode in 1994 has now created the need to examine and develop new policies for pre-service training of primary school teachers. This will become necessary especially when the core of untrained teachers now in the profession are upgraded and the demand for new teachers increases.

The training program for primary teachers titled "Three Year Certificate Programme With School Experience" is accredited with the Joint Board of Teacher Education at UWI, Mona. This program first introduced as a pilot program in 1990 was formally introduced under the Primary Education Development Project in 1992. Prior to 1992, the college offered the "Two Plus One Certificate Programme."

The new "Three Year Certificate Programme with School Experience" can be pursued through two modes. the first mode involves:

- One year full time studies at the college (Level 1), followed by
- One to two years of experience in the field, returning to the college for
- One additional year of full time studies (Level 2).

The second mode involves:

- two and a half years in the extra-mural program (Level 1), utilizing distance learning materials, followed by
- one year of full time studies at the college. (Level 2)

A Certificate in Teaching Level 1 is granted by the Ministry of Education at the end of Level 1. The Joint Board of Teacher Education grants certification for the entire program (Level 1 & 2) at the end of Level 2. Teachers receive a salary increase after successfully completing Level 1 and another after successful completing Level 2. This program prepares a teacher to teach in K-8 classrooms in Belize.

Although the college does not have the physical facilities to accommodate teachers with severe physical disabilities, a visually impaired student was admitted in 1994. The Council for the visually impaired and personnel from the Stella Maris school were instrumental in helping this student to succeed. This was a challenge which had successful results. It demonstrated how cooperative efforts can be used to assist disadvantaged students.

Since its introduction in 1990, 705 teachers have been enrolled in the Level 1 Certificate Programme. 163 teachers have been enrolled in the Level 2 program since its introduction in 1994.

An opportunity for further training will be soon become possible with the introduction of a Bachelors Degree in Primary Education which is currently being developed by the University College of Belize and the Belize Teachers' College.

12. The content of pre-service (initial training) program

One of the main objectives of the Belize Primary Education Development Project which was launched in 1992 is to 'improve the quality of instructional inputs in primary schools and increase the achievement levels of pupils'. To achieve this goal, the project has invested heavily in improving the teacher education program for primary school teachers. In studies done prior to the introduction of the project, the college's program was criticized as being too theoretical. With the advent of the project however, conscious efforts has been made to focus to the development of pedagogical skills while at the same time addressing content upgrading. New courses were introduced to meet the new demands and the challenges facing teachers and schools.

The new model of training assumes that teachers admitted into the program will have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and therefore the content necessary to begin training. Given the current employment practices however, this is not always possible.

If the program is to succeed, efforts will have to be made to admit only those who meet entry standards set.

The success of the program also requires a change in the attitude of trainees as well as that of tutors. Most teachers are accustomed to the "banking" system where they receive knowledge which they will in turn pass on to pupils, while most lecturers were accustomed to the lecture method. This new approach attempts to train teachers using the methodologies they are expected to use in their classrooms and to place greater emphasis on developing process skills.

The following are some of the benefits and changes the new program brings.

1. The structure of the training program has changed from "Two plus one Certificate Programme " (two years of full time studies followed by one year of supervised internship), to the Certificate Program with School Experience which "sandwich" one to two years of experience between two years of full time studies- (for those pursuing the full time mode). One semester of supervised teaching is done within the two years to complete requirements for the Level 1 Certificate. This change was designed to offer pre-service teachers a change to gain some experience between the two levels of training because it was observed that they experienced many difficulties in the classroom after the two years of course work in the old program. Teachers who have pursued the complete program, have commented that they found the experience valuable when they entered Level 2, since they were able to relate their experiences to the further training being given. Ironically, while the move is towards pre-service

training for teachers, those with at least one year of classroom experience prior to training in the full time program seem to cope better with the demands of the training program and of the classroom when they return. Those who pursue the extra-mural program have the support of a supervisor for the duration of the two and a half years of studies.

Desperately needed is a **structured system to support beginning** teachers and teachers in-service needs, and a form of monitoring to ensure accountability. Once the college's support is lifted, many teachers discontinue the good practices begun in training. This task is one that should be shared with the Ministry of Education, management and the training college and the schools.

