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Supplementary Note on the
Caribbean Documentation Centre

C O N T E N T S

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JOINT ECLA/UNESCO PROGRAMME
SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON THE
CARIBBEAN DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

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1. BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In January 1977, a Documentation Centre, attached to the
Secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee
(CDCC) was created in response to a mandate from the member countries:

- "to expedite the process of mutual exchange;"
- "to eliminate deficiencies in communication,
  data gathering and distribution;"
- "to establish a system for collecting
  technological and methodological data
  covering the sub-region."

The main functions of the Centre have been outlined as "dissemination
and referral services, rather than a centralized gathering of documents
and data." In particular, the need has been stressed to comply
immediately with the following specific functions:

- To facilitate "information interchange among CDCC
  Secretariat and CDCC member countries' ministries
  during co-ordination and implementation processes...,
  about the priority sectors on which regional
  co-operation actions are to be centered."
- To provide "both decision-making and
  decision-preparing agents of CDCC" with
  needed information.

With the assistance of the Latin American Centre for Economic and
Social Documentation (CLADES), the Centre has initiated a preliminary
phase of action which covers:

- Identification of the Centre's priority users;
- Identification of these users' information
  requirements;
- Analysis of existing documentation services
  in the Caribbean that might fulfil the users'
  information requirements;

- Comparison of information demand and information
  supply for each type of information required.

Due to the very recent appointment of the Documentalist/Librarian,
the effectiveness of the Centre in carrying out its functions cannot be
assessed as yet. Also, the Centre has not been able to fill the remaining
posts foreseen in the document E/CEPAL/CDCC/16/Rev.1. However, it can
well be anticipated that its potential capacity in meeting the CDCC mandate
will depend, to a major extent, on the following basic conditions:

- Its degree of access to information existing
  within and outside the sub-region.

- The adequacy of the mechanisms of information
  flow (application of modern telecommunication
  techniques).

Therefore, any long-term action of the Centre will have to be based
on a thorough knowledge of the current stage of library, documentation
and information development in the sub-region, its achievements and
problems, particularly regarding the building up of national infra-
structures of integrated services.

At the time of writing this document the results of the survey
now being undertaken to this end by CLADES, were not yet available.

Also, no up-dated literature on the development of information
facilities in the Spanish, French and Dutch-speaking member countries of
the CDCC was at hand.

Nonetheless, the review of sources available in Port of Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago, and interviews with leading librarians of that
country clearly indicated that the development of information
facilities in the English-speaking CDCC member countries is far more
advanced than in the Associated States where library and information
services are still in an embryonic stage.

Information available on the English-speaking CDCC member states
reveals the existence of certain common problem areas which differ from
country to country only in degree, and which impede optimum utilization

of information resources and services available within and outside
the sub-region. The most critical areas are:

i) Acquisitions

Acquisition and - consequently - bibliographic control,
particularly of non-conventional literature and unpublished data
(from governments and other sources), still constitute a very
critical area.

In spite of persistent efforts undertaken by individual
libraries as well as library associations, to find solutions to
this pressing problem, no adequate regulations and satisfying mechanisms
for collecting these materials at the local level, have been established
as yet.

On the other hand the Acquisitions Committee of the
Association of Caribbean University and Research Libraries (ACURIL) has
proposed a scheme for co-operative acquisition of materials published
in the English-speaking Caribbean to facilitate access. The plan as
formulated has not been implemented, but partial efforts have been made
at co-operative acquisitions, within the possibilities of the participating
libraries. It is understood that a new initiative to solve this problem
has been set forward.

With regard to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Protocol
(1974) for the exchange of government documents, no steps towards imple-
mentation have been taken.

ii) Bibliographic Control

Due to the above-stated circumstances, bibliographic control
of material published in the sub-region, has not been completely
achieved. It must be noted however, that five of the English-speaking
member countries (Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and
Belize) publish current national bibliographies. These bibliographies
record the materials which reach the deposit libraries.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) played an important role in getting some of these national bibliographies started (Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago), due to its sponsorship of a series of planning meetings in 1974. Jamaica and Guyana, on the other hand, started producing their national bibliographies much earlier.

At the Regional Workshop on National Bibliographies of the English-speaking Caribbean held in Georgetown, Guyana, 25-29 November 1974, it was suggested that Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, should assume responsibility to include publications sent to them from the Associated States. This recommendation does not seem to have been implemented, presumably due to difficulties in obtaining the material.

As to the publishing of a current regional bibliography, the CARICOM Secretariat Library has assumed this responsibility, but so far no volume has been issued.

