

First Draft

POPULATION POLICY FORMULATION

AND

INTEGRATION OF POPULATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

IN THE CARIBBEAN - JAMAICA'S EXPERIENCE

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This document has been prepared by Barbara Boland, Population Affairs Officer, ECLAC/CELADE Demography Unit, ECLAC, Port-of-Spain, for presentation at CELADE/CANADA meeting, Ottawa, 23-27 November 1987.

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INTEGRATION OF POPULATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
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Introduction

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This was partly due to the fact that, prior to 1970, development planning was primarily concerned with ways of enhancing socio-economic development with output growth representing the dominant target. The basic assumption underlying the planning process was that the benefits of economic growth would "trickle-down" to alleviate social problems such as poverty and unemployment. Despite the later change of emphasis expanding the scope of planning to deal with improvements in the standard of living and quality of life, population did not become one of the central variables in the planning exercise.

Thus, during this period, evidence of attempts at population influencing programmes was illustrated mainly in the institution of family planning programmes (both private and public sector) to help curb what was considered to be excessively rapid population growth rates.

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Indeed, the terms family planning and population policy were almost synonymous during that period.

By the late 1970s, however, due to the setbacks in economic growth encountered by many governments and partly as a result of the awareness created by the 1974 United Nations World Population Plan of Action, indications were that population factors were beginning to be perceived as linked to the wider socio-economic sphere, as reflected in the statements by Caribbean governments to the 1974 conference^{3/}.

The perception of the link of demographic variables to government policy and action slowly crystallised and by late 1970 was evident in the development plans of a few countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados but more so for Jamaica, which has been in the forefront in the recognition of population development links relative to its planning process.

Although Jamaica's 1978-82 Development Plan did not include any clear-cut population policy as such, it contained a demographic section which included an analysis of future population problems with a summary identifying objectives and goals to be achieved for effective management of the demographic variables. The issues of concern centred on (i) the results of population projections and implications for future growth - the most important being the management of the rapidly growing youth group; (ii) the importance of population redistribution to stem the flow of rural-urban migration; (iii) the continued need for fertility control; and (iv) the repercussions of emigration both on potential labour skills as well as fertility levels.

Moreover, the means of implementation, though not specifically mentioned within the framework of a population policy, were nevertheless "implied" throughout the Development Plan in the various sectoral chapters, which originally took into account population considerations as an exogenous variable. Hence, programmes indirectly designed to cope with population problems included (a) employment projects (especially for women); (b) increased skill training programmes; (c) additional secondary school places; (d) improved nutrition and maternal childcare programmes; (e) population redistribution strategies and special planning in the form of rural development projects, urban resettlement schemes and other community development schemes; and (f) agricultural production to meet future population demands.

Thus, by the late 1970s, population considerations had already taken a strong hold in the development plans of Jamaica. The stage was set for the formulation of an explicit national policy.

Population Policy Formulation

The process of formulating and implementing a population policy and the exercise of planning for economic and social development are very closely related. Moreover, the acceptance of a population policy indicates that the government recognises the need to change their demographic profile through extensive social, economic and demographic intervention. In the Caribbean, the activities concerned with population policy formulation and implementation have formed the basis for population and development planning related activities among governments. Indeed, a large part of the ECLAC/CELADE Unit's work programme being carried out in the Caribbean, is devoted to the

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provision of assistance in these areas. This is largely the result of governments' growing interest in the formulation of population policies due to the realisation that some of their primary social and economic problems may be influenced by the prevailing patterns of population growth, composition and distribution.

Over the past three years, assistance was provided to nine countries of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC), in the formulation of national policies through the conduct of national and regional training courses, the carrying out of research required as inputs into the documents and the provision of advisory assistance to governments through country missions.

Jamaica was the first country to formulate an explicit national population policy which was tabled and accepted in Parliament in 1983. Since then, the population policies of three more countries have been officially adopted by the governments of Saint Lucia (1984), Dominica (1986) and Grenada (1987). The final drafts of the documents for the other countries have been completed and are being prepared for submission to Cabinet. Further technical assistance will however be needed by these governments to ensure the legal acceptance of these documents and to assist in follow-up activities such as revisions of the documents.