2. The new program supersedes the previous one in its duration as well as in the number of hours of study, and gives greater attention to the development of teachers pedagogical skills. More emphasis is also being placed on student teaching to make the exercise more meaningful. The content of the newly introduced program (See Appendix), shows an increase in the education core courses from 270 hours to 390 hours. New courses added include: Testing and Measurement and Guidance and Counseling. The course in Testing and Measurement was introduced to meet the demands for training in this area. An introductory course in Guidance and Counseling was introduced to give teachers an overview of counseling and the ability to identify children who needed to be referred for specialized help. The many changes taking place in our Belizean society demand that teachers are equipped with some skills in counseling children.

3. To address the need for teachers to have a deeper understanding of our history and heritage and to help them to use strategies to impart these, the hours once designated for Social Studies was subdivided to give special treatment to Belizean Studies.

4. Recognizing the need for some specialization in the primary school, three areas of emphasis were included in the new program: Early Childhood, Special Education & Education Administration and Leadership. Students choose one area and pursue two 45-hr courses and one 30 hr course during the year. While the time allocated is insufficient to be classified as areas of specialization, these courses offer teachers some skills in the respective areas that would help them to cope with classroom life if they chose to teach in schools for children with special needs or in a pre-school. The courses in education leadership and administration should provide principals and prospective principals with some skills necessary for coping their changing roles as managers and leaders in their schools.

5. The introduction of Computer studies (now an elective course) in the program provides teachers with an opportunity for developing basic skills in various applications. The college hopes to make this course compulsory for all students in the Level 2 program . What is needed however, is a course for teachers in the use of the various forms of technology as teaching tools in the classroom- from calculators to computers.

6. To help teachers to develop their skills in classroom research, student teachers in the Level 2 program are given an opportunity to help the Ministry to collect data for

an Impact Evaluation currently being done. The college will continue to encourage the involvement of student teachers in this kind of research.

7. The shift in emphasis from content to the development of pedagogical skills has also been a major change in the new training program. The college now encourages a more child-centered approach to teaching and learning.

Notwithstanding the many changes that have taken place recently, the need still exists for training to focus on other areas of need. Some of these are outlined below:

(a) Developing skills to cope with teaching in Multigrade schools.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education Planning Unit reveals that of the 244 schools countrywide, 167 are rural of which 100 are multigrade. While this topic is covered as a unit in the teaching methods course, teachers still find themselves at a loss when they are assigned to such schools.

(b) Preparing teachers to meet the technological changes and their impact on teaching.

13. In-service Teacher Training

In-service training of teachers occurs in two forms: a) pre-college academic upgrading of teachers to meet the entry qualifications of the training college and b) post-initial training for teachers.

The pre-college upgrading program seeks to provide an opportunity for teachers to upgrade their content and to acquire the minimum entry requirement for admission into the college through attendance in-service classes on Saturdays. The target group is the 40-45% of the primary teaching force who are untrained. The program is organized and delivered weekly in the district towns under the supervision of BTTC faculty stationed in the respective districts. The newly constructed district centers serve as the meeting point for these and other teachers in the various programs being offered in the districts. Teachers pursuing the upgrading program sit any of the three qualifying examinations depending on their academic background. Teachers sitting the First Class exam (the highest level) are usually high school graduates who may not have passed any CXC's. Those sitting the First Teachers exam (lowest level) are usually primary school leavers who may have completed two years of high school studies and dropped out. Teachers are required to study six examinations at each of the three levels viz.-: English, Literature, History, Geography, Mathematics and Science. Teachers pursuing the First Class Certificate are required to do a course in Child Psychology and Teaching Methods and are assessed in Teaching Practice in addition to the six subjects. Teachers must complete all courses in a level before progressing to the next higher level.. Completing all the courses at each of the three levels can take teachers several years. Although time limits were set at three years per level for completing the courses, these were not strictly enforced until recently when management began to "crack down" on teachers who were taking too long to qualify themselves. With their jobs at risk, more teachers are trying to complete the courses.

Examinations are set annually by BTTC following course outlines developed jointly by the tutors in the program. Because teachers have to pay for the tutoring they receive, and because attendance is not compulsory, the enrollment in the classes is low. In the past year, 1995 for example, 524 teachers sat the First Class examinations, but only 35-40% of those were registered in the district programs. The results from the examinations have shown that the successful candidates are usually those who attend in-service classes. In 1995 for example, 95 % of those who were successful in the Belize District attended in-service classes. Teachers who do not attend classes cite such problems as transportation, funding and remoteness of the area in which they are teaching as the main reasons for not enrolling in the classes.

