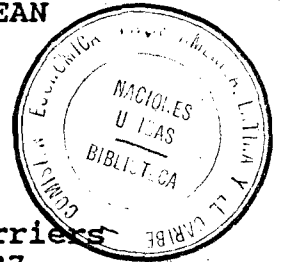


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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Advisory Group Meeting on the Removal of Language Barriers
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago 14-15 December 1987



REPORT ON
ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
ON
THE REMOVAL OF LANGUAGE BARRIERS



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Organization and Attendance	1
Opening session	1
Summary of Discussions on Major Issues	2
Recommendations on Interpreting and Translating	4
Preparation of Documents	6
ANNEXES	
I List of Participants	7
II Caribbean Subregional Project Removal of Language Barriers	8
III Guidelines for the National Chapters of the Caribbean Language Institute (NCCLI)	18

**REPORT ON ADVISORY GROUP MEETING ON THE
REMOVAL OF LANGUAGE BARRIERS PROJECT**

ORGANIZATION AND ATTENDANCE

The Advisory Group Meeting on the Removal of Language Barriers was convened at Holiday Inn Hotel in Port of Spain, from 14-15 December 1987.

The principal objectives of the workshop were:

(a) To discuss and advise on the proposals contained in the draft project document which conceptualizes the future development of the Removal of Language Barriers Programme;

(b) To prepare guidelines for the organization and operations of the National Chapters of the Caribbean Language Institute (NCCLIs);

(c) To advise on the creation of the network of national chapters, language training institutions and personnel in the Caribbean Subregion; and,

(d) To advise on the training of interpreters and translators at the national and regional levels.

The workshop was attended by personnel involved in the field of language training at national and subregional institutions. The participants were drawn from the Instituto Lingwistiko Antiano, Netherlands Antilles; the National Institute for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) Trinidad and Tobago; the Ministry of Education, Trinidad & Tobago; the University of the West Indies; the University of Guyana; the Caribbean Examinations Council and the Universidad Antónoma de Santo Domingo. A list of participants is attached.

Opening session

The opening session of the workshop was chaired by Mr. Wilfred Whittingham, Deputy Director, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, who welcomed the participants and presented a brief overview of the history of the programme. The participants were also welcomed by Mrs. Yvonne Acosta, Assistant, Social Affairs Unit who co-ordinates the programme at ECLAC.

Dr. Frank Martinus, Programme Co-ordinator on behalf of the Government of the Netherlands Antilles, assumed the chairmanship for the remainder of the workshop. In an introductory statement,

he outlined what he perceived to be the essential tasks of the meeting and reviewed the deficiencies of the strategy previously adopted by the programme. The main weaknesses identified were the following:

(a) The plan of action adopted had not been adequately structured; and,

(b) The focus had been on the level of curricula for the teaching of languages and linguistic backgrounds, ignoring the level of planning which would take into account the needs of the community.

He informed the group that the new project proposals were intended to focus on language planning to reflect national needs and those of the Caribbean subregion.

In the first session, wide-ranging discussions centered on the following:

(a) Securing the involvement of regional groups;

(b) Co-ordinating the work of organizations/institutions engaged in language delivery activities inside and outside member countries and the promotion of links with Latin America;

(c) The need for government support of the work of the national chapters;

(d) The need for the national chapters to be developed into self-sustaining entities;

(e) The question of the composition of the national chapters with inherent dangers of conflict;

(f) The need for developing cultural awareness in foreign language teachers and the general public;

(g) Enhancing the instructional process; and,

(h) The need to identify immediate and potential sources of funding.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS ON MAJOR ISSUES

1. Securing the involvement of national groups

This problem was identified as most crucial for the success of the process of designing the National Language Plan. It was agreed that countries should be motivated to formulate plans as a matter of urgency and that the involvement of national groups was

a major factor in stimulating this process. The need for formulated plans was related to the problem of acquisition of funds to carry out all the actions of the programme.

2. The need for government support of the work of the National chapters

It was pointed out that the programme was government-sponsored through the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and that this entailed consequences for its viability.

The following ideas were expressed:

(a) Government had the power to select any agency to advise it on the design of a language plan so it was desirable to work towards a situation in which the national committees could be identified by the governments as the advisory and formulating body involved with designing a National Language Policy; and,

(b) The role of government in the programme was of the highest importance, since any programme for the removal of language barriers could not have the necessary structure to achieve its ends without government sanction and would, therefore, lack sustainability.

3. The need for National Chapters to be developed into self-sustaining entities

Fears were expressed, that the National Chapter might emerge as a defining body, without the ability to carry out other desirable functions such as research, programme development, and other concrete actions.

