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The Challenge of Youth Unemployment in the Caribbean: the Role of Youth Employment Training Programmes

This Study was commissioned by the Caribbean Office of the International Labour Organization. It was undertaken by Dennis Pantin, Economist and Researcher at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus in 1996. It appears in two volumes. Volume I which appears here is the Executive Summary, Synopsis and Policy Conclusions. Volume II (which is available on request) contains the country case studies for Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

The following text has been edited to present the main findings. Tables have been omitted. Complete copies can be requested from the ILO Caribbean Office at: ilocarib@ilocarib.org.tt

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VOLUME I

Overview

The term "youth" in this Study includes all those in the 16-24 age group with some recognition of the 25-29 age cohort.

Young people between the 16-24 age cohort comprise an average of 25% of the labour force in the english-speaking Caribbean. When the 25-29 age group is taken into account, the contribution to the age cohort to the labour force ranges from a low of 27% in Bermuda to 57% in Jamaica and 60% in St. Lucia.

Demographic data suggest that this share of the youth cohort has probably peaked, or will do so shortly. In the case of Barbados, for example, the 15-24 age group comprised 18% of the 1990 population, down from 22% in 1980. The share of this age cohort is projected to decline to 15% by 2000 and to 13% by 2025. In the case of Jamaica, the 15-24 age group comprised and estimated 31% of the labour force in 1992. It is projected to decline to 28% by 2000 and to 24% by 2020.

As a result of these demographic trends, by the year 2000 and certainly by 2010, the share of youth in the Caribbean population will begin to decline as the region begins to experience the "ageing" of its population. There are two significant implications of this demographic trend.

First, the "burden" of investment in the education and training of youth is likely to decline, certainly in per capita terms by the early 21st century. Second, it is on the shoulders of the current youth population that another "burden" - of generating adequate productive output for a reasonable standard of living for an "ageing" Caribbean population – will depend in the 21st century.

This implication of both of these factors is that it is imperative that the Caribbean societies address causal factors explaining current labour market experiences of young people. Education and training loom large in any such explanatory framework, hence the focus of this particular Study.

I. Youth in the Labour Force in the Caribbean

The total labour force of the predominantly english-speaking Caribbean currently stands at approximately 2.7 million people. Twenty six % of this labour force is between the ages of 16-24. Males make up a greater share of the labour force on average, between the ages of 16-24, across the region. However, there are country specific variations and the pattern becomes less pronounced in the 25-29 age group where female participants roughly equal that of males in Jamaica, Barbados, the Bahamas, Saint Lucia and the Netherlands Antilles.

The youth cohort looms larger in terms of unemployment. An estimated 404,000 persons or 15% of the region's labour force are unemployed. Of this, 51% or 204,000 are between the ages of 15 -24. As a result, youth unemployment rates are substantially above the national averages across the region and average around 40% in the 15-19 age group and 30% in the 20-24 age group. Research reveals that the share of females in the total unemployment figure for youth is most consistently higher in the case of Jamaica across all three age groups between 16-29. The pattern is much more varied in other countries.

The overall figures show that these regional averages for youth participation and employment do not fully capture individual country experiences. In the case of Jamaica, for example, some 27% of the labour force is between 15-24 with another 30% between 25-29. Only a few other Caribbean countries have a comparable or higher proportion of their labour force between 15 -24 years (Guyana, Barbados, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) to that of Jamaica.

As noted earlier, most countries are experiencing unemployment rates among the 15 -19 age group of around 40% or higher. However, a few countries are recording atypically lower unemployment rates for this age cohort: for example, the Cayman Islands (14%) and Anguilla (29%). Similarly, for the age cohort 20-24, most Caribbean countries are averaging unemployment rates of around 28%, but with some countries showing lower rates. The Cayman Islands, Anguilla, Belize and Guyana are in this category. Unemployment rates drop to an average of around 16% in the 25-29 age group across the region, but with much greater variability.

II. Social Conditions of Youth

What is the nature of the socialization process which is preparing Caribbean youth for their role in the 21st century? It is impossible to provide a simple answer to this complex question. To begin with, it is necessary to distinguish between differing types of youth. The main criteria for such classification includes: Age, Economic or Social Class, Educational Status, Race/Colour, Gender and Health Status. Urban/Rural location and family conditions are somewhat independent factors which need to be taken into account.

• The Factor of Age

Although "youth" includes the 16-24 age group, it is necessary to disaggregate further into sub-groups of age. In this, two related age groups are included. The first is the 13-15 age group since a proportion of this group tend to find themselves in a 'nether' world of being out of school but simultaneously classified as too young to work or to be placed in 'non-formal' employment training programmes. The 25-29 age group also is included since many of the 'chronic' uneducated/unemployed fall within this group and some countries include this group in the youth population.

• The Factor of Wealth/Income/Social Class

It would be naïve to exclude the factor of social class, which largely correlates with levels of family wealth and income. Both of these related attributes provide youth with differential access to the job and job training market.

• The Factor of Educational Status

In one sense, this may be the most important factor in that someone who has achieved at the highest level of the formal education system is unlikely to experience job difficulties whatever their age, wealth/income and social class. However, the literature also shows that the educated classes tend to dominate the educational process, thereby reproducing themselves. That is, the children of those with more education are likely to have an above average opportunity of themselves being educated.

• The Factor of Gender

The evidence is somewhat contradictory. There is no doubt that historically females have been discriminated against – both in the family and the society- in terms of access to education, training, employment and compensation package, if employed. Such discriminatory trends continue. However, it may be as a result of this legacy and/or their socialization, females in the Caribbean seem to be more driven, certainly in terms of seizing the opportunities for training. Forecasting the trend therefore suggests that a higher proportion of the young females at the present time are likely to achieve higher levels of employment and income in their late 20's and 30's than their male counterparts. Technological change will influence also the gender balance of employment with greater prospects anticipated for service industries in the Caribbean region.

On the other hand, females in the group of "challenged" persons, face particular problems in accessing both educational/training institutions and the job market. Empirical evidence shows that female unemployment rates are substantially higher - generally twice as high - as for those of males in the youth age group. A recent survey in Trinidad and Tobago found that some 13% of the females dropping out of secondary school gave pregnancy as the reason.

- **The Factor of Race**

The legacy of racial discrimination under colonial conditions has not been eradicated. For historical reasons, the private sector has had an ownership and/or management structure skewed towards phenotypes who are sociologically defined as 'white' or 'near white'. A 1993 Task Force on Youth in Barbados found it important enough, for example, to include this in the range of problems facing youth in the island.