The population policies are all conceived out of widespread concern that some of the population trends in the countries are among the obstacles to their economic and social development. They contain certain basic goals, many of which are quantitative in nature, all of which are perceived as an integral part of the Caribbean's social and

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economic development. Essentially the general objective of the goals is improvement in economic conditions and the quality of life. Specific goals include items such as lower mortality and morbidity rates, improved health status, creation of greater employment opportunities, increased participation of women in the development process, improved nutrition, education levels, housing availability and more balanced regional development.

Thus conceived, the population policies are not only concerned with interrelations but intend to form part of the economic and social planning process.

It is obvious that active consideration of population factors in development plans is more effectively accomplished through the implementation of an explicit national population policy, which would not only establish goals consistent with other national, social and economic objectives, but also identify the mechanisms for successful achievement of these goals.

Population Policy Implementation

The implementation of a population policy represents an important component of development planning activities. Jamaica has been in the vanguard among Caribbean countries in efforts to transform recommendations of the World Population Plan of Action into concrete actions and is well along its way in the co-ordination of implementation activities with assistance from the ECLAC/CELADE Demography Unit.

In recognition of the fact that the integration of population into development planning depends, to a large extent, on the existence of a

strong government planning organisation as well as an effective institutional mechanism for linking population to the planning process, the first step was the establishment of a National Population Policy Co-ordinating Committee for direction and co-ordination of the policy implementation. In addition, a population planning unit was established in the government's planning ministry to function as secretariat to the National Population Council and given the responsibility to implement the population policy and ensure that the policy goals are included in the country's development plans.

In view of the socio-economic nature of the policy goals and strategies, however, Jamaica has also realised that the implementation of the policy requires a wider base of multisectoral participation to enable planners and policy-makers in other public and private sector agencies to gear their programmes and activities to demographic needs as well as to assist the population units to incorporate population components into social and economic plans. Consequently, a multisectoral structure is being developed that would function as the co-ordinating mechanism for encouraging interaction among sectors for the incorporation of population into the development plans.

Population policy implementation activities, however, have not yet begun in the other Caribbean countries with explicit policies. In fact, national population councils have been established but they are not yet operational neither have other institutional mechanisms such as population units been established. There is therefore an urgent need for the provision of assistance to the Caribbean countries in the

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establishment of institutional mechanisms to facilitate the incorporation of population in the planning process.

Other aspects of the implementation plan of Jamaica's population policy, comprise the following activities: (i) research - for the provision of information needed to guide population planning and develop knowledge about population and development interrelations; (ii) training - to conduct policy relevant research and strengthen capabilities for effective policy implementation; (iii) strengthening of systems providing data and other population information; (iv) an information/education and communications component for the creation of greater public awareness of population development linkages and increased participation in policy implementation; (v) development of an institutional network for active participation and effective co-ordination. Of course, most of these components are still to be introduced into the implementation programme for the other Caribbean countries.

Since the latter activities also represent the major prerequisites for the successful integration of demographic inputs in development planning, the experiences and constraints encountered will be discussed in the following section related to integration in planning.

Population and Development Planning

Following on the experience gained in the process of formulating and implementing a population policy, governments' concerns are now beginning to centre around the kinds of mechanisms that exist for determining how, when, and for what purposes population variables can be introduced into social and economic planning.

Given the complexity of the planning process, demographic factors could be integrated in various forms along a continuum ranging from implicit to explicit programmes and activities. Opportunities also exist for integrating population factors into each stage of the planning process involving (a) the analysis of the situation; (b) the formulation of goals; (c) the design of strategies; (d) the identification of indicators for monitoring and evaluating; and (e) the translation of these strategies into specific programmes, policies and projects.

On the other hand the degree of success in this integration process depends to a large extent, on the level of planning in the country. Many Caribbean countries still possess relatively weak planning mechanisms while, in other cases, despite their commitment to planning (geared mainly to individual projects or economic growth targets) development planning is yet to be established as an effective tool for social and economic development.

In essence, since the macro-economic development plan is built up of a composite of several sectoral plans, the applications of demographic inputs is greatest at the sectoral level.