4. The Role of the National Language Plans

After wide-ranging discussions, the meeting agreed to the following:

(a) National plans should build on and enhance the work of already existing professional language bodies, co-ordinating and facilitating their activities. Similarly, the regional body would facilitate the activities of the national bodies;

(b) The establishment of a structure based on the NCCLIs and the Caribbean Language Institute (CLI) would provide a catalyst for attracting funding. The preparation of a regional plan was an important element of this structure. The revised document should reflect the new emphasis on the language plan as a basis for interaction with other agencies;

(c) The objectives of the national planning bodies should be reviewed so as to highlight the new priorities;

(d) Past experience of the RLB project suggests that the time frame for producing National Language Plans should be flexible, in view of the preparatory work which would need to be done in all the territories;

(e) The function of language planning clearly devolves on national governments. NCCLIs could at best act or seek to achieve the status of an adviser to the government, which would nevertheless at all times be open to other sources of advice; and

(f) The National Chapters should focus their attention on devising strategies to motivate and influence the political process, focusing on strategies for eliminating cultural and linguistic barriers.

Examples would be:

- (i) Dissemination of cultural information;
- (ii) Sensitization of the public;
- (iii) Compiling a directory of current action.

5. The functions of the NCCLIs

It was agreed that the National Chapters:

(a) were needed to guarantee permanence of structure, to provide operating bodies to put into effect an agreement to which Caribbean governments are signatories;

(b) could constitute an advisory body and a linking mechanism between language institutions, the education professionals at secondary and tertiary levels and the Ministries of Education;

(c) should assist, enhance and co-ordinate already existing language activities, the co-ordinating function being specifically emphasized;

(d) should serve as advisory bodies to the Ministries of Education of respective countries;

(e) could attempt to prepare governments to take action on the matter of devising a language plan and implementing related activities; and,

(f) should articulate current positions on language policies.

The Advisory Group felt that it was important to ensure that the Project Document emerging from the present meeting should make clear to the National Chapters the guidelines which should regulate their functioning.

6. Other tasks of the National Chapters

The following tasks were also identified for the National Chapters.

- (a) Articulation of current policy;
- (b) Facilitation of inter-governmental communication; and,
- (c) Co-ordinating Language Training at the secondary and tertiary levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING

The meeting agreed that there was no need for a debate on the question of the need for translators and interpreters in the region since there was adequate opportunity for marketing their skills, particularly as the Removal of Language Barriers project would itself generate activities.

It was proposed that a translation and interpretation sub-committee of the Caribbean Language Institute Co-ordinating Committee be instituted.

It was suggested that the sub-committee be comprised of national representatives who should be trained translators, at best, or have professional experience in the area of translating or interpreting. The functions of the sub-committee would be to:

- (a) Undertake responsibility for researching the existing capabilities and training institutions of the participating countries;
- (b) Encourage the increase and improvement of translation and interpreting services at the national level;
- (c) Facilitate the creation of a pool of translators and interpreters at the national level on which governments and other users can draw on as a first option;
- (d) Stimulate the creation of national associations of translators and interpreters whose responsibility it would be to set standards and to assess its members;
- (e) Facilitate formation of a group of itinerant translators and interpreters who would supplement the programmes; and,

(f) Channel the information gathered to the Caribbean Language Institute, which would in turn disseminate the information to participating countries.

It was suggested that activities of the Translating and Interpreting Sub-Committee could be initially centered around the institutions/countries/entities presently involved in translating/interpreting activities.

Participants stressed that individual countries should be asked to examine the role of translating and interpreting at different levels in government departments.

It was proposed that the Translation and Interpretation Sub-Committee undertake the rationalization of regional training and certification in the region, even as countries with current interpretation/translation programmes attempt to rationalize such programmes at the national level.

The meeting concluded that in the context of the aims and objectives of the Removal of Language Barriers Project a series of translating and interpreting activities will be generated.

PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTS

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to the following activities:

- (a) The revision of the project document; ¹ and
- (b) The preparation of guidelines for the National Chapters of the Caribbean Language Institute; ².

¹/ as at Annex II

²/ as at Annex III

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BARBADOS

Mr. Hubert Charles
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 Director
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 Antiano
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 National Institute of
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 St. Augustine

ECLAC

Mr. Wilfred Whittingham

Deputy Director

Mrs. Yvonne Acosta

Co-ordinator, Language Barriers
 Project

PROJECT PROFILE

PROJECT TITLE: Removal of Language Barriers

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE: ECLAC/CDCC Member countries

PROJECT LANGUAGE: English, Spanish, French, Dutch and Caribbean Creole Languages

PROJECT SITE OF ACTIVITY: ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and Instituto Lingwistiko Antiano, Ministry of Education, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles.

