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**EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON POVERTY:  
EQUITY OR EXCLUSION**

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## **Abstract**

“Education and its impact on poverty: Equity or exclusion”, examines the poor and their relationship with the education system in the Caribbean. It does so through an analysis of data from recently conducted poverty assessments in selected Caribbean countries.

It agrees that education is one of the single most vital elements in combating poverty and that it is a right. The paper suggests that there is genuine belief in schooling and that it will lead to better opportunities and an improved standard of living. Parents, rich or poor, expect that the education system will provide their children with the basic skills to either continue with their education or to pursue a livelihood, which will enable them to enjoy a decent standard of living.

The paper reports that some 38 per cent of the population in the Caribbean are classified as poor, and their poverty acts as a constraining factor to access and to the quality of education that is received. Exacerbating the state of poverty, is the generally low performance level of the education system.

The paper concludes therefore, that the education system is failing one group of children more than others - those that are poor - and thus denying them the opportunity to become contributing members of the society and achieving the goal of sustainable human development.

It suggests that what is needed is a rescue plan for the education system which will transform it into a catalyst for genuine social equity. If not, the stratification between rich and poor, that currently exists may reinforce rather than correct income inequalities and perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

## **SECTION I: THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

"Education and its impact on poverty: Equity or exclusion", examines the poor and their relationship with the education system in the Caribbean. It does so through an analysis of data from recently conducted poverty assessments in selected Caribbean countries.

The folk belief in the Caribbean is that schooling will lead to better opportunities and an improved standard of living. The Mighty Sparrow, a leading calypsonian, captured that belief in a calypso when he sang,

"Children, go to school and learn well, otherwise later on in life you go catch real hell;  
Without an education in yuh head, your whole life will be pure misery – you are better off dead;  
For there is simply no place in this whole wide world for an uneducated little boy or girl.  
Don't allow idle companion to lead you astray, to earn tomorrow you got to learn today"<sup>1</sup>.

Parents, rich or poor, expect that the education system will provide their children with the basic skills to either continue with their education or to pursue a livelihood which will enable them to enjoy a decent standard of living.

The paper suggests that the education system is failing one group of children - those that are poor - thus denying them the opportunity to become contributing members of the society and achieving the goal of sustainable human development.

### **Education as a central component of human development**

Human development has been defined as the process of enlarging people's choices while raising the level of well-being. Some of those choices are: (a) to lead a long and healthy life; (b) to be educated; and (c) to enjoy a decent standard of living.<sup>2</sup>

An interconnectivity exists between these three dimensions as success in one area is increasingly co-dependent on the other areas<sup>3</sup>. Without an education, people cannot work productively, care for their health, sustain and protect themselves and their families or live culturally enriched lives.<sup>4</sup>

Education is not a luxury but a right. The right to education is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), Article 26.1 which states that "Everyone has the right to education..." and 26.2 that,

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality...”. It is reiterated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), in Article 28.1 which states that, “States parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunities..”; and in Article 29.1(a) in which States parties agree that “the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”.

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, called for universal quality education, with a particular focus on the world’s poorest citizens. Jomtien marked the emergence of an international consensus that education is the single most vital element in combating poverty.<sup>5</sup>

After almost two decades in which human development had taken a back seat to structural adjustment and globalization, there seems to be a renewed interest in investing in human and social capital. There is an emerging view among leading economists, including those at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, that privatization alone cannot assure long-term economic growth; equally essential are human capital (a nation’s health, education and nutrition) and social capital (shared values, culture and strong civil society). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), since the early 1990s has been arguing that there is a strong interdependence between growth and equity and that these two objectives have to be advanced simultaneously rather than sequentially.<sup>6</sup> There has also been a call for generating pro-poor growth by reducing inequalities and enhancing human capabilities through education and ensuring poor people's access to education.<sup>7</sup>

Economies in the region, marked by their smallness and openness, are facing the challenges of achieving growth and reducing inequities. Governments in the Caribbean have embarked, in the main, on trade liberalization, financial deregulation and privatization policies in order to achieve economic growth. However, the underdevelopment of human resources in the region could become a constraint to growth and perpetuate inequalities and the cycle of poverty within families, communities and nations.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed inequalities only partially reflect personal characteristics and family choice. More importantly they are shaped by the environment in which people live.<sup>9</sup>

Globalization, as part of that economic environment, is posing new challenges and opportunities for governments to grapple with inequalities and poverty reduction. Many are struggling to link into global markets, attract foreign investment and take advantage of the advances in information and

telecommunications technology. The region, as part of the globalising process, has experienced during the last decade, the erosion of trade preferences once secured through Lomé and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the opening of previously protected domestic markets to international competition.<sup>10</sup> To achieve gains from the globalising process, however, requires the building of human skills and capacity for the knowledge-based economy, thus avoiding the risks of marginalization and vulnerability<sup>11</sup>. Such vulnerability can result in higher risks of unemployment, labour market instability, low wages and poor working conditions. Box 1 below highlights the widening gap which is already a feature of the knowledge-based economy.

**Box 1: The Knowledge Economy**

**The widening global gap between the haves and the have-nots and the know and the know-nots.**

National Internet surveys conducted in 1998 and 1999 revealed that:

1. **Income buys access** - The average South African user had an income seven times the national average, and 90 per cent of users in Latin America came from upper-income groups. More than 30 per cent of users in the United Kingdom had salaries above \$60,000.
2. **Education is the ticket to the network of high society:** Globally, 30 per cent of users have at least one university degree, in the United Kingdom it is 50 per cent, in China almost 60 per cent, in Mexico 67 per cent and in Ireland almost 70 per cent;
3. **Men dominate:** Women accounted for 38 per cent of users in the United States, 25 per cent in Brazil, 7 per cent in China and a mere 4 per cent in the Arab States.
4. **Men and youth dominate.** Women make up just 17 per cent of the Internet users in Japan, only 7 per cent in China. Most users in China and the United Kingdom are under 30.
5. **Ethnicity counts** - In the United States, the difference in use by ethnic groups widened between 1995 and 1998. Disparity exists even among students in the United States. More than 80 per cent attending elite private college used the internet, compared with just over 40 per cent attending public institutions, where African American students are more likely to enrol.

Source: The United Nations Development Human Development Report, 1999

## SECTION II: POVERTY IN THE CARIBBEAN

### Poverty defined

Poverty has been defined as a state in which income, resources and assets, usually of a material nature, but sometimes of a cultural nature, are lacking. In absolute terms it refers to a state in which the individual lacks that which is necessary for subsistence. In relative terms, poverty refers to the



individual's or group's lack of resources when compared with that of other members of the society.<sup>12</sup>

Poverty is shaped not only by income, but also by access. It has various manifestations, including hunger and malnutrition, ill health and lack of access to education and other basic services. It is also manifested in increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life.<sup>13</sup>

The flip side of poverty is deprivation. To exist in a state of poverty means that opportunities and choices most basic to human development have been denied.<sup>14</sup> Inherent in this definition is the notion that poverty is not only based on individual actions, but can be circumscribed by the actions of the state. These actions include making available clean water, schools and health facilities. In other words poverty reflects important elements of the economic environment in which people live.