- **The Factor of Disability**

Persons with disabilities faced significantly different and peculiar problems in accessing both the job market and preparatory educational and employment training institutions. Moreover, the type of disability also leads to a differential degree of difficulty in terms of both employment and training. The mentally challenged face the greatest difficulties, on average, followed by visually challenged.

- **Urban/Rural Location**

As in virtually every society, education/training and job/self employment opportunities tend to be greater in urban areas. On the other hand, social dysfunctionality and alienation also tend to be higher in the urban areas. This factor is most evident in Jamaica which is a large enough island to make urban/rural distance to be significant in time and sociological terms. This is less so in Trinidad (certainly in Tobago), even less so in Barbados and other CARICOM countries.

- **Family Conditions**

A strong family unit can, in many instances, compensate for other negating factors. Equally, dysfunctional family origins can either exacerbate negative factors or even turn positive potential around. In the case of one Youth Employment Training Programme (YETP), it was reported that incest was a continuous problem in about 5-10% of the student intake. There was also a significant correlation between substance abuse, incest and other problems manifested in the youth trainees involved.

III. Youth Most at Risk in Terms of Labour Market Access

Some conclusions can be drawn from the Study about the problems faced by youth in terms of access to the labour market and youth training and employment. It is not a surprising conclusion that there is a differential impact of the greatest severity in terms of the problems of access experienced by 'youth at risk'.

The typical characteristics of such youth at risk is that they are predominantly male, 15-19/21; come from dysfunctional family and community backgrounds; have some secondary education (incomplete) or little formal education and; ascribe to subcultures marked by substance abuse and criminal activity. This characterization is not unique to the Caribbean and may even be, to some extent, stereotypical. However, it should be noted that this sub-culture has been growing for several reasons.

One such reason is the increasing difficulty for all types of youth to obtain access to youth employment training programmes and later, or simultaneously, to the job market. A second reason is that those unemployed increasingly face insensitive and many times, exploitative employers who continuously roll over their staff. The 1993 Barbados Task Force on Youth recorded complaints, for example, that employers do not employ some youth for 24 continuous months, since that would allow them entitlement to benefits under the Severance Payment Law. Youth taking part in focus group meetings in Trinidad and Tobago also complained about exploitation in terms of being continuously employed in 'training' programmes for basic stipends while engaged in the same job tasks of more adequately remunerated co-workers. Such complaints were raised in terms of both the public and private sectors.

Another reason for concern is that despite the increase in educational achievement and job training of many youth in the Caribbean, the proportion that are finding employment or self - employment opportunities appear to be declining. Related to this, levels of earnings also appear to be dropping.

Youth, Crime and Violence

It is this context that the issue of youth, crime and violence need to be located. Empirical evidence show that young people, mostly under 21 years, are responsible for a disproportionate share of crime and violence, including murder, in Caribbean societies. The 1993 Barbados Youth Task Force Report showed that young people accounted for 41% of all persons dying from homicide in 1990. The data for Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago would corroborate this fact.

Causes of Youth Unemployment and Underemployment

Two main types of factors explain the persistence and deepening of difficulties faced by Caribbean youth in regional labour markets. On the one hand, there are supply side factors. A 1993 Commission on Youth in Barbados found , for example, that among the reasons advanced to explain youth unemployment in that island were inadequate education, lack of appropriate training in terms of multi-skilling, relevance to modern technology, exceedingly high occupational and wage aspirations, lack of work experience and inappropriate attitudes. In other words, part of the explanation of youth unemployment could be placed at the feet of the youth themselves, their families and the educational institutions which are to prepare them for the world of work. In so far as this is correct, much of youth unemployment could be considered structural in nature and could be solved through changes in attitude and access to training opportunities. However, there are also factors on the demand side. The 1993 Barbados Commission also reports that a major causal factor in youth unemployment may simply be the failure of the economy to produce sufficient jobs specially in preferred areas.

A 1992 Study of youth employment training programmes in Jamaica came to the same conclusion. It was found that there are significant deficiencies in training in Jamaica, hence the co-existence of unemployment and unfilled vacancies in certain skill areas. In addition, the Study also concluded that the

Jamaican economy was not dynamic enough to clear the labour market and resolve the problem of unemployment. The evidence suggests that Caribbean labour markets appear to be finding increasing difficulties to come close to clearing themselves. Not merely is this already evident in terms of the 'formal' sector, but also in terms of the 'informal' sector. Therefore, although the share of young people in the total population of the Caribbean appears to have peaked, while educational and employment training programmes are increasing, the job market and income prospects are not reflecting a similar trend. Part of the reason is known.

Caribbean countries have been undergoing a prolonged process of transition from largely import protected and/or primary commodity producers to liberalized economies. Jamaica has had the longest experience of 'structural adjustment' in the Caribbean. This process began in the mid-1970s and, after some hesitation, became fully entrenched by the turn of the 1980s. Jamaica has undergone 18 agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before ending formal lending conditions in 1996. Jamaica has also been involved in many related policy loans from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Trinidad and Tobago began policy borrowing from the IMF and the World Bank in 1987. Guyana followed shortly afterwards, while Barbados sought assistance from the multilateral agencies at the turn of the 1990s. Dominica and Grenada also have undergone more 'home grown' variants of structural adjustment policies.

The context of these policy changes have been stagnant or declining export earnings from traditional sectors, alongside similar trends in non debt creating capital inflows from the 1970s. One result was the decision by some Caribbean governments to finance external and fiscal deficits by borrowing. By the late 1970's, Jamaica began to experience the negative effects of accumulating unsustainable levels of foreign debt. Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana followed in the 1980s, while Barbados faced a less critical bunching of foreign debt in the 1990s. The cumulative result of the changed circumstances on external accounts has been reduced aggregate income and fiscal revenue. As a result, the affected Caribbean governments have had to cut back on public sector employment and the provision of social services and support.

One substantive result has been a worsening of poverty indicators across much of the region. In the larger Caribbean countries, an estimated one quarter to one third of the population is living below the poverty line. It is from this sub-strata that one finds a significant concentration of youth unemployment with a close correlation with lower levels of education and training.

The process of structural adjustment has negative costs. The expectation is that benefits will begin to be seen in the near future. This may be disputed as a hopeful prognosis. Empirical evidence exists to support these expectations. Positive trends may be subterranean at this time. Nevertheless, while this happens, the youth of the Caribbean are facing difficulty in accessing institutions of education and job training as well as the job market. The demand side of the labour market continues to experience difficulty in assuaging the supply side. In this scenario, young people find themselves at a disadvantage in terms of training experience and many times, attitudes or socialization to the world of work.