STARTING DATE: Last quarter 1987

COMPLETION DATE: Last quarter 1990

DURATION: 40 months

TOTAL BUDGET: US\$300,000.00

CONTRIBUTIONS: UNECLAC: \$86,000 (In Kind)
DONORS:

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY: UNECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago.

CO-OPERATING AGENCY: Ministry of Education, Netherlands Antilles, UNESCO/CARNEID Office, Barbados.

PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS: CDCC Member governments, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. CDCC Associate Member Governments: Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands, the Netherlands Antilles and the US Virgin Islands.

NATIONAL LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS: Ministries of Education, Culture and Foreign Affairs, Language Institutes, Language Teachers Associations.

SUBREGIONAL LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS: Subregional Universities and the Caribbean Examinations Council.

I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

At its constitution in Havana in 1975, the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) was immediately faced with language barriers, ensuing from the fact that there are four official languages of its member countries: English, Spanish, French, and Dutch. It was realized that special efforts would have to be made to overcome the resulting language barriers so as to establish subregional co-operation as envisioned by the constitution of the CDCC.

At the second session held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 1977, the Committee agreed to engage a consultant to carry out an initial survey on foreign language teaching policies, facilities and methodology in the Caribbean. This study was submitted for evaluation to a group of Caribbean language specialists and government representatives at a CDCC meeting convened in Belize in 1978. On the basis of the work accomplished, at its third and fourth sessions the Committee recommended:

(a) The organization of a "Caribbean Regional Workshop on Modern Approaches to the Teaching of Foreign Languages" involving the widest possible participation of relevant policy-makers and language teachers, especially teachers holding pivotal positions in universities, teacher-training institutions and senior secondary schools.

(b) A series of national level workshops similar to the subregional one mentioned above, as well as other training courses to facilitate the widest possible application of the modern approaches accepted at that workshop and, hence, the improvement of language teaching in the national systems.

(c) The development of courses for the training of translators/interpreters.

It was envisaged that these three activities would eventually lead to the creation of a Caribbean Language Institute which would organize the promotion and co-ordination of teaching-training programmes in the region.

However, in spite of the political will expressed by the member states, the urgency of the situation and the offers of assistance made by several countries to contribute human resources and physical facilities, the lack of financial resources impeded implementation.

During 1982 the project was presented for consideration to the Government of the Netherlands Antilles which had just become an Associate member of the CDCC. At the seventh session of CDCC held in Port-of-Spain in 1983, the delegation of the Netherlands Antilles informed the meeting that its Government had established

a Working Group to consider the implementation of the project. The Netherlands Antilles hosted the Subregional Workshop on the Removal of Language Barriers from 29 August to 9 September 1983, in Curacao, with financial co-operation from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation/Caribbean Network for Educational Innovation for Development (UNESCO/CARNEID). The Netherlands Antilles provided the co-ordination for the continuation of the project activities. The Minister of Education of the Netherlands Antilles as the ad hoc Co-ordinator of the project, supported by other member states of the CDCC, requested financial assistance from UNESCO under the Participation Programme 1984-1985.

This application was approved by the UNESCO General Conference, and US\$25,000 was allocated to the project in 1984. This amount was used to carry out national workshops in the following member states: Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles and Trinidad and Tobago.

Additional funds will be needed to complete the second phase of the programme, that is, to assist the remaining CDCC member countries to organize their national workshops. These countries are: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Montserrat, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the British Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

The Antillean Language Institute of the Ministry of Education, Netherlands Antilles has been the co-ordinating agency for the National Workshops, with the assistance and co-operation of the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat.

II. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The creation of mechanisms for the removal of language barriers in the Caribbean in order to facilitate closer collaboration in the area of educational, cultural, social and economic development among member countries of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC).

III. OBJECTIVES

(a) The emphasis will be on the creation of a network which will utilise the services of existing institutions and resource persons available in the subregion.

(b) The implementation of the project would promote the development of a programme of communication, exchange of information and enhancement of language instruction.

(c) The promotion of both internal and external communication through focus on the official languages used in subregion: English, Spanish, French and Dutch, as well as the creole languages. Consideration will also be given to Portuguese.

IV. INSTRUMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The two main instruments for achieving these objectives are:

(a) the establishment of a Caribbean Language Institute (CLI); and

(b) the establishment of National Chapters of the CLI (NCCLI).