Poverty is a multidimensional problem with origins in both the national and international domains.<sup>15</sup> Poverty can be structural, based on societal patterns of order - economic or social, such as the loss of preferential markets by banana producers in the Eastern Caribbean<sup>16</sup> or evidenced in extreme cases, by the caste system in India<sup>17</sup>, enslavement in the Caribbean and North America or apartheid in South Africa. Poverty can also be of a seasonal nature, in which normally self-sufficient individuals are made incapable of meeting their basic needs.<sup>18</sup> As well, poverty can occur due to environmental disasters such as, hurricanes, as experienced recently in the Caribbean and neighbouring Venezuela and volcanic eruptions, as experienced in Montserrat.

Because poverty is a complex phenomenon affecting so many aspects of the human condition, selecting the most appropriate tool for measurement and measuring its extent is a challenging process.

There is the absolute versus the relative approach to poverty measurement; the multidimensional versus the unidimensional approach; and more recently the sustainable livelihood approach.

In the absolute versus the relative approach, a poverty line is used which seeks to define a minimum or basic level below which an individual or household is deemed to be poor. This is generally specified by an income or a basket of subsistence of goods and services. The relative approach refers to social and economic inequality and is measured by the deviation from social and economic norms represented by mean income. Relative inequality measures indicate the degree of inequality in income distributions and include the Lorenz curves and the Gini coefficient.

The unidimensional approach to the measurement of poverty is usually based on one fundamental dimension, generally income or consumption. In the Caribbean, due to the difficulty in obtaining accurate income data there has been a reliance on expenditure or consumption as a proxy for income. A multidimensional approach involves the use of several basic indices, such as the Human Poverty Index (HPI) which is based on composite indices of three variables: longevity, knowledge and a decent living standard.

The sustainable development approach measures the assets which people utilize in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood. These assets are defined as natural resources (land, water, flora, and fauna), the social dimension (family, networks, and participation) and the physical infrastructure (roads, bridges, schools, clinics, and markets).<sup>19</sup>

### **The state of the art in the region**

The assessment of poverty in the region has utilized at different times and in different places all or some of the approaches described above.

At the opening of the 1990s, a review of poverty assessment studies undertaken at an ECLAC conference held in Port of Spain, 1993, revealed that very few studies had been undertaken in the region and those that had been conducted lacked comparability due to differing methodologies.

By the close of the decade however, the region had amassed a robust set of data from which the situation of the poor in the region could be analyzed and with which to inform policy. Box 2 provides an overview of the studies undertaken during the last decade.

### **Extent of poverty in the Caribbean subregion**

A country's economic performance can have significant influence on the choices individuals make about education – both the level that is considered acceptable and the type of education that is relevant and appropriate. In the final analysis, it is the economic performance and the changing structure<sup>20</sup> of the economy that shapes the quantum of resources available to finance education and training, the job opportunities that are created and the returns on investment in education.

**Box 2:  
Countries with household and income  
surveys 1994-1999**

- Country poverty assessments for Belize (1995), Saint Lucia (1995), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1995) and Grenada (1999);
- Living standard measurement surveys for Guyana (1994) and Trinidad and Tobago (1993/94) sponsored by the World Bank;
- A Survey of living conditions for Jamaica (1989-97) by the Planning Agency of Jamaica;
- The survey of social and income inequality in Barbados, sponsored by the IDB;
- The survey of poverty in the Dominican Republic, Fundacion Economica y Desarrollo, Inc (1994);
- Food security and living standards survey in Haiti, conducted by the USAID, 1995; and
- Poverty assessment in Suriname (1999), sponsored by the UNDP

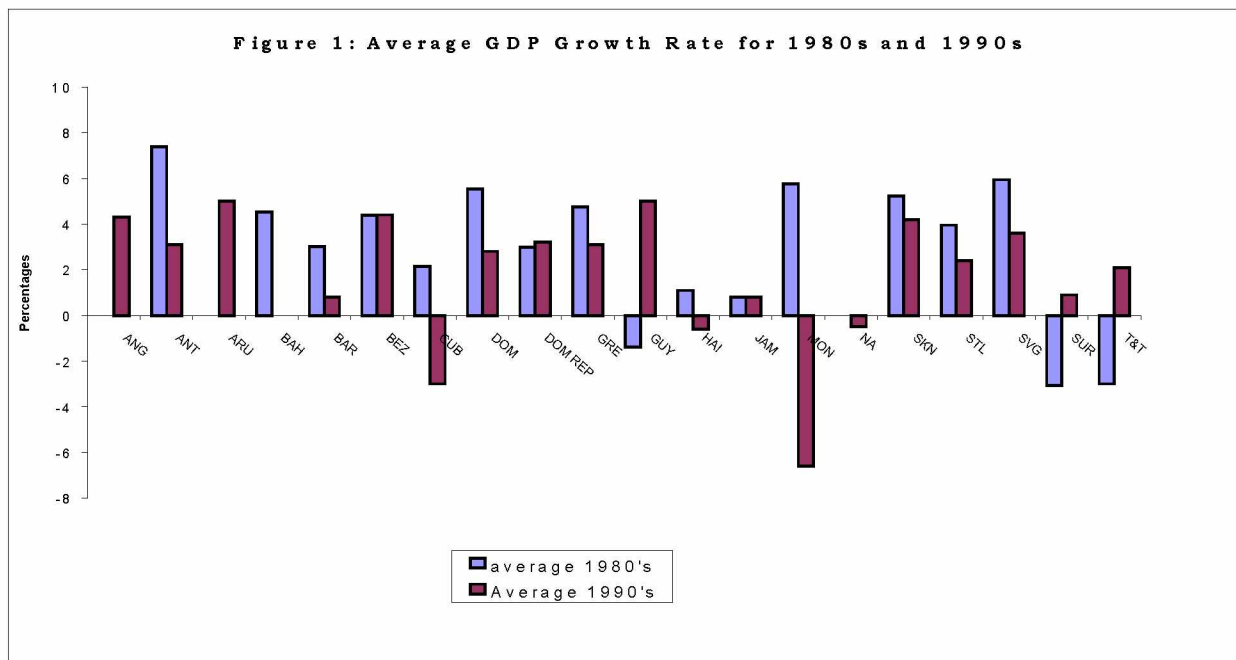
Source: Green; UNDP; ECLAC

Countries in the Caribbean have been undergoing major economic and social reforms which began in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s. This has been an attempt to manage growing fiscal and balance of payments deficits and mounting external debt. The economic reforms included: trade reforms, liberalization of exchange rates, freezing the wages of public employees, reducing employment in the public sector and reducing government transfers to public enterprises including public utilities. In addition, there has been an acceleration of activities to establish the Caribbean single market and economy. All these actions have resulted in a mixed economic performance which is illustrated by Figure 1.