To meet the needs of teachers in remote areas of the country, the In-service Coordinator wrote a proposal designed to offer four CXC subjects (English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies) by distance to the teachers who sought to upgrade their content. The materials proposed for use in the program was developed by OCOD for teachers in the Eastern Caribbean islands with the same need. The program is currently on hold until permission to use the materials is obtained. The infrastructure for such a program already exists with the recent establishment of district centers to support the extra-mural program described earlier.

Post initial training (in-service) training of teachers takes two forms- support to schools that request assistance from the college with staff development activities, and formal programs offered by the college.

The college is currently offering a program for principals in educational leadership and administration. This program was introduced earlier this year and utilizes the "Better Schools" distance learning modules developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The program is scheduled to run for one academic year (September to June). Principals enrolled in the program must have completed the 2+1 Certificate or the Level 2 programs and have at least three years of teaching experience. Those enrolled are supported by supervisors in the field who visit them once monthly and conduct monthly workshops.

The college is currently developing a course in Multigrade methodologies for teachers in-service. This is an areas of dire need in the country. Many teachers complain that they do not know how to cope with teaching several classes with children of varying abilities. This new program scheduled to be introduced in the second semester 1997 will target all teachers in multigrade schools. Training will be done through the training of trainers approach beginning with district supervisory teams and moving down to the teachers in the schools.

14. The training of teachers abroad

Training for teachers abroad began in the early 1940s when teachers were sent to Jamaica to pursue a program similar to that which is now offered in Belize. This continued until a teachers college was established in Belize in 1954. Today, those who seek qualifications beyond the teacher training certificate level to the Bachelors degree and beyond, pursue training abroad. Government offers a limited number of scholarships to the University of the West Indies at the three campuses. However, since the early 1980s, a large number of teachers have gone to the United States

through the CAMPUS, CASP and CAPS programs set up by USAID. To dateteachers have benefited from these programs. The LASPAU program, administered through the US Embassy, offers upgrading to post graduate degrees . With the closing of the USAID office earlier this year, these opportunities no longer exist. Other opportunities are available through Commonwealth scholarships and other governmental agencies.

15. Professional support to serving teachers

This would can be considered one of the weakest areas and one that needs development. Some management offer new recruits a three week induction course before the beginning of each school year. Otherwise, new recruits have to take on the challenges of the classroom as they enter the profession. As was mentioned earlier, a support system for beginning teachers, and for teachers in-service is desperately needed.

The establishment of resource centers in each district under the Primary Education Development project, is a positive move towards making more teaching/ learning materials available to teachers. These centers can become the focal point for professional development of teachers through organized in-service courses, available teacher resource packs and cooperative school activities. Educational journals are currently available only at the main library of the college. These will be made available in the district centers once they are fully established.

There are no known local professional journals for teachers at the primary level.

16. New information technologies and the role and functions of teachers:

With the assistance of the Ford Cupola Foundation and the Michael A. Ashcroft Foundation, computers were introduced in primary and secondary schools respectively in the six districts in Belize. The computers donated through the Michael A. Ashcroft Foundation were introduced to improve Information Technology in Secondary schools. The program's main training center is a suite of ten computers located at BTTC. So far the training conducted at the center has been done only when new schools were added to the project. Thereafter, follow up visits have been made to the participating schools by the specialist supervising the project. With the network installed, it was hoped that the schools in the program would be communicating via modem, exchanging ideas and information. However, this has not happened because schools ran into difficulty getting permission from their respective boards to install an additional phone line. While the schools in the program are no doubt making full use of the computers to teach, they are not being used to their full capacity. The suite could become a training ground for teachers via evening courses. This training can be done to introduce teachers to computers and various applications, as well as in their use as a teaching tool.

The same can be said of the computers introduced through the Ford Cupola project in primary schools. The intention was to introduce the teachers to the computers as a teaching tool. After various schools were identified and the computers installed, the teachers were trained in the use of the computers for the project. While this project

may have met with some success, the use of the computers in the schools have not been used to their fullest capacity. The sustainability of the program and its expansion to other schools and teachers is questionable. Given that the training college was not involved in the Cupola project, nothing is known of the programs being used and their worth in the instructional process. If the suite at the college could be expanded to accommodate both programs, the capacity of the college to reach more teachers would be expanded.