This experience is not unique to the Caribbean. The world economy has been going through a process of adjustment to changing economic conditions in which technical change is both cause and effect. Globalization of markets has meant increased competition across all sectors of the economy and increased difficulties in insulation from global economic pressures. The process is now institutionalized in the completion of the Uruguay Round and the creation of the World Trade Organization. Goods, services and intellectual property are now within the remit of the liberalization thrust.

At immediate risk for the Caribbean are preferential market access for bananas, sugar and garments. These global changes also portend opportunities. It is a matter of whether such opportunities can be seized within framework of unfettered economic liberalization. One market in which state intervention is still considered appropriate is that of education and training. It is with this reality in mind that this Study reviews the experience of the Caribbean in youth employment and training programmes.

Remedial measures and corrective strategies

Youth policy in the Caribbean has tended historically to be located within the Ministry of Education and hence part of the formal education system; or to be linked to the Ministry of Sport or Community Affairs. In the context of fiscal stringency, these Ministries do not benefit from large allocation of funds. While this is not true in absolute terms for Ministries of Education, real fiscal flows to the education system have long been on the decline in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and perhaps, more recently, in Barbados.

Moreover, youth policy, and particularly youth employment training policy, has tended to be reactive and to be informed by the desire to be able to report on the large number of trainee intakes. The increase in youth crime has also precipitated 'quick fix' solutions, many times targeted, in practice, at those youth who are not within the group which is most at risk.

There are virtually no private sector policy on youth at risk, although some firms do assist in terms of other groups within the age cohort. One exception is an Inner City Youth Training Project run by the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce.

A range of other non-governmental organizations, particularly church-based groups have had a much longer and consistent involvement in youth programmes. However, these NGO efforts have not had a substantial impact in terms of numbers of youth involved, given limited resources and other constraints. One possible exception is the SERVOL organization in Trinidad and Tobago which has grown from a modest intake of 25 trainees in 1972 to become a major institution of training, particularly for those on the fringes, if not actually, youth at risk.

The empirical evidence shows that in terms of YETPs, the history of public as well as NGO initiatives have tended to be spurred by social upheavals or the threats of some negative macro-economic trends. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago for example, the 'Black Power' demonstrations of 1970 acted as a catalyst for the formation of SERVOL which has a quarter of a century of experience in running youth employment training programme. In 1988, the onset of structural adjustment programmes in Trinidad and Tobago also influenced the establishment of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme. While SERVOL began modestly with an intake of 25 trainees, YTEPP had an immediate target of 20,000 trainees.

In the case of Jamaica, the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency was established by a new government that had initiated a process of economic liberalization, while simultaneously closing down many existing youth employment training initiatives begun by the previous Government.

IV. Youth Employment Training Programmes in the Caribbean

This Study has had to take a pragmatic approach to the definition of what exactly is a Youth Training Programme (YETP). Discussions in the field and reading of the literature seem to use one main basis of demarcation as co-determinous with YETPs. This distinction is between "formal", academic-type "education" and "non-formal", (technical-vocational) "training". Even within the conception of "non-formal" the term YETP also sometimes seem to mean, for some, low- level technical and vocational education. In practice, these demarcations were found to be too rigid. In one sense, the entire education system and for the purposes of this Study, the component catering to young people, is involved with youth employment training programmes. The reason is that ultimately the youth involved will be expected to enter the labour market and utilize whatever form of "training" they obtain.

It was decided to utilize a pragmatic definition of YETP to include any "training" institution whether publicly or privately funded, whose focus of training was on the provision of skills for direct application to occupational activities in the job market. This criterion for inclusion of a "training" institution as a YETP was reinforced if it also included "on-the-job training" as a significant component of its programme and even more so, if it provided assistance to its graduates in terms of job placement and/or search.

This pragmatic decision has led to some apparent difference in the treatment of what would otherwise appear to be similar types of institutions in the three country case studies. To illustrate, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic of Barbados is included but not the technical High Schools of Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago.

In the case of Barbados, eight (8) major YETPs were identified, with the Barbados Government being overwhelmingly the most important actor here. The two most significant programmes, and the two oldest, are managed by the Barbados Vocational Training Board: The National Apprenticeship Programme and the Skills Training Programme. The first programme targets unskilled, unemployed youth and the entry age is 16 years. The Skills Training Programme targets the 16-25 age group and seeks to provide employable skills within the shortest possible time. Two recently started programmes in Barbados are the National Youth Service which began in 1991 and the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme initiated in 1995.

In the case of Jamaica, one institution – HEART/NTA – as the National Training Agency, dominates youth employment training in two senses. First, HEART/NTA is a major provider of training programmes itself. Secondly, many other youth employment training programmes in Jamaica utilize the curricula of this organization and/or also get some form of financial assistance. HEART/NTA is funded from a payroll tax. Currently, HEART/NTA operates through seven main types of programmes:

- | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|------------|
| 1. | | | Academies |
| 2. | | Special | Programmes |
| 3. | Vocational | Training | Centres |
| 4. | Jamaica/German | Auto | School |
| 5. | School | Leavers' | Programme |
| 6. | | Apprenticeship | Programme |
| 7. | Vocational Training Development Division | | |

A National Youth Service has also been re-established recently in Jamaica as one of two initiatives of the Social Development Commission.

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, six main YETPs can be identified. Five are run by the Government. The largest is the Youth Training and Employment Programme (YTEPP) which began in 1988. Alongside this, we can identify SERVOL which is an NGO-based programme initiated in 1970. The former is funded by the World Bank (65%) and the Government, while the latter is financed from grant assistance.

A comparison of main characteristics of Caribbean YETPS

A comparison is now made of the main characteristics of Caribbean YETPs based predominantly on the three country case studies noted above (6).

1. Dominance of the public sector

Perhaps the single most common characteristic is the dominance of the public sector in the provision of youth employment training in the Caribbean. In Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean, with the exception of SERVOL in Trinidad and Tobago, there is no private sector or non-governmental initiative which can match that of the State in terms of number of trainees.

One significant difference found between the Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) of Trinidad and Tobago and other YETPs in the Caribbean is that the former is financed to a substantial extent (65%) by loan financing from the World Bank; this as opposed to its main comparative public sector equivalent in Jamaica – HEART/NTA which is funded from the payroll tax and SERVOL in Trinidad which is funded by grant contributions.