### Box 3: Macroeconomic performance

In the 1990s the economic performance of Caribbean countries varied a great deal. Countries such as Haiti, Cuba, Montserrat and the Netherlands Antilles experienced negative average growth rates. Also, growth in the OECS countries and Belize slowed somewhat compared to the 1980s. On the other hand, there was a resumption of growth in the economies of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana which had contracted in the 1980s. Fiscal deficits, inflation rates and external debt burden were generally moderate in the subregion, except for Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname

Source: ECLAC Caribbean Economic and social Performance in the 1990s. January 1990

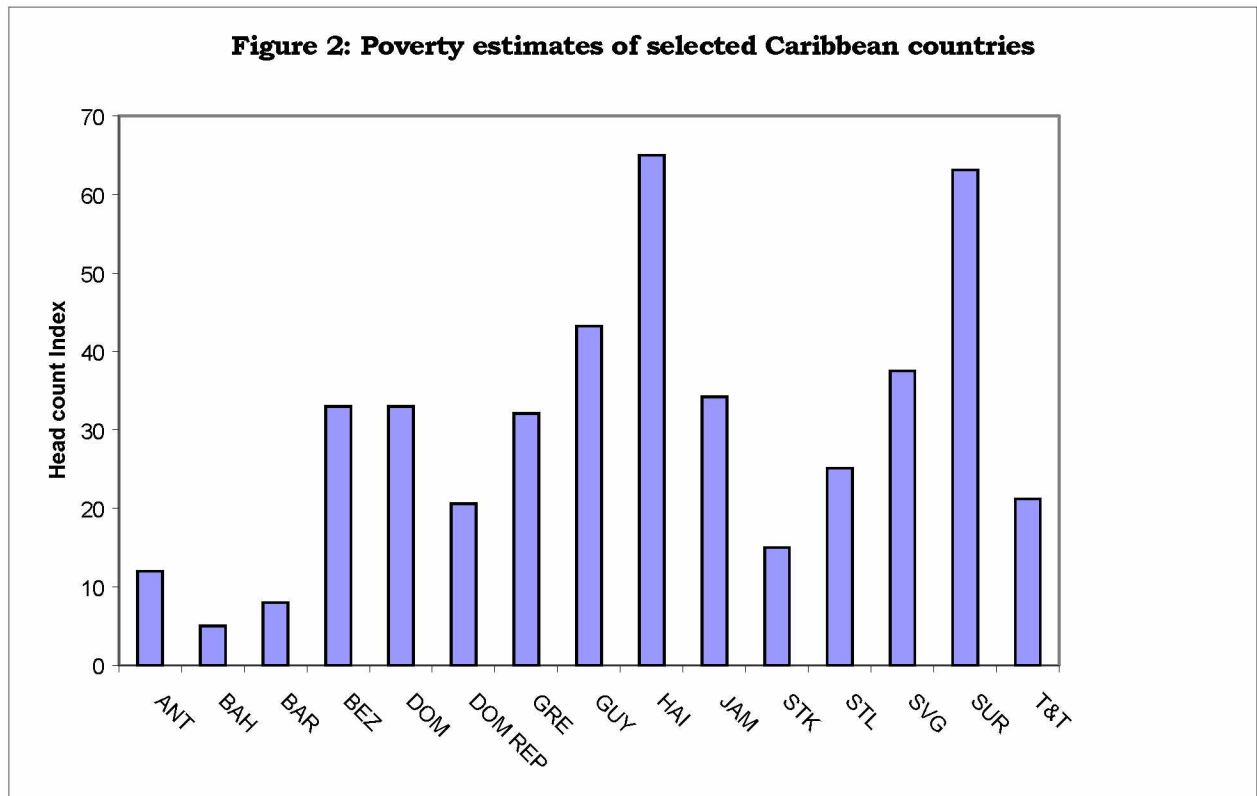


The economic performance of countries in the subregion is not only dependent on the economic structures which have been inherited and which have undergone some changes, it is also affected by the vulnerability of the subregion to exposure to natural disasters, sometimes of a seasonal nature. <sup>21</sup>

How the differing economic performance of countries in the subregion has impacted on the poor is the work of on-going research and analysis. There

is little disagreement however, that over the last decade, many of the fiscal measures have affected the poor more adversely than the non-poor.<sup>22</sup>

Of a population of some 35.1 million based on 1990 census data, the World Bank reported in 1996 that approximately 38 per cent of the population or more than 7 million people could be classified as poor (25 per cent if Haiti is excluded).<sup>23</sup> Figure 2 below illustrates the head count measure, which represents the proportion of the population whose income falls below the poverty line. A comparative look at selected countries in the region indicates that poverty in the region ranges from a low of 5 per cent in the Bahamas to a high of 65 per cent in Haiti. Eight of the 15 countries listed have over 30 per cent of their population estimated as poor. Only in the Bahamas, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and St Kitts and Nevis do 15 per cent or less of their population fall below the poverty line.



Despite the undesirable levels of poverty estimated through the head count measure, when the region is compared to other regions of the world using other indices, a less deprived picture of the region is presented.

The Human Development Index (HDI), one such measure, has been constructed since 1990 to measure average achievements in basic human development in one composite index. The basic dimensions of the HDI are longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. When we examine the HDI, as presented in Table 1 below, for selected ECLAC/Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee (CDCC) countries, it is noted that the Caribbean has three countries ranked among the high human development countries, those with a score of 0.800 and above; 12 ranked among the medium human development countries, those ranked between 0.500 and 0.799; and only one ranked among the low human development countries, those below 0.500. It is unfortunate that one can not use the rankings from the period 1990 to 1997 to ascertain whether a country has made improvement in its human development. This is not possible because different data sets have been used to calculate the values for each year. But certainly it is a useful tool to see how countries rank against each other over the period. Policy makers are advised not to become too complacent as a result of the region's fairly good rankings in the HDI, since the index may mask existing inequities within the country. This could result in the development of policies that do not address those most in need.