Though the Caribbean Regional Library, located in Puerto Rico, started publishing in 1951 the Current Caribbean Bibliography (CCB), this bibliographical tool is by no means up-to-date, as the last volume available covers the year 1972. In spite of its original projections, the Library has not been able to function as a regional co-ordinating body due to its being supported exclusively by the Government of Puerto Rico.

iii) Union Catalogues and Union Lists of Serials

Though attempts have been made, particularly by public library services, to establish a record of complete holdings within their systems, no national union catalogues and national union lists of serials have been compiled as yet in the English-speaking member countries. Therefore, information on the holdings of most of the individual libraries and documentation centres operating in the sub-region, is still difficult to obtain.

iv) <u>Regional Inventories</u>

No comprehensive inventory has been conducted yet on all the different library, documentation and information facilities existing in the sub-region.

The CLADES survey, currently underway, covers mainly those insitutions which specialize in economic and social information.

Other specialized surveys are being conducted by the following international organizations:

UNESCO: UNISIST inventory of on-going research information systems and services.

UNCTAD: Feasibility Study on the progressive establishment of an international information exchange system for the transfer and assessment of technology.

UNEP: Survey of existing documentation capacity conducted for the International Referral System for sources of environmental Information (IRS).

No information has come to hand on the status of these surveys.

v) <u>Information Policies</u>

To our knowledge, of the English-speaking member countries, only Jamaica, through its National Council on Libraries, Archives and Documentation, is in the process of formulating information policies on which to base national planning for integrated information services and resources.

vi) <u>National Information System</u>

In spite of the vigorous development of library and documentation work in the sub-region, only Jamaica, of the English-speaking countries, is taking steps towards the achievement of full integration of its different and diversified services into a National Information System, having established in 1974 the National Council on Libraries, Archives and Documentation, which has assumed responsibilities for development planning in this particular field.

The remaining English-speaking countries have not yet established corresponding national co-ordinating bodies.

vii) Manpower

Manpower planning needs and training requirements to implement National Information Systems have not been assessed and projected for the English-speaking countries. It is understood that the Department of Library Studies of the University of the West Indies (Mona, Jamaica), is preparing a relevant survey.

viii) Regional Co-ordinating Body

No regional focal point has been established to co-ordinate information facilities existing in the Caribbean and access to systems and services available outside the sub-region.

During the UNESCO/Jamaica Library Service Workshop on the Planning of NATIS, Library and Documentation networks for the Caribbean Area, held in Kingston, Jamaica, 10-14 November 1975, the pariticpants recommended "that a Regional Library Advisory Council with broad representation from the CARICOM Countries be established to advise the CARICOM Secretariat and through it, the Heads of Government of the Region on the development and maintenance of a co-ordinated network of National Information Systems (NATIS) in accordance with appropriate library standards for the Caribbean Region."

However, no steps have been taken to implement the recommendation. Considering that CARICOM embraces only the English-speaking countries, the need arises to entrust the responsibility for co-operative and co-ordinated regional development of information facilities to an inter-governmental body which represents the interests of the total sub-region. In establishing this regional focal point, the commitment of CARICOM to the Associated States must be fully recognized and supported. It is equally important that the co-ordinating body should draw on the experience and knowledge of professional in this and related fields (ACURIL, etc.) by creating an advisory council.

At present, several projects with potential regional coverage are underway. At the time of preparing this document complete information was not at hand; mention is made therefore only of the following:

(a)   The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) of the University of the West Indies (Mona Campus), has initiated in 1975 the Development-Output Evaluation and Research Service (DOERS) project, "to collect and disseminate documentation and hard data on contemporary social, economic and political happenings in the English-speaking Caribbean."

(b)   The Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), based at St. Augustine, Trinidad, offers a Technical Information Service.

(c)   The Library of the Ministry of Agriculture, Jamaica, as well as the University of the West Indies Library at St. Augustine, Trinidad, have established contact with the International Information System for Agricultural Science and Technology (AGRIS), providing input of agricultural data, produced in the Caribbean, and receiving in return the printed output. The University of Guyana has also recently agreed to input data to AGRIS.

(d)   ACURIL has started the publication of the Caribbean Social Science Index (CARINDEX), a biennial author and subject index to cover newspapers and journals published in the sub-region and not indexed elsewhere.

None of these projects, however, provides the necessary framework to assume the responsibilities of a regional co-ordinating body.

2.   OBJECTIVES

Bearing in mind that the CDCC's mandate calls for optimum utilization of available resources and taking into account CDCC's immediate information needs, its Documentation Centre will have to operate in compliance with the following objectives:

Immediate Aim

To fill the existing gap of information supply, providing priority users of the CDCC Secretariat and member states

with information urgently needed and not available
through other channels.

To this end a plan of action has been outlined in
the document E/CEPAL/CDCC/16/Rev.1.