2. Employment training and political/social amelioration

Appraisal of many YETPs suggest that most carry the burden of their origins as responses to social crises as noted earlier. A 1991 HEART/NTA document captures this tension:

"...there has been, over the years, a fundamental confusion between training for purposes of social rehabilitation and training for purposes of productive employment. Policy makers, in an effort to address endemic youth unemployment and poor literacy have tended to place a high priority on compensatory programmes while the formal education programmes are under-funded." (HEART/NTA, 1991:4/5)

3. Impact of the political process on YETPs

In the case of Jamaica, for example, HEART/NTA was the creation of a new political regime which was simultaneously closing down many of the existing YETPs. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, a change of Government at the end of 1991 led to a reported closure of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) for six months. By 1995, several key top managerial positions had been changed. In late 1995, the reins of the Trinidad and Tobago Government changed hands again. Currently, as of September, 1996, the twenty-two top managers of YTEPP have been asked to resign and reapply for their positions which will be simultaneously advertised.

Evidence shows that there is likely to be a significant degree of non-productive utilisation of what are scarce fiscal resources in ameliorative programmes which satisfy short-term political objectives but provide little longer-run return either to the society or directly affected youth.

4. A dependence on informal training needs surveys for youth employment training

With the exception of HEART/NTA, there appears to be no formal process of surveying the demand for occupational skills in the market place as a basis for determining and/or reviewing the types of training provided. Much of the training provided tends to be biased towards skills which can be utilised in occupations which produce output for the domestic market. Trainees are not unaware of this reality. In the case of one focus group of a particular YTEP which participated in this Study (of graduates and a few trainees), the young people raised, inter alia, the problem of saturation of the domestic market in terms of the areas in which they were trained. They linked this to an emphasis on micro-entrepreneurship and asked the rhetorical question of how many tie-dye artistes can a society absorb? HEART/NTA conducts more formal industry surveys to inform its training programmes.

5. Limited evaluation procedures and practice

Some of the oldest YTEPs appear never to have conducted a Tracer Study. Even where these have been attempted, there appears to be no consistency in the methods used in Tracer Studies in the same organization. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, for example, the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) has conducted at least three Tracer Studies. Unfortunately, the methodology has varied across such studies, limiting the scope for longitudinal studies. Equally, there appears to be no attempt by Government agencies concerned with youth policy to conduct comparative analysis of performance across YTEPs in the same Caribbean country and even more so across Caribbean countries.

6. Focus on micro-entrepreneurial training

In what appears to be an uncanny commonality, youth employment training policy across the Caribbean appears to have concluded that the focus has to be on business and in particular micro-entrepreneurial training.

The line of reasoning is obvious. The formal sector has been shrinking. Moreover, there is need for a "paradigm shift" in terms of the thinking of Caribbean peoples away from seeking employment to become self employed. None of this could be questioned. It is, however, somewhat different to assume that the burden of business creation and micro-entrepreneurship should rest on sectors of the youth population which finds itself in YETPs largely because of its inability to perform in the "formal" educational system. This assumption could be questioned on several grounds, one of which is casual empiricism which indicates a limited inclination of youth involved in YETPs to enter into business immediately after graduation. The Trinidad and Tobago case study documents, for example, data from a recent SERVOL Tracer Study which showed that around 2% of the 271 graduates surveyed were operating their own business. In the case of Barbados, a manager of a main public sector YETP reported frustration at the fact that retrenched young workers trained in micro-entrepreneurship but returned to employee status as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Moreover, the nature of the micro-entrepreneurial training also appears to be somewhat insensitive to the very nature of such business activity. The training approaches appear to assume that the type of management training needed for more formal sector activity would be equally applicable for micro-entrepreneurship. One reason for this conclusion appears to be the limited evidence of studies commissioned or conducted by YETPs providing micro-entrepreneurial training on the specific dynamics of this activity in the Caribbean context.

7. Significance of attitudinal change

Although most YETPs include some orientation programme, several seem in practice, to downplay the significance of attitudinal change in their training programmes. One significant exception here is that of SERVOL. The first three and a half months of all of its programmes are devoted to an Adolescent Development Programme (ADP). Casual evidence, via the focus group meetings, indicated that the SERVOL trainees gave significant weight to the importance of this ADP for themselves. The Director of SERVOL indicated that the ADP had been given its prominence after SERVOL's initial approach of providing skills training appeared to be floundering. Employers complained about attitudinal problems of its graduates. Moreover, the Director indicated that the employers had persuaded his organisation that SERVOL could only provide rudimentary skills training with more specific skills being acquired on the job. The more critical need was to prepare young people in terms of attitude and orientation for the world of work.

HEART/NTA in Jamaica appears to have drawn similar conclusions to that of SERVOL.

8. Fixed training versus continuous training

There is a tendency for YETPs to emphasize the number of graduates as the most important indicator of success. This fails to take into account the positive impact that training may have had on dropouts. Moreover, these programmes provide little opportunity for re- entry by those who may wish to return to complete at least another stage of their training. HEART/NTA has indicated in its Corporate Plan to 2000 that it has recognised this problem. Its solution is to shift to modular training.

V. Evaluation of Youth Employment Training Programmes in the Caribbean

Against the backdrop of these summary characteristics noted above, this Study now provides an evaluation of Caribbean YETPs. Two main criteria have been identified as the basis of such evaluation. The Study reviews YETPs in the Caribbean in the context of the these two evaluatory criteria:

- Is the training provided by YETPs (even if inadequate in supply terms) appropriate for the types of training demanded by the actual markets for employment and self employment?
- Is the training provided by YETPs (even if inadequate in supply terms) appropriate for the types of training demanded by the actual markets for employment and self employment?

A caveat is necessary to precede this evaluation and this relates to the availability of data. The fifth general characteristic noted above about Caribbean YETPs was the limited attempts to conduct Tracer Studies and other supplementary forms of evaluations. The conclusions which are drawn below, therefore, need to be seen in the context of the limited data available.

Is the supply of YETPs training adequate in relation to demand?

The simple answer is that supply is inadequate throughout the region. The best example of this is the Jamaican case where between 55,000 and 85,000 young people are estimated to be potentially available for training. Some 20,000 young people were enrolled in training programmes in Jamaica in 1995. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, approximately 15,000 youths were enrolled in training programmes whereas the comparable figure for Barbados was about 800. These data enabled a crude basis for assessing the adequacy of places. More detailed data was not available to permit comparison of finer distinctions in terms of supply relative to the types of, and length of, training which youth demand.

There is a more complex question which needs to be answered, which is the adequacy of supply in terms of differing categories of youth along the lines of the classifiable scheme outlined earlier. For some categories of youth, there is an adequate supply of places. For others there may be few or little places available. Casual evidence suggests that the YETPs are hardly reaching "youth at risk" particularly in "under-class" communities. There also may be some geographic discrimination. Rural youth, particularly in Jamaica, also would appear to face disproportionate problems of access. A similar and perhaps even more severe access problem exists for those with disabilities, particularly if combined with rurality and female gender. As noted earlier, females, on the empirical evidence, are making greater use of the training opportunities available. One may suggest that many of these areas of training are in male dominated industries (e.g. construction) but that in itself does not restrict access to training.