**Table 1: Human development index by selected ECLAC/CDCC countries**

COUNTRY	1990		1992		1994		1995		1997	
	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank	value	rank
Antigua and Barbuda	.785	60	.840	55	.892	29	.895	29	.828	38
Bahamas	.875	32	.894	26	.894	28	.893	32	.851	31
Barbados	.928	20	.900	20	.907	25	.909	24	.857	29
Belize	.689	82	.883	29	.806	63	.807	63	.732	83
Cuba	.711	75	.769	72	.723	86	.729	85	.765	58
Dominica	.819	51	.776	69	.873	41	.879	41	.776	53
Dominican Republic	.586	97	.705	96	.718	87	.720	88	.726	88
Grenada	.787	59	.786	67	.843	54	.851	51	.777	52
Guyana	.541	105	.622	105	.649	104	.670	100	.701	99
Haiti	.275	137	.362	148	.338	156	.340	159	.430	152
Jamaica	.736	69	.721	88	.736	83	.735	84	.734	82
St. Kitts/Nevis	.697	79	.873	37	.853	49	.854	50	.781	51
St. Lucia	.720	72	.732	84	.838	56	.839	58	.737	81
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	.709	76	.761	79	.836	57	.845	55	.744	75
Suriname	.751	65	.762	77	.792	66	.796	65	.757	64
Trinidad & Tobago	.877	31	.872	39	.880	40	.880	40	.797	46

Source: UNDP. Human Development Report 1993, 1994, 1997, 1998 & 1999

Another measure of well-being is the HPI which is a multidimensional measure of poverty that brings together in one composite index the deprivation that occurs in four basic dimensions of life - longevity, knowledge, economic provisioning and social inclusion. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has prepared two such indices, one for developing countries and the other for developed countries, using different indicators to measure the same dimensions. In the HPI (for developing countries) the Caribbean has three of the five countries ranked at the top. They are Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba (the other two countries in the grouping being Uruguay and Costa Rica).

In Table 2, Barbados has the highest rank in the HPI constructed for developing countries, despite the fact that it does not have the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in the region. (See Table 3). This demonstrates clearly that the link between economic prosperity and human development is neither automatic nor obvious.<sup>24</sup> Conversely Guyana has a higher rank than Jamaica even though it has a lower GDP per capita suggesting that it has been better at converting economic wealth into human development.<sup>25</sup> Using the HPI values as a measure, as in Table 4, suggests that for five of the countries in the region, poverty affects less than 15 per cent of their population, but for Haiti it affects almost 50 per cent of the population.

**Table 2. Human poverty index for developing countries by selected ECLAC/CDCC countries**

COUNTRY	HDR 1997		HDR 1999	
	value	rank	value	rank
Barbados			2.6	1
Cuba	5.1	2	4.7	5
Dominican Republic	18.3	20	17.7	26
Guyana			10.2	11
Haiti	46.2	61	46.1	74
Jamaica	12.1	12	13.6	17
Trinidad & Tobago	4.1	1	3.5	2

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997 & 1999

**Table 3: GDP Per capita for selected CDCC countries (1990-1995)**

COUNTRY	GDP Per Capita (1990 dollars)					
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
<b>Bahamas</b>	12,291	11,596	11,169	11,211	11,113	11,059
Barbados	6,657	6,459	6,130	6,213	6,457	6,580
Trinidad & Tobago	4,259	4,347	4,236	4,127	4,267	4,369
Belize	2,122	2,127	2,231	2,261	2,243	2,264
<b>Suriname</b>	824	847	891	806	765	817
Dominican Republic	833	821	870	878	901	927
Jamaica	1,633	1,626	1,639	1,646	1,641	1,637
Guyana	471	515	566	635	686	722
Haiti	314	298	249	238	223	229

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999

It must be remembered that the differences observed between the HPI and the Poverty Head Count Index (PHCI) is based on the fact that the HPI takes into account schooling and life expectancy, whereas the head count index is based on a poverty line measure.

### **The face of poverty**

Regardless of what measure is used however, there is the agreement that the profile of the poor in the subregion includes the following groups: the elderly, children, the disabled, small-scale farmers, unskilled workers, the indigenous population, and in some countries, female-headed households and the underemployed and unemployed, many of whom are school-leavers who have few skills with which to enter the labour market<sup>26</sup>.

Two elements converge to improve the status of those persons living in poverty. These are the creation of employment opportunities and the preparation of these groups for participation in the labour force. Being poor should place affected groups in a position for more urgent attention regarding education, enrolment and levels of education attained. At the very least they should not be disadvantaged either by the education system or the economic environment. This is so, if they are to receive the necessary preparation for participation in the labour force at an income level which affords them a decent standard of living.

Section III examines available data to assess to what extent the education system favours those who are most in need.

## **SECTION III: ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE REGION: POOR VS THE RICH**

*“Inequity in education is reflected in unequal access to different levels of education, as well as to schools of different quality<sup>27</sup>.”*

### **Education and Access**

Caribbean countries when compared with other developing countries have made significant progress in the education sector. Structures from pre-school to post-graduate level have been established. There is equal access to primary school without discrimination based on gender, class, race or religion and, most indicators of education place the majority of Caribbean countries well above the average for all countries at similar levels of economic development. Overall literacy rates are also high. (See Table 3 in Annex 1)

Governments in the region have shown a strong commitment to human resource development, as evidenced by the relatively high HDI ranking of most countries in the subregion (see Table 1 in Section I above).

In the English speaking countries, a larger share of national income is allocated to education than any other region of the developing world, averaging around 5.5 per cent, compared to 3.4 per cent for Latin America and 4.2 per cent for Africa.<sup>28</sup>

While the share of education has remained virtually the same, real expenditure on education in many countries has fallen due to inflation, fluctuations in the value of some countries currency and to increasing enrolment levels.

**Table 4: Education expenditure in selected CDCC countries, 1993-1996**

Country	Public Education Expenditure			
	1993-1996			
	As a % of total Govt. exp.	Primary & Secondary as a % of all levels	Higher as a % of all levels	as a % of GNP
Bahamas	13.2	...	...	...
Barbados	19.0	...	...	7.2
Belize	19.5	87.9	6.9	5.0
Cuba	12.6	57.3	14.9	
Dominican Republic	13.4	62.0	13.0	2.0
Guyana	10.0	71.3	7.7	4.9
Jamaica	12.9	65.5	22.4	7.5
St. Kitts & Nevis	8.8	75.7	11.4	3.8
St. Lucia	22.2	69.1	12.5	9.8
Suriname		75.2	7.6	...
Trinidad & Tobago	11.6	80.0	...	4.4