17. Teacher and their partners in the education process

In some ways Belize is undergoing rapid and significant change spiritually, economically and socially. In the matter of its spiritual life the connection between the churches and people's secular life is weakening and impacting on the moral system which once guided families so strongly. Economically, the country is about to lose its dependency on quotas from foreign markets for its major export products including bananas, citrus, sugar and fish products while increasing dependency is being placed on the growth of tourism. Socially, the populace has become more highly educated and more diverse with the entry of a new wave of Central American immigrants and that of Asians, all this alongside an increase of unemployment and poverty. On the other hand, in other ways Belize is still struggling to be completely free from its colonial past with only fifteen years of political independence and therefore still tied to cultural modes of life, which retain many vestiges of colonialism.

When related to the perceptions expressed in the foregoing paragraphs much the same can be said for education. In some respects we may be of the opinion that the concept of education is changing in a changing Belize. One prevalent notion of education in Belize is that it is a process of liberating the human mind and spirit and that consequently this process must be given prominence in any school curriculum. In contrast, with the growing view that education should prepare people to participate in the development of the nation, greater stress should be put on vocational/technical education. The church-state partnership in education lends support to the former concept. Consequently, academic schooling and the authoritative role of the teacher still hold sway in the schools system at all levels.

With regard to the relationship between teachers and the family and other sectors of the wider community teachers are still highly regarded and respected and are still turned to for help in community activities. In Belize it is not a case of teachers losing their intellectual monopoly, but rather one of teachers' becoming more professional and not overly eager to ingratiate themselves with the community.

The School Assistance Program (SAP) provides an excellent support service by PRIDE-Belize (an NGO) and secondary teachers in responding to individual students in crisis or at risk from social problems--family disintegration, drug abuse, crime and violence.

18. Teachers in particular situations

Belize has been fortunate to have escaped the turmoil of war or revolution, unlike Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. However, the disruptions in these Central American countries brought about by armed movements have impacted on the

Belizean society significantly. Since the 1970's large number of Central American immigrants have sought refuge from war in Belize and since that time many others have followed seeking to improve their socio-economic conditions. The efforts by the Belize Government to accommodate these immigrants have created additional burdens to the health, social and educational services of the country as well as on those of the Lands and Housing Department. In education, teachers have had to be deployed to communities of Central American immigrants to teach under difficult circumstances despite efforts by certain agencies including the UNHCR to assist. Other teachers work in schools which are attended by disadvantaged children. Such schools are usually the poorest in the urban and rural parts both in amenities and in the learning achievements of their pupils. Then there are thousands of children with special needs including learning needs. In all such categories of difficult situations, the Government of Belize through the Ministry of Education provides for the servicing of such schools but under the present austerity situation allocations of resources have had to be reduced. Children with special needs have received increasing attention over the years and some two years ago, a comprehensive plan was designed to make even greater provisions for special needs children. A special needs unit was set up within the Ministry of Education and teachers were sent to West Indies and elsewhere for special training, especially to improve the delivery of the special needs curriculum at the Stella Maris Primary school and to provide support in others. This plan is being implemented within the present budgetary allocations of MOE.

APPENDIX: Belize Teachers College Programs

2+1 Certificate Programme: Last intake 1991

Course	hr.	Credits
REQUIRED COURSES		
Educational Methods (incl. visual aids)	90	4
Educational Psychology	60	4
Educational Sociology	60	4
Educational Philosophy	60	4
Mathematics	180	12
English Language	150	10
Language Arts	120	8
Science	90	6
Social Studies	90	6
Art Education	90	6
Physical Education	90	6
REAP	90	6
Divinity	60	4
ELECTIVES 1 (one from)		
English Literature	90	6
Special Education	90	6

Early Childhood Education	90	6
Spanish	90	6

ELECTIVES 2 (one from

Music Education	90	6
Computer Studies	90	6
Home Economics	90	6
Industrial Arts	90	6

Internship	1 school year in the field (20 credits)
Research Paper credits)	Done during the internship year (8

NEW PROGRAM INTRODUCED IN 1992

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: 3 CXC G1 or G2 including English
or a First Class Certificate plus
a pass in an Entrance Examination

**PROGRAM: THREE YEAR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME
WITH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