With regard to incorporating demographic factors into sectoral programmes, a distinction is often made between two types of planning: (a) the first type takes demographic variables into account in order to accommodate prospective demographic change. This would entail, for example, planning for employment to meet job requirements of future labour force growth, or planning to accommodate future demands for health and education services; and (b) the other type of planning seeks to influence demographic processes through the achievement of specific

development objectives. The knowledge base for the latter type of planning at present remains underdeveloped while the methodology for population - influencing planning still contains many unresolved issues thereby limiting its uses in planning.^{4/}

As a result, the current form of incorporating demographic inputs in the planning process in some Caribbean countries normally amounts to the carrying out of a series of partial analyses at the sectoral level to prepare the quantitative bases of the development plan. This is achieved through the conduct of a number of exercises aimed at projecting economic and social variables over the plan horizon which, in turn, depend directly or indirectly on the projection of demographic variables. Thus, current activities are concerned with the projection of four key demographic variables - population, students, labour force and households which, in turn, are intended to enable projections of economic components such as employment, household incomes, consumption and savings. The second part of the exercise, however, is still in its embryonic stage.

Thus, at the sectoral level, Jamaica has developed a medium-term manpower plan utilising population and labour force projections as inputs into the formula to obtain productivity estimates and labour market demands. Similarly projections are being incorporated into sectoral plans and form the basis for decision-making concerning future demands on social services such as education and health. Hence in the education sector, projections are used in conjunction with other demographic statistics for estimating the characteristics and distribution of the school age population, teacher training

requirements, investments in school construction, planning education development needs, and assessing the overall progress of the education system.

In like manner, the health sector uses demographic data in combination with other health statistics to assist in determining areas requiring further strengthening of services and facilities, constructing health indicators for evaluating health conditions, identifying segments of the population needing special health programmes and planning for projected needs for services and facilities. Some form of integration of health programmes with development plans takes place in planning for expansion of urban areas and rural development where sanitary services, such as water supply needs, are considered as an integral part of the community planning exercises. Nevertheless, much more work needs to be done for effective utilisation of demographic information in this sector, especially in the area of evaluation of quality of statistics as well as research studies on patterns of mortality for improved understanding of determinants of mortality change and to provide recommendations for health programmes in the Caribbean region.

Much more work still needs to be done in the agricultural sector, with respect to the incorporation of demographic inputs in planning. In this respect, the ECLAC/CELADE Unit intends building a number of training courses into its work programme for the purpose of increasing theoretical knowledge of population/food/nutrition linkages and improving methodology for stronger integration.

On the other hand, social and economic programme formulation within the context of population-influencing planning among the sectors is even

further behind in the development and utilisation of existing methodology. This form of planning remains almost solely at the non-quantitative level and relies mainly on theoretical assumptions relative to determinants and consequences of demographic components of change obtained from research findings (not necessarily of relevance at the national level).

One of the main reasons why the above analyses are conducted within the context of a partial framework, that is, each set of relationships are considered separately as uni-directional or, in some cases, two-way relationships. However, the interrelationships among demographic and economic variables are far more complex and interdependent. Moreover, the connections between changes in the population and changes in the economy are often non-linear, subject to lags and run in both directions. In recognition of this complexity of relationships, the Planning Institute of Jamaica in the past three years, has been working on the development of the ILO Bachue model, which focusses on the interactions between population, employment, income distribution and economic development. Activities have comprised the construction of the model, the adjustment of specifications to fit the Jamaica situation and the incorporation of the country's macro-economic model currently in existence. Despite the general criticisms on the usefulness of economic-demographic modelling, it is felt that the work on the building of this model, has, so far, served to enhance planners' appreciation of interdependencies between patterns of population change and patterns of development and has helped to identify the kinds of research that are needed to strengthen the population-development integration process.

The ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat in its work programme, will undertake to share the experiences in economic-demographic modelling with other Caribbean countries through the utilisation of the skills developed on the project within the framework of TCDC.

The unavailability of demographic data for planning at the smallest geographical area has often discouraged planners from making greater use of population information in their social and economic programme formulation. This has now been solved through the development of CELADE's REDATAM, funded in large part under the CELADE/CANADA programme, which allows planners to access data at the smallest geographical area on the microcomputer. The response of government officials to this planning tool has been tremendous in the country selected for the pilot project (Saint Lucia), which provides a clear indication that a large demand exists in the Caribbean countries for use of population data at smaller geographical areas. This is especially useful for the purpose of planning at the sectoral levels - housing, health, education and the provision of other services such as water and electricity. Consequently, plans are now underway for the introduction of REDATAM to the other Caribbean countries.