... - data not available

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999

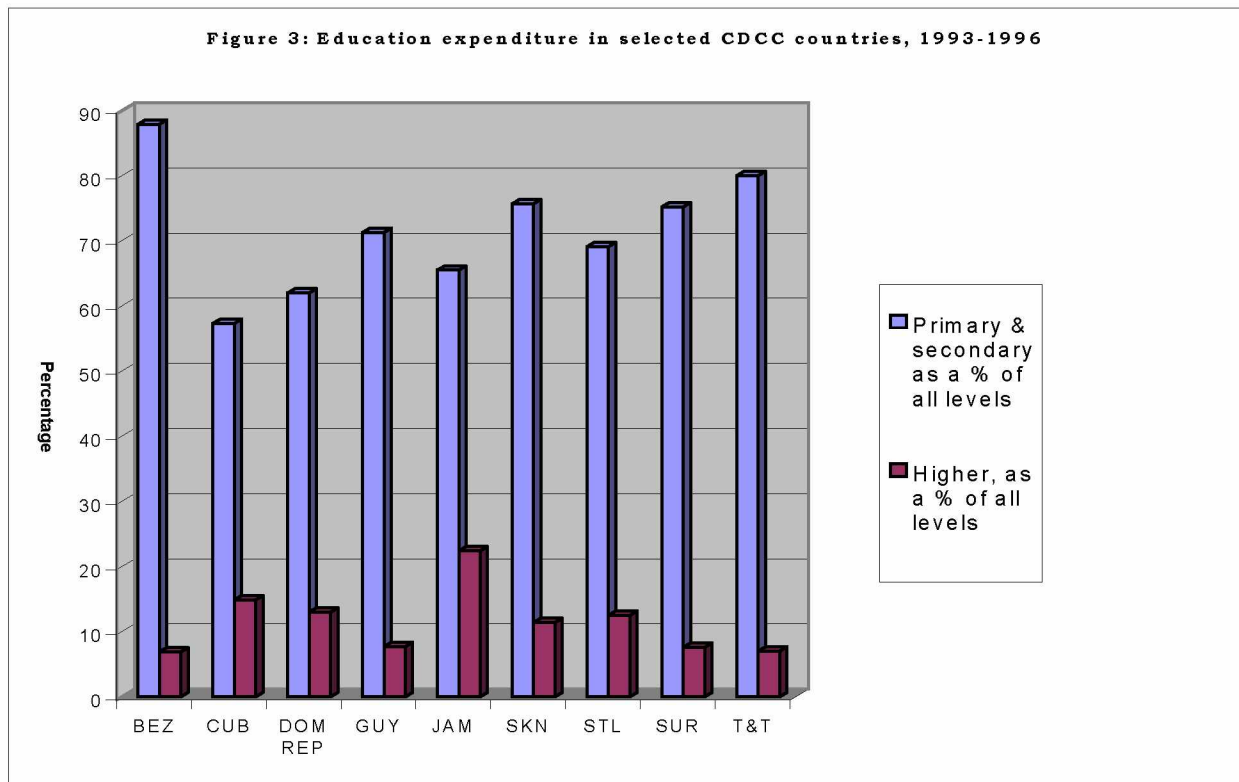
There are however, some variations in government expenditure across the region as can be seen in Table 4 above. The data suggests that the expenditure as a percentage of GNP for Saint Lucia, Jamaica and Barbados is significantly higher than the average for the region, while Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis and the Dominican Republic spend significantly less. Trinidad and Tobago despite its high per capita income and level of development, allocated 4.4 per cent of GNP to education.

Saint Lucia has the highest proportion of expenditure on education to total government expenditure, 22.2 per cent, among selected ECLAC/CDCC countries for the 1993-1996 period. This is followed closely by Belize and Barbados, which spent 19.5 and 19.0 per cent of education to total government expenditures. Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis had the lowest percentage for that period. Barbados, with one of the highest proportions of total government expenditure on education also had the highest-ranking HDI and Poverty Development Index (PDI) among Caribbean countries.



Expenditure on primary and secondary education in selected CDCC countries as a percentage of expenditure on all levels was significantly higher, as figure 3 illustrates, and had an average of 71.5 per cent while the average expenditure on higher education as a percentage of all levels was approximately 12 per cent. Population projections for the region suggest that there will be a tapering off of primary and secondary school age population between 2000 and 2010 and continuing into the future (See Table 4 in Annex 1). This would enable current levels of expenditure to be applied to improve quality of education offered at the primary and secondary levels, even if expenditure levels remain the same.

Government expenditure is not the only expenditure on education. Studies suggest that private expenditures incurred by individuals to attend government schools exceed government outlays in all types of primary and secondary schools and in selected kinds of tertiary education<sup>29</sup>. Invariably, the vast majority of these expenditures represent outlays for education-related items, particularly textbooks, writing materials, transportation, lunches and school uniforms.<sup>30</sup>



Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999

This relatively high expenditure on education in the Caribbean has resulted in nearly universal access to primary and secondary schools. Enrolment ratios for primary school, defined as first level, in Table 5, except for

Haiti, where enrolment ratios are low, exceed 95 per cent for most countries in the Caribbean.

**Table 5: Enrolment in selected CDCC countries**

Levels of Education by Year	COUNTRIES								
	USA	Bahamas	Belize	Cuba	Dom. Rep	Guyana	Haiti	Jamaica	Trinidad & Tobago
<b>Pre-Primary</b>									
1990	63	-	24	101	-	69	41	84	9
1993/94	68	8	27	89	20	85	-	-	-
1995	70	10	-	94	-	84	-	-	-
<b>First Level</b>									
1990	102	101	112	98	-	98	56	108	95
1993/94	102	94	121	100	103	94	-	111	96
1995	102	100	-	105	-	95	-	110	96
<b>Second Level</b>									
1990	93	93	41	89	-	83	22	64	79
1993/94	97	90	49	75	41	76	-	-	74
1995	97	86	-	80	-	75	-	-	72
<b>Third Level</b>									
1990	75	-	-	21	-	6	-	6	7
1993/94	81	-	-	14	-	9	-	-	8
1995	81	-	-	13	-	10	-	8	8

Source: UNESCO Yearbook, 1998

Pre-primary school enrolment ratios are highest in Cuba, Guyana and Jamaica and lowest in Belize and Trinidad and Tobago. There is an increasing demand for day-care as well as pre school places, fueled by the large number of single parent, female-headed families (including unmarried teenage mothers) and the increasing numbers of women participating in the labour force. Data on female headship in the Caribbean indicates that the proportion of female-headed households ranges from a low of 20 per cent in Suriname to a high of 43.9 percent in St. Kitts and Nevis (See Table 5 on Headship by Sex in Annex 1).

The one gap which has been identified by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the region is the coverage at the primary level for children with special needs, particularly those physically challenged or with learning disabilities.

Enrolment ratios in secondary schools, except for Belize and Haiti, were fairly comparable to the United States of America (USA) in 1990, but have fallen steadily except in Belize according to Table 5.