Ultimate aim

To assume the responsibilities of an inter-governmental
co-ordinating body in order to secure a balanced and
integrated development of national information systems
in the Caribbean and facilitate the flow of information
among the Caribbean countries, and between them and the
rest of the world.

This objective is based on the following reasons:

i) There is a definite need for co-ordination, expressed
over a long period of time by librarians and documentalists,
in view of the many but dispersed efforts undertaken in
the field of library and information work.

ii) No regional co-ordinating body has been established
to assume such responsibilities.

iii) The CDCC was created by the governments of the sub-region
to "act as a co-ordinating body for activities relating to
development and co-operation..."; its sphere of action
embraces the total sub-region.

3.   WORK PLAN

The development of an effective system of information flow has
received priority in the work programme of the CDCC Secretariat.

The above objectives call for concentrating efforts on the
following areas of action:

- to make the CDCC Documentation Centre quickly
operational;
- to assist the CDCC member countries, and through CARICOM
the Associated States, in the development of National
Information Systems;

- to examine the feasibility of setting up a
  sub-regional network.

Accordingly, the following plan of operation should be implemented:

i) <u>Immediate organization of the Documentation Centre</u>

   This implies the following actions:
   - to implement the plan of operation outlined
     in document E/CEPAL/CDCC/16/rev.1;
   - to devise a scheme whereby non-conventional
     materials and unpublished data about subject
     areas of priority to the CDCC Secretariat's
     work plan are made available and easily
     collected. It is recommended that a relevant
     project be prepared which would provide for
     adequate funding in order to collect material
     at source;
   - to determine the feasibility of applying automated
     processing and retrieval devices for the establish-
     ment of a current awareness service and selective
     dissemination of information.

ii) <u>Advisory services to CDCC Governments</u>
    <u>on the development of NATIS</u>

    Due to the urgency of having ready access to facilities
    existing in the sub-region, advisory services for
    planning and implementing NATIS, should be taken up
    as soon as the results of the CLADES survey have been
    assessed. Thereafter, the following steps are necessary,
    giving priority to the Less Developed Countries:

    - to advise the CDCC member governments and, through
      CARICOM, the Associated States, on the formulation
      of comprehensive information policies;
    - to advise the governments, professional
      associations, institutions and organizations
      involved in the creation and development of

libraries, documentation and information centres,
on the integration of existing services into National
Information Systems;

- to assess and project the specific manpower requirements
and training needs, at the professional and para-professional
level, to implement planning and development of National
Information Systems;

- to provide for the creation of union catalogues and
union lists of serials on the national and regional
level, bibliographic control being an essential
component of NATIS. In view of the non-existence
of these tools in the English-speaking Caribbean, a
special project might have to be prepared providing
alternative solutions and financial arrangements.

iii) Feasibility Study of setting up a
regional information network

This study will have to be based on the assessment of
the outcome of the CLADES survey and other inventories
(UNESCO/UNISIST/UNCTAD), currently being undertaken.
Should the data prove incomplete to establish a
comprehensive diagnosis of the present situation of
information facilities in the sub-region, a
supplementary survey might have to be conducted.

The feasibility study should take into account the
following terms of reference:

- analysis of the existing situation;
- conceptual framework and policy objectives
for the creation of the regional network;
- components and structure of the network;
- legal basis, structure and functions of
the co-ordinating body at the national level;
- legal basis, structure and functions of the
regional focal point, and its relation to other
regional bodies existing in the Caribbean;

- identification of information priorities according
  to priorities established in the sub-regional
  development programme;
- assessment and projection of manpower needs;
- assessment and projection of training requirements
  and facilities;
- terms of co-operation:
  possibilities of pooling resources,
  different transfer methods.
- assessment of technology needs to facilitate
  flow of recorded information;
- analysis of establishing links with systems
  outside the sub-region (UNISIST/DEVSIS, AGRIS, ERIC,
  MEDLARS, etc.);
- definition of short, medium and long-term
  priorities to implement a plan of action;
- time table;
- budget proposals;
- evaluation of technical assistance needs
  on the national as well as sub-regional level.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

It is understood that the outlined plan of action has to be
carried out as far as possible with resources available within the
region.

Nevertheless, the actions to be taken require highly qualified
personnel, and top professionals; those working at present in the
sub-region are placed in key positions and, therefore, not available
on full-time terms.