Is existing supply of training in YETPs appropriate to the demands of the market place ?

Four proxy indicators are detailed below as necessary ingredients for answering this question. It is important also to begin by asking the question of whether YETPs can be divorced from the larger question of the adequacy of the overall system of "education" available for the youth age cohort. The evidence suggest that YETPs are providing a second opportunity for secondary, and sometimes, primary school students who fail to either finish this schooling or who lack adequate skills and attitudes for the job market . On a related point, HEART/NTA in Jamaica has decided to introduce its Level 1 training in the secondary school to reduce the pressure on the demand for places at this introductory level.

Focus group meetings conducted in Trinidad revealed that most of the trainees had attended secondary school. Equally striking was their near unanimous condemnation of the quality of the education in the secondary school system, including the insensitivity of teachers to their problems and needs.

Four proxy indicators are now used to answer this second question including:

- A. Post-graduate employment experience of YETPs' graduates.
- B. Post-graduate income earning experience of YETPs' graduates.
- C. Views of the graduates themselves on how valuable they found their YETP experience.
- D. Views of employers on the relative skill and aptitude levels of YETP graduates relative to other employees of similar age.

The first three proxy indicators can be considered on their own or in comparison with control groups of peers of graduates of YETPs who either were drop-outs, or who did not have any such training. The later comparative framework is the normal one utilised in Tracer Studies. Unfortunately, as noted earlier, very few of the YETPs in the Caribbean, or other external agencies, have conducted such Tracer Studies. Moreover, even where such Studies exist, there appears to be little consistency of approach even in repeat Studies within the same institution.

However, it is possible to review the partial evidence available, including that of informed opinion of those familiar with YETPs.

(a) Post Graduate Employment Impact

In the Jamaican case, HEART/NTA reported in a 1992 Tracer Study that its graduates were more likely to be employed relative to dropouts and non-participants in the ratio of 69%: 37% : 43%, respectively. However, only a fair match existed between areas of training and that of employment of HEART/NTA graduates. In Jamaica, it was found that YETPs appear to make little difference to the employment and income prospects of graduates of YETPs in the short run, although there is a likelihood of a positive impact in the long run.

A 1993 YTEPP Tracer Study in Trinidad and Tobago concluded that graduates had improved their employment prospects since only 14% of the group of graduates had been employed prior to training while that proportion had increased to 37% employed, post-graduation, with another 8% recorded as self-employed. Moreover, this 1993 YTEPP Tracer Study found that its graduates had a 177% improvement in their employment status as opposed to 25% improvement for a control group of non-participants. A follow-up 1994 YTEPP Tracer Study shifted to a focus on relative earnings rather than employment experience on the basis of the utilization of econometric techniques. As a result, no comparative data are available on the employment experience of its graduates.

A summary finding was available in terms of recent SERVOL graduates in Trinidad and Tobago. This indicated that 41% were fully employed; 27% were employed part-time; 1.9% were self-employed while 31% were unemployed. No empirical data were available on the employment experience of YETP graduates in Barbados. However, informed opinion suggests that the well established, public sector programmes have experienced a substantial improvement in the employment trend.

(b) Post-graduate Income Impact

The 1992 HEART/NTA Tracer Study in Jamaica also concluded that its graduates were earning more than other youth in the two comparative control groups.

Sixty percent of the YTEPP graduates included in 1993 Tracer Study in Trinidad and Tobago also felt that their income earning potential had improved as a result of their participation in the training programmes of this institution.

The 1994 YTEPP Tracer Study mentioned above came to the conclusion that the income earning experience of YTEPP graduates appear to have had a relatively weak advantage over non-participating control group.

No Tracer Studies, or summaries on same, were available for Barbados or the rest of the Caribbean.

(c) Views of Graduates of YETPs

Seventy-three percent of the graduates surveyed in the 1992 HEART/NTA Tracer Study also expressed satisfaction with their training. Focus group meetings with trainees or graduates of HEART/ NTA in Jamaica, Vocational Training Board Programmes in Barbados and SERVOL and YTEPP in Trinidad and Tobago also suggest that the majority of the participants felt that the training improved their attitude to life and work as well as their employment and self-employment prospects. The issue of relative earning gain did not emerge in these meetings.

(d) Views of Employers

This Study did not attempt to survey employers of graduates of YETPs since time, information and other resources did not permit. In the case of one YETP, casual empiricism indicates that SERVOL graduates are well considered by employers. A similar sense was obtained about graduates from the skills training programmes in Barbados.

The Questionnaire administered to YETPs sought to find out how these organizations determined their areas of training. The idea was to assess the extent to which training was influenced by the demand in the market for particular skills, and therefore an indication of employer satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

All of the institutions indicated that they utilized informal methods of surveying employers. However, HEART/NTA's Research Department also conducts formal sector surveys to determine trends in demand.

In most instances, a review of the actual areas of training provided by the YETPs across the Caribbean reveal an uncanny similarity. With the exception of Jamaica which has industry-targeted training in the data entry and hospitality industry, training appears generally to fall into the common categories:

- | | | | | |
|-------|---|--------------|-------------------|-----------|
| (i) | | Construction | related | skills |
| (ii) | Household | and | Commercial/Office | Furniture |
| (iii) | Electrical/Electronic | | repair | and |
| (iv) | | | Auto-mechanical | |
| (v) | | Cosmetology | and | related |
| (vi) | | Home | health | aide |
| (vii) | Garment construction and related skills | | | |

In a somewhat differing category is that of micro-enterprise and business training which has been increasing at a geometric rate in the curricula of YETPs in the region.

VI. Policy and Programming Recommendations to Promote Employment for Youth in the Sub-region

Based on an analysis of the data collected on the YETPs, particularly the three country studies detailed in Volume 2 (Chapters 1-3), a synopsis of their main characteristics was provided above, together with an evaluation of their impact. This Chapter now concludes with the identification of four main categories of constraints to the deepening of the impact of YETPs and with proposals for reducing the intensity of these constraints.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | Overall | social | conditions | facing | Caribbean | youth |
| 2. | | Pre-training | YETP | policy | | parameters |
| 3. | | | YETP-specific | | | constraints |
| 4. | Post-YETP/graduation experience | | | | | |

1. Social Conditions Facing Caribbean Youth

Three main issues are identified as important in terms of the social conditions of Caribbean youth, particularly "youth at risk".