Caribbean Language Institute

The CLI will be a regional collaborative institution operating under the aegis of the CDCC and responsible for co-ordinating regional initiatives in the field of language towards the "Removal of Language Barriers" in the Caribbean.

The CLI will be initiated with National Chapters in each member state. The National Chapters will comprise representatives from relevant institutions in each country such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the University, Teachers' Training Colleges, Language Associations, Language Centres, Institutions for Adult Education, the UNESCO National Commissions and the mass media.

Delegates of the various NCCLIs together will constitute the Co-ordinating Committee of the CLI (CCCLI). Until the first convocation of the CLI, its co-ordination will be assured by the Ministry of Education, Netherlands Antilles. That Ministry and the CDCC Secretariat will work in close co-operation to constitute the Secretariat of the Co-ordinating Committee. The Co-ordinating Committee will meet every two years.

The activities of the CLI shall include:

(a) The training of foreign language teachers in modern approaches to language teaching-learning by means of national and subregional seminars/workshops;

(b) The establishment of programmes to increase the number and improve the skills of translators and interpreters in CDCC member countries and to rationalize their efforts so as to facilitate the accessibility of information subregionally;

(c) Development of a Data Bank of language institutions, organisations, materials and resource personnel in the region to provide support for language training and technical co-operation programmes at the regional level;

(d) The co-ordination of language planning in the region to reflect the development needs as identified by the National Chapters;

(e) The improvement of language teaching by the use of modern approaches and the creation of interest and sensitivity towards the official languages used in the Caribbean; the significant enhancement of the willingness to speak and listen to them and the augmentation of the number of people who communicate in them in order to facilitate the sharing and exchange of development information between CDCC Member countries, so as to avoid duplication of activities and to promote increased co-operation.

The Activities of the National Chapters of the CLI shall include:

(a) The carrying out of research on attitudes towards foreign languages in their countries and on their countries' language needs, so as to formulate short and long-term language plans¹ for consideration and possible adoption by their governments.

(b) The organisation of workshops, seminars, conferences and other activities to meet national language training needs.

(c) The creation of a data bank on language teaching and learning, language teaching personnel and language resource materials. The data bank will be linked to the Regional DataBank of the CLI.

(d) The encouragement of the use of appropriate modern technology in language activities.

VI. ACTIVITIES OF THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

¹ A Language Plan is a necessary tool to ensure that the foreign language activities in the country are relevant to the needs of the country. (It should keep students and teachers motivated by providing them with clearer insights into the usefulness of their efforts).

The Co-ordinating Committee will give itself a statute in which it will formulate its rules of procedure.

In addition to developing a Caribbean Language Plan and Policy the Co-ordinating Committee will also be involved in the following activities:

(a) The linkage of the national data banks into a Caribbean Regional Data Bank on language training, language institutions, language personnel and materials inside and outside the Caribbean;

(b) The receipt of funds and their disbursement for the support and promotion of national language plans and activities;

(c) The provision of support for activities which can be pursued at the subregional level such as the development of training materials, assistance in curriculum development etc.;

(d) Responsibility for facilitating increased exposure to the countries where the foreign languages are spoken. This includes:

(i) Fellowships to students who excel in language studies to visit countries (preferably in the Caribbean) where the languages studied by these students are spoken;

(ii) Teacher and student exchange programmes.

(e) The maintenance of specific contacts with programmes and institutions such as the following:

- (i) Language programmes emanating from member countries;
- (ii) Hispanophone, anglophone, francophone, hollandophone and creolophone cultural institutions, organizations and associations;
- (iii) Important language teaching institutions throughout the world;
- (iv) Caribbean communications and information agencies and organizations;

- (v) Teacher training colleges in the Caribbean;
- (vi) Universities in the Caribbean;
- (vii) The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC);
- (viii) The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation/Caribbean Network for Educational Innovation for Development (UNESCO/CARNEID);
- (ix) International and other institutes for training interpreters and translators;
- (x) Existing cultural activities such as the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA);
- (xi) Other public and private organizations which have specific language goals; and
- (xii) Other institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS).

(f) The publication of a quarterly called: Bulletin of the Caribbean Language Institute.