Recent data from a Poverty Assessment Survey conducted in Saint Lucia, points to what may be a disturbing trend in the region, that of poorest students showing a lower enrolment ratio in secondary schools than students from the richest quintile. (See Table 6).

**Table 6: Distribution of persons of secondary school age enrolled in secondary schools by quintiles (Saint Lucia)**

Per Capita Consumption Quintiles	Percentage Enrolled
Poorest	45.8
II	52.0
III	62.3
IV	70.7
V	78.8
Total	61.1

Source: Main Report – Poverty Assessment, Saint Lucia.  
Kairi Consultants

In Table 6 the higher the consumption quintile, the higher the percentage of persons of secondary age enrolled in secondary school. Those persons in quintile V exceeded those in the poorest quintile by 33 per cent.

Transition rates to tertiary and university education are much lower than would be expected given relatively high primary and secondary enrolment ratios. In comparison to Cuba which has a government policy directed at increased levels of tertiary enrolments, and the United States of America, the English-speaking Caribbean has low levels of tertiary level enrolment rates. These enrolments, as well, seem to be conditioned by levels of poverty or wealth. The data from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines suggests that persons in the richest quintile are six and a half times more likely to complete post secondary education than students from the poorest quintile. (See Table 7).

**Table 7: Highest educational level attained by youth by quintile (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)**

Highest Level Attained	Per Capital Consumption Quintiles					
	Poorest	II	III	IV	Richest	Total
Primary	64.1	49.3	73.2	56.2	23.9	53.6
Secondary	34.6	46.3	23.9	37.0	64.8	41.1
Post Secondary	1.3	3.0	2.8	5.5	8.5	4.2
Other	-	1.5	-	1.4	2.8	1.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Main Report – Poverty Assessment, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kairi Consultants

This data may also support the theory that Caribbean children from the poorest households also obtain lower quality education even when they attain levels of schooling similar to those from higher income groups.

## Education and quality

High access levels do not necessarily translate into high quality of schooling. There is a perception that the quality of schooling provided to the majority of primary and secondary school students in the region is poor. If results of common entrance exams in the area of reading, writing and numeracy are used as indicators of achievement in the primary school system and pass rates at Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) at the secondary level, then such results suggest low levels throughout the region.<sup>31</sup>

**Table: 8 Common Entrance Examinations:  
Entries and awards 1995/96 – 1996/97 (Jamaica)**

Type of School	1995/96				1996/97			
	No. of entrants	% of Total	No. selected	No. selected as a % of entrants	No. of entrants	% of Total	No. selected	No. selected as a % of entrants
Primary and all age	48,245	91.1	12,201	25.0	47,898	91.5	13,287	27.7
Private preparatory	4,705	8.9	2,813	59.8	4,441	8.5	2,921	65.8
Total	52,950	100.0	15,014	28.3	52,339	100.0	16,208	31.0

Source: Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica, 1997

But not all schools or students receive poor quality education. Data from the Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica 1997 points to the different results at common entrance exams from two different types of schools in the country. Students at the primary and all age schools, who accounted for by far the largest number of entrants to the exam, had the smallest proportion of entrants selected while for the same period, the children from the private preparatory school had proportionally twice as many entrants selected.

At the secondary school, it is agreed that achievement levels are generally low as measured by CXC passes. But once again there is variance between schools of different quality. Data from a tracer study conducted in Jamaica among secondary school graduates by Dr. Dennis A. V. Brown indicated there is significant variance in the CXC results between school types in Jamaica. Only 1.1 per cent of the students attending the New Secondary schools received Grade One in the CXC examinations while 10.8 percent of the students in the traditional schools received Grade One.<sup>32</sup>

**Table: 9 Percentage distribution of CXC results by school type**

CXC Grade	School -Type				
	Traditional	Technical	Comprehensive	New Secondary	Technical Vocational
Grade One	10.8	5.9	4.2	1.1	5.0
Grade Two	36.5	26.9	19.1	9.1	20.8
Grade Three	30.7	34.8	32.6	24.2	26.7
Other	22.0	32.4	44.1	65.6	47.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: A Tracer Study of Graduates of Jamaican Secondary Schools 1991-1992, (Education Research Centre, UWI, Mona, Jamaica)

It has been suggested that in the absence of clear data linking educational performance at secondary level with poverty status, the performance of students at the respective types of schools provide some indication.<sup>33</sup>

Data from Trinidad and Tobago from the analysis of the Survey of Living Condition 1992 supports the view that there is a growing disparity in the quality of education received by the richest and the poorest.

**Box 4: Analysis of the Survey of Living Condition data for Trinidad and Tobago 1992**

- While students from all expenditure quintiles attended primary school, the representation of children from low income families was progressively reduced as the level of education increased;
- University was clearly a venue for the wealthy: enrolment by students from the fifth quintile was four times as that by youth in the fourth quintile, compared with zero enrolment of youths in the first to the third quintile;
- Transportation and lack of textbooks were problems for low income children, particularly rural children;
- 64 percent of students in the lowest quintile walked to school, compared with 21 per cent in the fifth quintile who walked;
- Over 30 per cent of the school students in the first quintile did not have textbooks, compared with less than 10 per cent among the fifth quintile;
- In the Common Entrance Examination, 44 and 55 percent of Standard five students in government primary schools scored below the minimal acceptable levels in mathematics and English, respectively, compared with 37 percent and 49 percent of students in assisted primary schools, and 12 and 13 percent in private primary schools;
- Students in government schools performed the worst, and those in private schools, the best;
- Government schools tend to cater for poorer students, and since students are selected to different types of secondary schools according to their CEE scores, poor students who attend public primary school have fewer opportunity for post-compulsory education or are tracked to secondary schools;
- Students from lower income families are concentrated in junior secondary, senior comprehensive and composite schools;
- By contrast, students from upper and middle classes have the highest concentration in 7 year traditional schools, 5 year traditional schools and Sixth Form Colleges, far above their share in the total student population in secondary school.

Trinidad and Tobago: The Financing of Education. World Bank document, 1996

## **Gender inequality**

There may be another qualitative inequality in the education system which is emerging in the region, and this relates to gender. Most of the discourse on gender inequality in education has focused on male marginalization and the fact that girls were out performing boys at different levels of the education system. This discourse though presented as a qualitative issue has stayed in the domain of quantitative analysis, regarding access, enrolment rates by sex and pass rates by sex.

Gender experts in the region have suggested that when examined from a qualitative perspective the results may be quite different. Data indicates that although females have a slight quantitative advantage over males in the education systems in the Caribbean, qualitatively they may be at a disadvantage. These disadvantages arise out of subject tracking in which young girls are tracked into the soft sciences, or the low end of technical vocational training, or the arts and humanities at the University level. (See Tables 6 a,b,c in Annex 1) Such tracking ultimately impacts on income earning possibilities. This will be further explored in the following section of the document.