1(a) Stereotyping of youth on the basis of age, race and place of residence

Young people complained, in the focus group meetings, that they tended to be misjudged and not "given a chance" by employers and others in society on the basis sometimes simply of their age or how they dressed; or more often their race and even more often, in terms of the community in which they live.

Proposal

The proposal is for a programme of education targeted at employers/managers to get them to be sensitive to the cumulative impact of stereotyping.

1(b) Police Harassment

Linked to the above point about stereotyping, some youth complained in focus group meetings, particularly in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and to a lesser extent Barbados, that the police tend to harass young people without any reason.

Proposal

While acknowledging the particular stress and tension under which police officers increasingly function in the region, education programmes on sensitivity to the cumulative impact of abuse of police powers are recommended.

1(c) Dysfunctional Family Backgrounds

Some youth unavoidably come from family backgrounds which are dysfunctional in terms of persistent substance abuse, violence and sometimes, incest.

Proposal

This Study does not offer any specific solutions to this problem, but suggests that this reality needs to be taken into account and addressed by a variety of legal, fiscal and societal support systems. Equally,

actual YETPs need to be sensitive to these issues and include them as part of their programme. All YETPs currently have some programme addressing these issues and include them as part of their overall programme. The focus group meetings suggest that the Adolescent Development Programmes (ADP) of SERVOL in Trinidad and Tobago which runs for 3 ½ months is perhaps the most developed. This is perhaps not surprising given the 25 years experience of this organization and the fact that its target group includes young people in lower income communities.

1(d) Life does not begin at 16

The implication is that one has to conceive of YETPs as being the second or third stage in an entire educational system beginning at nursery, then moving on to primary and then secondary levels. YETPs, as defined, enter at the end of the second and/or third stages. Conceived in this way, the quality of the inputs into every stage depend critically on the quality of the output produced by earlier stages in the educational "production" system. Persisting with the latter metaphor, one can borrow from the latest industrial literature which suggests a shift from "Fordist" mass production to post "Fordist" flexible production systems. The latter is sometimes referred to as "Just-in-Time" (JIT) production. As is well known, the assumption behind this production system is that one can operate with zero inventories because inputs come with zero defects. The corollary is that at every stage of production, "workers" have control over the production flow, as opposed to the mass production assembly line when they are driven by machines. As a result, "workers" can stop the production process and remove any inputs which are defective.

The problem with the overall educational system in the Caribbean, and elsewhere, is that it is still stuck in the Fordist mass production paradigm. Some teachers at nursery, primary and secondary level operate without a positive culture, without system, in many instances without training and other positive support and reward measures in addition to negative, punitive measures, to diagnose and remedy "defects" in learning. As a result, there is a significant degree of wastage of scarce fiscal resource. Governments playing "penny-wise" in restraining expenditure on education, then end up, "pound-foolish" in having to finance additional resources to make up for "defective" products. There is therefore unconscious "double-counting" of expenditure.

Two specific issues are identified within this context.

(i) Wastage of resources at the primary and secondary level

As noted earlier, for example, young people complain bitterly, in focus group meetings, of the quality of teaching in the secondary school system. Teachers were described as insensitive, uncaring and many times as unable to teach. The teachers no doubt have their own explanations. Critical to the overall explanations is the absence of training in particular in addressing the peculiar problems, certainly of some young people.

In addition, massive State educational bureaucracies are many times clogged with bureaucratic red tape and corruption, including the appointment of unsuitable candidates to certain positions. A substantial share of the actual fiscal expenditure on the formal educational system is wasted with perhaps a 25% proportion of the output being "defective" in an educational sense.

(ii) The peculiar problem of "unattached" 13-15/16 year old youth

Some young people find themselves outside the formal educational system from as young as 13 for a variety of reasons. Some fail to gain entry into any post-primary educational institution on the basis of their performance at the Common Entrance examination and the inadequate supply of school places. Others fall out as a result of poverty or lack of parental/adult supervision. This group is too young to work and to gain access to the "non-formal" YETP network. By the time they do come of age at 15/16, they may be lost for life.

Another problem is that of dropouts from the system. In Trinidad and Tobago, 18% of those surveyed who dropped out of the primary school level indicated that they could not afford to go to school. Another 47% indicated that they had "problems" with school work. In the case of secondary school dropouts, 26% cited financial constraints with 13% of the female dropouts giving pregnancy as the explanation.

Proposal

This Study does not present a solution to this overall problem of the linkages between all levels of the educational system. It is highlighted because it is central to everything else. In other words, there is a continuum which links from nursery school to YETP. The solution conceptually, is for an educational system which has a main straight "highway" but also includes "pit-stops" and lay-bys, together with re-entry points for those who, for whatever reason, may need to go "off-track" and be "refitted" for re-entry into the fast, highway track including young females who become pregnant. This Study does not attempt to elaborate further in terms of this overall conception. However, in terms of the "unattached" 13-15/16 year old youth, the proposal is for widespread re-introduction of post-primary centres and perhaps experimental YETPs for this age group.

In terms of the larger problem, one suggestion is for periodic, objective assessment the quality of education at every level and also to propose solutions to same. It would be naïve to assume that there is any easy, simple or "quick-fix" solution. However, a system of routine appraisal, on a comparative basis, to identify "best" and "worst" practice could be central to a systematic change in the overall educational system.

2. Pre-Training YETP Policy Parameters

Before addressing the constraints specific to the training programmes themselves, there are some policy parameters which influence the nature, structure and content of the latter which need to be explicitly addressed.

2(a) Inadequate data for evaluation of existing programmes

As noted earlier, the attempt to evaluate Caribbean YETPs was constrained by the dearth of Tracer Studies and related types of research work. It is imperative that any changes in the programming of YETPs be based on information and data which can be gleaned from both current and historical experience.

There are some current attempts to correct this deficiency. HEART/NTA is reported to be conducting a Tracer Study. The Vocational Training Board in Barbados also is exploring such a possibility while the National Training Board of Trinidad and Tobago recognises the need for a Tracer Study. One interesting proposed core area of data should be on the number of secondary school graduates participating in and their level of certification in the latter. This information could be an input into secondary school reforms.

Proposal

Several proposals suggest themselves. The first is for a common methodology to be utilised for comparative analysis between YETPs and within YETPs over time. Such a methodology will permit the building up of a data-bank to illuminate performance over time. A related solution is to then attempt to apply this methodology, post-facto to existing Tracer and related studies. In other words, greater use can be made of existing studies if they can all be collected and collated, particularly in terms of raw data.