VI. PROJECT OUTPUT

(a) The sensitization of the general Caribbean population to the importance of bilingualism and multilingualism, including creole languages, as a means of increasing knowledge of the underlying commonalities on the one hand, and the cultural diversity on the other hand, existing in the subregion and to the importance of preserving the language - associated cultural heritage;

(b) The increase in the number and range of trained personnel and improvement in the efficiency and efficacy of foreign language training in the CDCC member countries;

(c) Increase and improvement in translation and interpreting services in the CDCC member countries;

(d) Increased knowledge of languages which should facilitate economic and social collaboration, increase Caribbean cultural awareness and stimulate intra-regional trade and other kinds of contacts among CDCC member countries.

VIII. WORKPLAN FOR 1987 - 1990

(a) Preparation of the Bulletin of the Caribbean Language Institute - 1987-1990;

(b) The convening of national workshops (1987-1990) in the following countries:

(i) 1987: 1 Workshop - last quarter
1987: Antigua and Barbuda.

(ii) 1988/1990: Eleven workshops:
Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and the United States Virgin Islands.

(c) The creation of National Chapters of the Caribbean Language Institute (Last quarter 1988 - 2nd quarter 1990);

(d) Preparation of National Language Plans (1987-1990);

(e) Drawing up of the Common Caribbean Language Plan (1989-1990);

(f) First meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Caribbean Language Institute in the second half of 1990 to:

(i) Determine the budgets of the NCCLIs.

(ii) Determine the Common Caribbean Language Policy and its Budget.

(g) The training of interpreters and translators (1988-1990);

(h) The creation of a pool of interpreters and translators (1989-1990).

IX. PROJECT SUMMARY

The project aims at creating, on a national as well as on a Caribbean subregional level, the infrastructure and mechanisms necessary to accomplish increased communication among CDCC member countries. Besides enhancing nationally the quality of foreign language study and teaching, the network of the Caribbean Language Institute will seek to promote collaboration with regard to language training and use.

By questioning their linguistic past and future together in the process of language planning the Caribbean people may continue to discover their common qualities and their common strengths. The project should be considered to be worthwhile, once the mechanism has been set in motion to improve language communication among Caribbean peoples.

The subsequent phases of the programme will, on the one hand, maintain and intensify this communication and, on the other hand, will influence collaborative action through increased knowledge and contact between the various agencies and persons involved.

During the second and subsequent phase of the project a set of institutions will be created and maintained by the network of the Caribbean Language Institute. Some of these include: the translation and cross-publication of Caribbean literature and other works in the different geographical and language sectors of the Caribbean; student exchange; teacher exchange; summer courses; cultural festivals and language contests; instrumentalization of the creole languages i.e. increasing the use of these languages in formal and official communication; and, interconnected government translating centres.

It is estimated that within a few years after these institutions have been set in motion the first indications of change should be noted.

ANNEX III

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Caribbean Subregional Project
Removal of Language Barriers in the Caribbean

GUIDELINES FOR THE NATIONAL CHAPTERS
OF THE CARIBBEAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

These guidelines have been formulated by the experts at the Advisory Group Meeting convened to provide suggestions on the composition, role and functioning of the National Chapters of the Caribbean Language Institute. They should be considered as an extension of the project document.

GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL CHAPTERS

Composition

The National Chapters should comprise representatives of as many agencies and institutions involved in language activities as is deemed useful. These could include the following: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, University, Teachers' Training College, Language Associations, Language Centres, Institutions for Adult Education and the UNESCO National Commissions. The National Chapter should operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.

Goal

The goal is to undertake a series of activities within the framework of a national language plan so as to develop the capacity and resources of the country in foreign and local languages in order to enhance the communication of people within the region.

Objectives

- (a) To research the language needs in the respective countries;
- (b) To identify and prioritize the specific needs of the country within specified time frames; and
- (c) To submit an annual progress report on language teaching activities in the country for dissemination within the region.

Specific Objectives

- (a) Training
 - (i) to identify the needs in teaching language;
 - (ii) to organize activities, including workshops, seminars and conferences, designed to enhance the knowledge of and

the competencies in the target languages;

- (iii) to stimulate the use of mass media in language teaching;
- (iv) to encourage the production of local materials for use in language teaching;
- (v) to create a national data bank on language teaching-learning, linguistic research, personnel and language resource materials.

(b) Translating and Interpreting

- (i) to investigate and categorize the national needs for translating and interpreting services;
- (ii) to encourage training of translators and interpreters;
- (iii) to encourage a national association of translators and interpreters.

(c) Promotion of Culture

- (i) sensitizing nationals to the culture of the peoples of the Caribbean;
- (ii) to promote exchanges at the level of students, teachers, artists, and materials (books, music and artifacts); and
- (iii) to utilize the mass media in bringing about awareness and appreciation of Caribbean cultures.