## **SECTION IV: IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON POVERTY**

### **Return on education**

We can assess the impact of education on poverty by examining how education enables people to have a decent standard of living and make optimal use of the assets and resources at their disposal to achieve a sustainable level of human development.

In assessing the current returns on education provided by Caribbean society it is important to ascertain, as well, if they are sufficient and adequate to motivate persons to continue from one level of education to another in order to best prepare for the demands of the labour market.

There is agreement that basic education offers individuals low-income returns. However, it is argued that the social returns to basic education are high, particularly in relation to improvements in the population's health conditions, creativity and productivity.<sup>34</sup> There is also, the additional justification for ensuring all individuals have access to at least basic education, as it provides a basis for further education and further benefits.

### **Employment**

People generally expect that if they receive some level of education it will result in them being able to secure employment.

Data from Table 10, Unemployment rates by level of educational attainment in the Caribbean countries in 1997, clearly indicates that in the four countries for which data is available, unemployment for both sexes is lowest for persons with the highest education and highest for persons with the least education. The data also points to the fact that at each level of attainment, primary, secondary and tertiary, women have a higher rate of unemployment than men who have achieved the same level of education. This is so for each country.

**Table 10: Unemployment rates by level of educational attainment in selected Caribbean countries in 1997**

	Female Rate	Male Rate
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>		
Primary and less	22.3	11.0
Secondary	20.6	13.5
Tertiary	2.3	1.0
<b>Belize</b>		
Primary and less	24.0	9.2
Secondary	20.0	9.2
Tertiary	5.8	5.2
<b>Barbados</b>		
Primary and less	16.7	10.4
Secondary	20.6	12.9
Tertiary	8.2	7.3
<b>Bahamas</b>		
Primary and less	19.6	9.2
Secondary	15.6	9.8
Tertiary	5.3	3.4

Source: Caribbean Subregional Review of WSSD+5 and the Status of the Older Person: Globalization and Employment in the Caribbean. Prepared by the ILO Caribbean Office, Port of Spain, August 1999.

The data for the four countries reinforces the notion that people with education usually are employed as against people with little education who may find some difficulty finding employment. It should be noted that there is not much differentiation in unemployment levels between educational attainment of 'primary and less' and 'secondary' levels. Returns on secondary education in the region, are typically lower than those at the university level and are not much higher than returns on primary education.

One study suggests that this may be one of the emerging impacts of globalization on low levels of education being observed in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>35</sup> The thinking is that as China and other countries with low labour costs, move into world trade, and as technological advances demand substantially higher skills, the demand for labour with low levels of education – primary or secondary will decrease and so too will the returns on education at those levels.

### **Income**

People with the highest levels of education are likely to receive the highest incomes. Data from the Poverty Assessment Study, conducted by Kairi Consultants Ltd., on the Eastern Caribbean Island of Saint Lucia, supports this thesis as Table 10 indicates that persons in the richest quintile possessed the highest level of examinations passed while persons in the poorest quintile possessed the lowest examinations passed.

**Table 11: Highest examination passed by heads of households by quintiles (Saint Lucia)**

	Poorest	II	III	IV	Richest	Total	
						%	n
None	58.6	52.8	42.2	45.0	31.5	45.7	246
School Leaving	36.4	40.7	45.9	33.3	27.0	36.6	197
CXC Basic	1.0		0.9	1.8	1.8	1.1	6
CXC General	2.0	5.6	1.8	10.8	13.5	6.9	37
A'Levels			0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	3
Diploma	1.0		4.6	6.3	9.0	4.3	23
Degree			0.9		10.8	2.4	13
Other	1.0	0.9	2.8	1.8	5.4	2.4	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	538

Source: Kairi Poverty Assessment Study. St. Lucia, 1995

The data may suggest as well that some differential in income levels exists between those persons holding the CXC Basic and the CXC General results. It is clear however, that since education is positively associated with productivity and earnings, differences in educational attainment and achievement will lead to different employment prospects and future lifetime earnings.

However, data from a review of labour market trends in Trinidad and Tobago<sup>36</sup> reveals an unequal wage structure based on gender. In the Review, as is illustrated in Table 12, only in the lowest wage scale of less than \$1,000.00, and in select categories within that scale, did women earn more income than men. In all other scales including the highest scale of \$5,000 and more, in no single category did women receive equal or more wages than men. This lends support to the findings of gender experts that across the region women are disproportionately segregated in the low wage sector.

It becomes clear that a number of factors affects each individual's labour income differences, among them are educational level and gender.



**Table 12: Income group by type of worker by sex**

1996 - '000 of workers									
of which									
	All Types	Paid Employee	Govt. Public/ Statutory Board	Govt. State Enterprise	Non-Govt.	Employer	Own Account Worker	Unpaid Worker	Learner/ Apprentice
<b>All Income Groups</b>	<b>444.2</b>	<b>334.2</b>	<b>103.4</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>206.3</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>76.3</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Male	282.5	207.3	63.4	20.4	123.4	14.2	53.6	3.2	4.1
Female	161.7	126.9	40.0	4.0	82.9	3.8	22.7	6.9	1.2
<b>Less than \$1000</b>	<b>131.5</b>	<b>76.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Male	68.5	36.7	2.3	0.5	23.9	1.2	23.9	3.2	3.3
Female	63.0	39.6	3.0	0.2	46.5	0.5	15.1	6.9	1.1
<b>\$1000 - &lt;\$3000</b>	<b>200.9</b>	<b>163.9</b>	<b>57.3</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.4</b>
Male	142.8	113.6	38.2	11.1	64.5	6.3	22.3	0	0.4
Female	58.1	50.3	19.1	1.7	29.5	2.0	5.7	0	0
<b>\$3,000 - &lt;\$5000</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Male	34.7	29.7	13.8	5.2	10.6	3.0	1.8	0	0
Female	21.7	20.8	12.6	1.3	6.9	0.6	0.2	0	0
<b>\$5000 and over</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	15.7	12.1	3.5	2.9	5.7	2.6	1.0		
Female	5.4	4.7	1.3	0.4	3.0	0.6	0.1	0	0
<b>Not Stated</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Male	20.9	15.2	5.6	0.9	8.7	0.9	4.5	0	0.3
Female	13.4	11.5	4.1	0.3	7.1	0.3	1.5	0	0
<b>Average Income</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>	<b>\$1,900</b>	<b>\$2,700</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$400</b>
Male	\$2,000	\$2,100	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$1,700	\$3,100	\$1,200	\$-	\$500
Female	\$1,700	\$1,900	\$2,700	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$2,600	\$800	\$-	\$400
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$2,900</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$2,200</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$400</b>
Male	\$1,600	\$1,800	\$2,300	\$2,500	\$1,200	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$100	\$400
Female	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$2,900	\$1,000	\$2,200	\$700	\$100	\$400

Source: A Review of Labour Market Trends and Development in Trinidad and Tobago: 1986-1996

Anywhere in the world, higher wages are paid to workers, who are more skilled or occupy management and administrative positions than to workers having little education, who are normally placed in manual production jobs. Data from Saint Lucia, as seen in table 12, affirms that assumption as the persons in the richest quintile are in the Legislator/Manager and Professional categories, while people in the poorest quintile predominate in the elementary, machine operator and craft categories.