Prerequisites for Population-Development Integration

The successful incorporation of demographic inputs into development plans as well as the effective implementation of population policies requires, in addition to improved methodology, the strengthening of a number of attendant activities.

Institutional Mechanisms

The integration of population into development planning depends, to a large extent on the existence of a strong government planning organisation as well as an effective institutional mechanism for linking population to the planning process. Among the variety of factors observed as probable obstacles to the successful execution of this integration and implementation process in most countries has been unresolved organisational issues, the answers to which have been found to depend on many factors including: (a) the existing institutional set-up for national planning; (b) amount of resources available to support these activities (c) national objectives, priorities and underlying philosophies; (d) administrative structure of the government and the decision-making hierarchy; and (e) the nature of demographic problems facing the country and the priority given to the solution of these problems.^{5/}

It is now being recognised that certain institutions are needed at different levels and stages of the policy formulation, implementation and planning process. The basic structure adopted by other countries consists of a Central Population Unit in the Planning Ministry for co-ordination and integration of population in Development Plans and a National Population Council for overall policy direction. The establishment of additional agencies for carrying out research and data collection complete this organisational structure.^{6/}

In Jamaica, a population planning Unit has been established in the government's Planning Institute and given responsibility to implement the population policy, ensure the integration of population factors in

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the development plans and co-ordinate the population-related activities of the other social and economic sectors. In addition a national population council, an interministerial body, was established. As earlier noted, population units have not yet been created in the planning ministries of the other Caribbean countries and although national population councils have been established in two countries, they remain inoperative.

Given the complex nature of the socio-economic-demographic planning process and the resultant need for collaborative activities among sectors, the Jamaican government also saw the need to establish a multisectoral population policy implementation committee.

Moreover, in recognition of the fact that population-development integration is more successfully accomplished through awareness creation of the population-development linkages, an Information/Education/Communications Unit was established as a sub-committee of the population planning unit in Jamaica.

In view of the fact that the development of an appropriate institutional network is an essential ingredient for the success of population-development integration, it is obvious, from the above, that there is an urgent need for the provision of technical assistance to the other Caribbean countries in the construction of a solid institutional base.

Research

One of the most important research tasks facing the population planning unit is to demonstrate the importance of population in the

process of national development and the feasibility of implementing alternative programmes for influencing population dynamics. These issues cannot be addressed without increasing our knowledge about population-development relationships.

On the other hand, a major obstacle to integrating demographic with development plans is the fact that the quantitative effects of development processes on population change have been inadequately explored. Moreover, where general interrelations have been established with certain factors such as education, female employment or infant mortality and widely discussed or accepted, not enough is known of the effects in terms of expected order of magnitude, timing or pace of change once developments have been initiated ^{1/}. Information which is required for programme planning.

In the Caribbean, some research on the determinants and consequences of population factors is being conducted both at the University of the West Indies as well as organisations such as CELADE. The research findings, however, need to be presented in a form that is policy-relevant. This could be partly accomplished through the establishment of closer links between planners and researchers.

Unfortunately, much of the research establishing links has not gone further to explore systematically the programmatic initiatives required to influence the desired demographic change on outcome. Also consideration of the synergistic effects are limited. Few quantitative guides exist for establishing the extent to which programmed and unprogrammed demographic and development processes may reinforce or substitute for each other.

It is clear from the above that currently observed economic-demographic relationships are, to a large extent, not yet operationally useful for planning purposes. This points to an urgent need to increase activities of research in the latter areas, especially in view of the fact that the population planning unit requires quantitative documentation of population-development linkages in order to maintain their credibility and utility within the government planning ministry.

Data Collection

In addition to the conduct of policy-relevant research, the building of a central store of data constitutes an essential component of the population-development integration process. The collection of data is currently carried out by the Statistical Office, which functions under a ministry separate from that of the planning ministry. The disadvantage encountered is that, unless closer working ties are maintained between the statistical office, population planning unit and research institutions, the data required for analysis and evaluation of demographic-economic relationships may be limited in scope.