In view of the urgency to improve information flow within the
sub-region and provide for ready access to information existing
outside the Caribbean, the following Technical Assistance is, therefore,
requested.

i) <u>Experts and Consultants</u>

The implementation of the project requires the appointment of the following advisory personnel: (See Page 13).

ii) <u>Travel of Experts and Consultants</u>

The regional scope of the project requires constant travel of the international staff assigned to it.

iii) <u>Training</u>

Four regional workshops and one on the national level (Trinidad) are planned for training personnel working in libraries and documentation centres in the CDCC member countries. The workshops will deal with different aspects of documentation and information flow.

iv) <u>Equipment</u>

To implement the project, a calculating machine and two typewriters must be purchased.

v) <u>Miscellaneous</u>

Includes telephone calls, cables, reporting costs, maintenance of equipment, etc.

i) <u>Experts and Consultants</u>

Technical Assistance Requested	Activities	Sponsoring Organization	DURATION		TOTAL m/m
			BEGINNING DATE	COMPLETION DATE	
Project Co-ordinator	Advise on the organization of the Documentation Centre	UNESCO ECLA	July 1977	Dec. 1978	18
	Advise CDCC member Governments on the development of NATIS	UNESCO ECLA			
	Prepare feasibility study on regional information network	UNESCO ECLA			
	Conduct 2 regional workshops on NATIS	CLADES UNESCO			
Expert in Planning for NATIS	Advise the Associated States on the development of NATIS (working closely with CARICOM)	UNESCO ECLA CARICOM	Oct. 1977	Dec. 1978	15
Consultant in documentation techniques	Advise the Documentation Centre on different techniques of documentation	UNESCO ECLA	Sept.1977	Oct. 1977	2
	Conduct a national workshop on this topic	CDCC Secretariat			
Consultant in computerized information, storage, processing and retrieval	Examine the feasibility of utilizing automated processes for the dissemination and referral functions of the Documentation Centre	UNESCO ECLA	Oct. 1977	Nov. 1977	2

| Technical Assistance Requested | Activities | Sponsoring Organization | DURATION | | TOTAL m/m |
			BEGINNING DATE	COMPLETION DATE	
	Conduct a regional workshop on this topic	ACURIL			
Consultant in systems analysis	Devise alternative schemes for the structure and functioning of the regional information network	UNESCO ECLA	Jan. 1978	March 1978	3
	Conduct regional workshop on this topic	UNESCO ECLA			
Consultant in Telecommunications	Assess the feasibility of applying modern tele-communication techniques to facilitate flow of information within the CDCC member states, among them and with systems located outside the Caribbean.				
	Participate in workshop on the regional information network	UNESCO ECLA			

5. BUDGET PROVISIONS

The implementation of the project requires the following budget provisions:

i) COUNTERPART CONTRIBUTION (CDCC/ECLA)

Specification	TOTAL		1977		1978	
	m/m	US$	m/m	US$	m/m	US$
PERSONNEL						
Chief Documentalist	18	27,000	6	9,000	12	18,000
Documentalist/Librarian	24	25,840	12	12,920	12	12,920
Documentalist/Programmer	18	11,310	6	3,770	12	7,540
Assistant Information Officer	18	15,450	6	5,150	12	10,300
TRAVEL						
Missions within the Region		10,000		4,000		6,000
TRAINING						
Regional Workshop		15,000		15,000		
EQUIPMENT AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC MATERIALS						
Specialized documentation equipment (microfilm reader, reproduction equipment)		20,000		15,000		5,000
Basic reference books; periodical subscriptions		17,500		12,000		5,500
Documentation Centre publication		3,000		1,000		2,000
MISCELLANEOUS		5,000		1,500		3,500
SUB-TOTAL		150,100		79,340		70,760

ii) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTRIBUTION

Specification	TOTAL		1977		1978	
	m/m	US$	m/m	US$	m/m	US$
PERSONNEL						
Project Co-ordinator[1]	1/18	65,610	1/6	21,870	1/12	43,740
Expert in Planning for NATIS	1/15	49,500	1/3	9,900	1/12	39,600
Consultants:						
Documentalist	1/2	10,000	1/2	10,000		
Computer Programmer	1/2	10,000	1/2	10,000		
Systems Analyst	1/2	10,000			1/2	10,000
Specialist in Tele-communications	1/2	10,000			1/2	10,000
Secretariat support	2/12	21,750	2/6	7,250	2/12	14,500
TRAVEL						
Project Co-ordinator		15,000		5,000		10,000
Expert		6,000		1,000		5,000
Consultants		9,000				9,000
TRAINING						
2 Regional Workshops		30,980		15,490		15,490
EQUIPMENT						
2 Typewriters		1,000		1,000		
1 Calculator		500		500		
MISCELLANEOUS		7,500		2,500		5,000
SUB-TOTAL		246,840		84,510		162,330
TOTAL		396,940		163,850		233,090

[1] Alternatively, to creating a new post, it is suggested to station the adviser appointed to the Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, for an 18-month period at the CDCC Documentation Centre in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.