LEVEL 1		LEVEL 2	
Courses	hr.	Credits	Courses
Credit			hr.
Compulsory Courses		Compulsory Courses	
Teaching Methods	60	4	Education & Society
3			45
Child Development	45	3	Guidance & Counseling
2			30
Testing & Measurement	45	3	Principles of Education
2			30
Classroom Organ. & Mngt.	60	4	Research Methods
3			45
Instructional Aids	30	2	
English Language	105	7	English Language
5			75
Language Arts	90	6	B'zean & Caribbean Lit.
6			90
Mathematics	90	6	Mathematics
6			90
Belizean Studies	45	3	
Social Studies	45	3	
Divinity	30	2	
Electives (Two from)		Electives 1 (One from)	
Art Education	45	3	Art Education
3			45

Physical Education	45	3	Physical Education	45
3				
Music Education	45	3	Music Education	45
3				

INTERNSHIP 1 SEMESTER
 (15 Weeks with supervision after
 8
 completion of course work requirements)
 8
 8

Electives 2 (One set from)
 Early Childhood Education 120
 Special Education 120
 Educ. Leadership & Admin 120

(One from)

	90	Spanish	6
	90	REAP	6
& Counseling	90	Guidance	6
Studies	90	Computer	6

Electives 3

STUDENT TEACHING 6 WEEKS (done before the second semester of course work)

Table 1: Pupils/students enrolled and teachers, 1990/91 - 1994/95

Level and type of education	Academic year	Pupils/students		Teachers	
		MF	F	MF	F
Pre-primary education	1990/1991	2753	1443	155	154
	1993/1994	3172	1586	176	175
	1994/1995	3311	1704	190	189
Primary education	1990/1991	46023	22297	1749	1224
	1993/1994	56291	24314	1939	1350
	1994/1995	51377	24835	1976	1390
Secondary education, total of which	1990/1991	8009	4059	581	269
	1993/1994	10044	5087	719	331
	1994/1995	10272	5335	758	352

	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F	MF	F
Pre-primary education	62	61	0	0	26	26	10	10	2	2	0	0	90	89
Primary education	1318	915	616	440	137	81	62	43	48	32	46	32	1503	1028
Secondary education, total of which	303	146	0	0	94	47	94	47	343	153	188	98	740	346
(a) General education	303	146	0	0	94	47	94	47	343	153	188	98	740	346
(b) Technical and vocational education														
(c) Teacher training														

Source: Ministry of Education Planning Unit

Notes: The figures for pre-primary include principals only. The total number of principals and teachers would be approximately four times as many.

The number of teachers in general education include those teachers who are vo-tech teachers in those institutions. The number for (b)—referring only to teachers who teach in trade schools is 18.

For pre-primary and primary teachers, first level means up to secondary schooling; second level means from secondary schooling up to a first degree, and third level means having a first degree or higher.

For secondary school teachers, first level means having less than a bachelor degree, second level means having a bachelor degree only, and third level means having a graduate degree.

Table III: Number of teachers by age and sex, 1994/95

Age Group	Primary education		Secondary education	
	MF	F	MF	F
Less than 20 years old	133	93	6	5
20 to 29	774	504	339	164

30 to 39	585	451	207	90
40 to 49	371	263	121	50
50 and over	113	78	67	37
TOTAL	1976	1389	740	346

Source: Ministry of Education Planning Unit

Table IV: Number of teachers in public and private schools, 1994/95

Level and type of education	Public education	Private education	Total
Pre-primary education	100	90	190
Primary education	1976		1976
Secondary education, total of which	728	30	758
(a) General education	710	30	740
(b) Technical and vocational education	18		18
(c) Teacher training	237		237
Higher education, total of which	237		237
(a) Universities and university level institutes	53		53
(b) Other institutes	184		184

Source: Ministry of Education Planning Unit

Table V: Teacher's workloads, 1994/95

Level and type of education	Number of hours per week devoted to classroom teaching	Number of hours per week devoted to other educational activities
Pre-primary education	20.5	5-10

Primary education	27.5	10-15
Secondary education, total of which	46.9	
(a) General education	22.0	15-20
(b) Technical and vocational education	24.9	15-20
(c) Teacher training		
Higher education, total of which	24.2	15-20
(a) Universities and university level institutes		
(b) Other institutes	24.2	15-20

Source: Ministry of Education Planning Unit