2(b) Political Factors

Unlike the "formal" education sector, "informal" training tends to be marked by a more evident political role. As noted earlier, the very origins of many YETPs can be traced to reactive responses to immediate political crisis. These programmes also tend to suffer the problem of policy and managerial changes as political regimes change.

Proposal

The solution include either formal "privatization" in the sense of passing YETPs to Non-governmental Organizations, or to link financing via a Payroll-type tax, as happens in the case of HEART/NTA in Jamaica, linked to greater representation of interests on the Boards of Management.

2c. Determination of the type of training to be provided and the length of training

As noted earlier, most YETPs provide training in the same generic areas. Although these YETPs report that their decisions are informed by informal surveys, one can speculate that there is an implicit assumption which influences training decisions. The latter seems to be based on the conclusion that training will be provided in skill areas which will be triggered by a demand from those employed in the formal sectors of the economy, including those generating export earnings. The YTEPP focus group in Trinidad and Tobago generated concerns about saturation of the domestic market in terms of the types of training conducted and with the young people making suggestions for more training in export competitive activities. There are some types of "other" training provided particularly in Jamaica, as pointed out earlier, in areas such as data entry and the hospitality industry.

The implicit assumption which informs the dominant mode of training is not without some validity. However, it also is reflective of an approach to youth employment training as targeted at those who do not "make it" in the formal sector. The concept suggested in this Study is of an integrated educational system in which YETPs play multiple roles including the one noted above but also equally important in terms of training all young people for the world of work.

Proposal

The solution requires a greater role for formalization of the process of projecting demand for skills. It is unlikely that most YETPs can undertake such studies independently. Cooperation among YETPs could therefore increase the resources available for such projections. There is no reason why such cooperation could not proceed nationally, sub-regionally (OECS in particular), and regionally (CARICOM). It is intended that such formal studies will not merely survey existing industries but attempt to develop "foresight" in terms of coming trends. There is an obvious link between such futuristic work and Industrial Policy.

The related assumption which informs this proposed solution is that youth employment training will be able to insulate itself from the short-term, politically motivated decisions. which conceive of such training as merely as political expediency which require quantity in terms of number of trainees passing through the system and as quickly as possible, rather than quality.

2(d) Under-representation of certain categories of youth in training, including disabled Casual evidence suggests some under-representation of certain categories of youth. It should be the function of Youth Ministries to develop a profile of youth by geographic region including the category of disabled.

2(e) The peculiar problems of business/micro-enterprise training

The point has been made earlier that there appears to be an over-emphasis on entrepreneurial training. The empirical evidence does not support the assumption behind this focus. This Study is not suggesting

that entrepreneurial training should not be provided. It is arguing for a re-tilt in the balance of thinking and training.

Some evidence was provided earlier to indicate, for example, that only around 2% of SERVOL graduates were involved in self-employment. The proportions is likely to be higher for a YTEPP graduate for example, but unlikely at the most generous to exceed 20/25%. The responses given by youth in focus group meetings to the question of post-graduation plans require interpretation since all three future options were presented to them: to seek further training; to seek employment and; to start own business. However, job seeking and further training were more prevalent answers. There was greater variability in terms of those indicating that they would open their own business. Fifty-three percent of those involved in Cosmetology training in Jamaica indicated such a plan together with 50% of those involved in Barbados Youth Service and the same percentage from one of the SERVOL training centres at Beetham Estate in Trinidad.

Another problem with the actual micro entrepreneurial training is that it assumes that such training can simply replicate what is provided for larger business operations, namely, training in project proposal preparation, balance sheet preparation, etc. Much of this seems to be innocent of the more organic, and apparently confused financial, nature of micro-enterprise operations; the single most important feature of this is the integration of business and personal finances in operations which are oft-times conducted at home. Although this Study did not undertake a detailed evaluation of the micro-entrepreneurial training provided by YETPs, earlier work suggests that there is little Caribbean-specific research on micro-enterprises. A small study conducted by this researcher in 1994 of micro-entrepreneurs in the East/West Corridor in North Trinidad involved in food processing and garment construction found that only 23% of such micro-entrepreneurs were under 25 years old , with 50% recorded over 35 years old . This study also concluded that there were four stages in the trajectory of micro-enterprises and each stage involved certain critical managerial issues which, in turn, required specific forms of public policy support, including training. The implication is that there is no such thing as micro-enterprise training per se; that what is required is training targeted at each stage when the factors determining success shift in focus. The related implication is that such training should be continuous rather than "one on one".

Proposal

YETPs need balance in the structure of their training and to avoid becoming overwhelmed by a new conventional wisdom. The greater need would seem to provide multi-skill training so that graduates can adjust to changing sectoral market conditions in terms of their employability (including self employment). There is also need for more empirical research on the dynamics of micro-entrepreneurial activity in the Caribbean.

3. YETP-Specific Constraints

3(a) The attitudinal mid-set of intakes into YETPs

The literature suggests that attitudes, not skills, of young workers may be the most important constraint to their sustained employment. This problem also may be even more acute in another sense. Some of the youth who participated in the focus group meetings noted their problems of self-confidence. One particular young female indicated that although she had five O'Levels , she did not feel confident enough to face the labour market. The initial adolescent training programme in her YETP had resolved that problem.

Proposal

The solution is to make issues of attitudes, personal confidence, etc. central to youth education, not merely in YETPs but also in the primary and secondary school system. Surrogate parenting in terms of formation of values may be one of the more important requirements for successful teaching.

3(b) Lack of Equipment

Young people involved in YTEPs in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica, complained, in focus group meetings, of the problems of limited facilities and equipment. They complained of having to wait for long periods to access equipment.

Proposal

Given resource constraints, there may be a possibility of sharing equipment with other institutions, including some relatively better equipped secondary schools. A secondary market also could be mobilised by a public information and tendering process.

3(c) Availability of training space and the timing of classes

YTEPs require physical space, in addition to equipment. There is limited availability of such, especially for residential training programmes. No ready solution is offered but this problem needs to be addressed. One solution, by YTEPP in Trinidad and Tobago, is to operate on an evening shift utilising the physical facilities of secondary schools.

3(d) Stigma of YETPs

The focus group encounters revealed that there was a stigma attached to some YETPs. As a result some potential beneficiaries may not even seek entry.

Proposal

A marketing strategy is necessary to highlight the benefits of participating in YTEPs including employment, income and career enhancement. Such a strategy would need to include profiles of success stories. It is interesting to observe that one project in Barbados, which is a very small operation, has produced two videos which highlight its programmes and successful graduates.