Equally important is the need for further evaluation of data (such as census and vital statistics) to ensure that the data base being utilised for planning is of the highest quality.

Most of the research work being conducted in Jamaica's population planning unit is fully computerised. The processing of census and vital statistics is also fully computerised. This is not the case, however, for the other Caribbean countries, many of which do not possess microcomputers in their planning ministries. The provision of equipment as well as technical guidance in these areas is therefore also a

necessity in order to accelerate the process of population-development integration in the rest of the Caribbean Region.

Personnel Requirements - Training needs

The availability of skilled personnel constitutes an important ingredient for successful incorporation of demographic inputs in planning as well as population policy implementation. Unfortunately, shortage of qualified persons adequately trained in demographic analyses and development planning represents a major constraint for the Jamaican government.

Consequently, a number of training programmes are being planned by CELADE to assist in this situation. In mounting training courses, it has been considered useful to group the actors involved in policy implementation into three broad categories ^{8/} The first consists of high-level officials (policy-makers, ministers and parliamentarians). The second would comprise the professionals, technicians and academics while the third group is composed of other middle-level officials - the support staff to the planning and other sectoral ministries. ^{9/}

With regard to high-level officials, no specific skill should be required except awareness of the interrelations between population dynamics and the process of socio-economic development as well as exposure to issues involved in the integration process. The second group constitutes the technicians responsible for executing the integration process. Recommendations are that members of this group should possess advanced level training in economics, development planning and demography with support skills such as statistics and computer technology. ^{10/} With respect to the middle level

sufficient knowledge (of a diploma level) is required on population and development theories and interrelations.

Information dissemination

The successful integration of population in development planning requires high-level political support—as well as a strengthening of interaction between statisticians, planners and policy-makers. Perhaps one of the most effective mechanisms for achieving this is the promotion of an understanding of the relationships between the socio-economic processes and population factors.

In this regard, Jamaica has given high priority to 'population-exposure' programmes and dissemination activities as components of the operational strategy of the country. An information/education/communications committee has been established as a sub-group of the population planning unit which has been disseminating information including bulletins, newsletters and reports on research findings.

Future Directions

As discussed in the above sections, the process of integrating population in development planning is a complex one which requires the initiation of activities on several fronts. Many have already been commenced by the ECLAC/CELADE Unit in the Caribbean region while others are being incorporated into the future work programme.

One main aspect of the work programme of the ECLAC/CELADE Unit, Port of Spain, over the past three years has been the laying of a foundation required for improving the incorporation of demographic factors in the development planning process in Jamaica as well as the

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other Caribbean countries which has been accomplished through the provision of assistance in (a) the formulation and implementation of national population policies (b) the processing and evaluation of data (census and vital statistics) (c) conduct of research. In addition, a number of national and regional training seminars were conducted with the aim of increasing theoretical knowledge of economic-demographic interrelations. This was intended to assist in providing a framework for use by planners mainly as a 'mental model' for decision-making with regard to development objectives and selecting policies and strategies for achieving these targets.

Also, with regard to the need for linking demography more closely to social and economic planning, within the work programme of the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat, attempts are being made to utilise the advantage of having both a CELADE Demography Unit and ILDES Planning Unit to strengthen the interdisciplinary approach and encourage multisectoral co-operation.

The 1987-1990 programme is designed to continue and consolidate those activities initiated within recent years.^{11/} emphasis will be placed on developing and strengthening national and regional capacities for population policy implementation and the integration of population into the planning process in the Caribbean countries. More specifically, the programme will ensure the provision of assistance for establishing population units in the planning ministries; the conduct of policy relevant research with emphasis on population-development interrelations; the conduct of training seminars aimed at improving techniques for the provision of demographic inputs into Development

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Plans; the building of a data bank, and the dissemination of data and research findings through regular circulation of reports and a regional digest of statistics.

ECLAC/CELADE Demography Unit
ECLAC
Port-of-Spain

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NOTES

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5. Horlacher, D.E., Lim, M.T. and Rao, C.N. "Technical and Organisational Arrangements for Integrating Population Factors into Development Planning." USSR International Population Conference, Manila, 1981.

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8. Rao, Sethuramiah, C.N. "UNFPA and Training in Population and Development." ...

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. Report to the ... "CDCC", LC/GAR/G.230.