3(e) The relative importance of "on the job" training

The literature on youth employment training programmes is skeptical on the benefits of such training when it is unconnected to the actual world of work. Some go so far as to suggest that it is a waste of time and money. While this Study does not go so far, the evidence cannot be ignored. Some of the literature suggest that the most important form of training is to help young people to understand the job search process including where to look, how to present themselves on paper and in person, as well as attitudes on the job. The empirical evidence also suggests that one factor explaining the drop-out rate from YETPs is that young people remain until they have acquired enough training to be employed, or until any job becomes available.

Caribbean YETPs reflect some of this thinking in their practice. SERVOL in Trinidad and Tobago is of the view, for example, that it is preparing its trainees for the job in terms of attitudes and "rudimentary" skills. The National Training Board in Trinidad and Tobago does not provide any institutional training but simply facilitates access to the job market by fiscal transfers. HEART/NTA will shift to a modular form of training from September, 1996 to accommodate those who may only be interested in specific skills.

4. Post-YETP Participation/Graduation Experience

Three distinct post-YETP/graduation experiences were discerned from the focus group meetings which included, in some instances, graduates.

4(a) Frustration at the inability to obtain a job or successful self employment

A proportion of the graduates, and certain drop-outs from YETPs do not find employment or opportunities for self-employment.

4(b) Perceptions of exploitation by employers

Others complained of being exploited by being continuously employed for relatively short-time periods as trainees, with stipends for wages in varying institutions. Others complained about being placed on probation and then dismissed before they could accumulate enough working time to qualify for severance benefits. Interestingly enough, the public sector was included among the institutions engaging in these perceived acts of exploitation.

Proposal

While there may be some exaggeration, over-sensitivity and lack of patience on the part of some of the youth, the perceptions of exploitation seemed too common to be ignored. One possible solution could borrow from the example of National Apprenticeship Programme of Barbados' Vocational Training Board. Here, training runs for three years on the job and apprentices earn not less than 45%; 55% and 65% of a workman's pay in each of these three years respectively.

4(c) The problem of dropouts who wish to complete their training

As noted earlier, some trainees do not complete their training. This does not mean that they do not benefit from their programmes. In fact, it is the very success of their training which may explain their non-completion. The Metal Industries Company in Trinidad and Tobago, for example, runs 3-5 year training programmes for the production of skilled tool and die operators, etc. Within two years of the programme, many of these trainees are attracted by the real salaries as opposed to the stipends paid by the MIC.

Proposal

HEART/NTA in Jamaica has identified an ideal solution which it will implement in September, 1996. This is the provision of training in modular form. This permits trainees to return to complete additional modules. This solution also lends itself to an evening and weekend programme. It is recommended to other YETPs in the Caribbean.

4(d) Provision of credit and assistance in management of own business

Some graduates of YETPs go into self-employment. As noted above, the recent focus on such business and micro-enterprise seems to be excessive and somewhat misplaced. The question is that of balance since there is no doubt that such training does have a place. The focus group meetings also raised concerns about problems of accessing credit as a factor dissuading young people from getting into business. Such concerns were expressed by those still in training and others actually involved in their own businesses. There were problems of management of small businesses, including financial management, particularly where personal and business finances become inextricably, and unavoidably linked.

Proposal

All trainees in YETPs should be trained in personal finance management and in the credit access process including their rights and leverage over credit institutions. In this way, the problem of personal and business flows would benefit from notions of prudence, savings and budgeting of both revenue and expenditure.

VII. Proposals for critical Policy Interventions

A holistic approach is proposed for addressing the issue of youth employment training in the Caribbean. Four main areas have been identified as deserving attention. First, these begin with the overall social conditions facing Caribbean youth. Second, there are pre-training policy parameters specific to youth employment training programmes. Third, there are YETP-specific constraints and finally, post- YETP graduation experience.

Although all of these issues covered under these four areas are important, a sub-set can be identified as critical intervention points. Nine such policy interventions are proposed hereafter across the spectrum of issues detailed earlier under the four main areas.

A. Quality Control Monitoring of the Overall Educational System

As noted earlier, there may be significant double-expenditure of public money on youth training as inadequate educational programmes leave a substantial share of their intakes attitudinally and functionally illiterate. There is need for independent external agencies to serve as 'auditors' of the educational systems. The proposal is that the University of the West Indies and/or other types of relevant tertiary institutions can serve this function. It is vital that such external auditors have some insulation from political interference.

B. Reconstructing Tracer Studies from Archival Data

One of the problems facing assessment of YETPs is the unavailability of data. Even where Tracer Studies have been conducted, there have been inconsistencies in the methodologies used. It is proposed that an effort be made to reconstruct methodologically consistent Tracer Study analysis from the variety of data sources available, including archival sources. The reason for proposing this intervention is to ensure that the lessons of the past are considered in future policy formulation.

C. Review of Methods for Determining areas of Training and the Content of Training

Most youth training seem to be biased towards skills training for derived demand from existing productive enterprises with an increasing tendency to emphasize micro-enterprise training. HEART/NTA in Jamaica is perhaps the only exception. There are dangers in the implicit assumptions which undergrid this regional sharing of experiences and the attempt to develop differing methodological approaches for determining the areas of training. A similar point holds for the nature of the training.

D. De-emphasis of Certification and Modularization of Programmes

The decision of HEART/NTA to shift to modular training appears to be well-founded. The market for training needs to be sensitive to the fact that many potential trainees need to marry immediate demands for income with efforts to improve their skill base and thereby increase income-generating prospects. Moreover, as in the case of micro-enterprise training, certain skill needs may only become important after some time in the work place.

E. Equity of Access to Training

There is a need to ensure that YETPs cover all the relevant bases including those of gender, disability, geography and the special case of those 'at risk'. Ironically, while it is the latter that have tended to trigger some YETPs, the trainee intake does not always reflect this.

F. Attitudinal Training

The transition from school (particularly in a context where discipline is not emphasized or supported by social systems) to the world of work is not a natural one. Attitudinal training requires special emphasis in this context, not merely in YETPs, but in the general education system. The proposal is not for discipline in the military sense but of self-control, self-confidence and personal determination.

G. Profile of Successful Graduates of YETPS

There have been many successful graduates of YETPs. Yet, the public image of these institutions does not always reflect this track record. The proposal is for public education programmes to enhance the public image and attractiveness of YETPs.

H. Indexation of Compensation

One danger facing YETPs is the informal information system among young people themselves which may suggest that training tends to be uncompensated as employers systematically under-pay trainees or even graduates. Country case studies found such complaints both in reports and in the focus group meetings with youth. The Barbados Government provides some assistance by linking compensation to that of a workman's pay. A similar model with some greater flexibility is proposed.