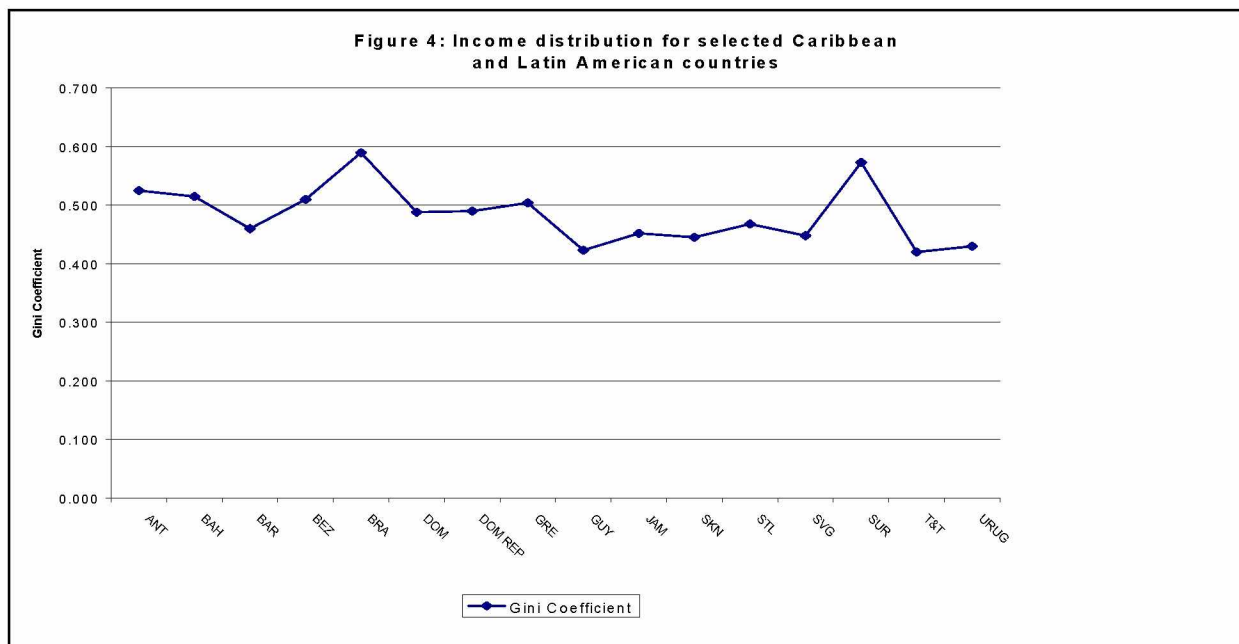
**Table 13: Occupation of heads of households by quintiles (Saint Lucia)**

	Poorest	II	III	IV	Richest	Total
						%
Legislator/Manager	2.9	1.5	7.1	12.1	17.0	8.9
Professional		1.5	2.4	5.5	17.0	5.9
Technical	2.9		2.4	1.1	2.1	1.7
Clerical	2.9	4.4	7.1	5.5	6.4	5.4
Services/Sales	16.2	22.1	17.9	17.6	10.6	16.5
Skilled Agricultural	17.6	25.0	23.8	22.0	10.6	19.5
Craft	19.1	22.1	16.7	13.2	12.8	16.3
Machine Operator	10.3	8.8	9.5	12.1	7.4	9.6
Elementary	27.9	14.7	13.1	11.0	16.0	16.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
	68	68	84	91	94	405

Source: Saint Lucia data, Kairi Poverty Assessment Studies

Globalization and the introduction of new labour-saving technologies have widened these wage and income gaps in both industrial and developing countries. Trends in income disparity in the region suggest that the effects of globalization are already widening income gaps in the region.<sup>37</sup>

The World Bank concludes that income distribution in Caribbean countries resembles that in other regions of the developing world, where the poorest 20 per cent of the population receive fewer than 5 per cent of national income. As a consequence, many people, including children, live in absolute poverty. It has been estimated that during the 1990s the wealthiest 10 per cent of families in the Caribbean improved their position in relative and absolute terms and received 15-20 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent.<sup>38</sup> Figure 4<sup>39</sup> illustrates the degree of income inequality among selected countries in the region.



Despite what appears to be the best position of Guyana relative to other countries for which data is presented, it must be remembered that Guyana is one of the countries in the Caribbean with a high poverty head count. Their position in figure 4 may well be an indication of generally low-income levels. Barbados' position on the other hand, may well indicate a positive degree of income distribution, in light of the fact that it has one of the lowest levels of poverty in the region and is ranked among those countries with a high human development. The data for Trinidad and Tobago is based on data from the early period of the 1990s and may have undergone some changes during the latter part of the nineties. Data for Suriname indicates a position closest to Brazil, which has the highest Gini coefficient and the most unequal income distribution in Latin America.

### **Family and Education**

A fundamental transfer of resources takes place within the family as differences in education are transmitted from one generation to the next through the family unit.

One way in which that can be expressed is family support for the education of their children. Families in the higher income quintiles have greater purchasing power, allowing them to afford a better education for their children. Data from Table 14 indicates in Saint Lucia, households in the highest quintile spend almost four times as much as households in the poorest quintile on lessons to improve the academic performance of their children.

**Table 14: Annual expenditure on schooling by quintiles (Saint Lucia)**

Selected School Items	Average Annual Expenditure (\$)				
	Household Quintiles				
	I	II	III	IV	V
School Books	245.43	345.34	373.17	350.94	250.89
School Uniform	119.93	111.50	142.62	166.57	125.14
School Fees	91.63	101.20	165.28	84.25	161.63
Examination Fees	14.83	12.90	37.53	32.05	31.17
Lessons	24.71	46.42	75.54	73.33	92.50
Total	496.53	617.36	794.14	707.14	661.33

N=600

Source: Main Poverty Report, Kairi Poverty Assessment (Saint Lucia, 1995)

Investment in the education of girls has been defined as possibly having the highest return on investment available in the developing world. This is so as it has been found that girls schooling not only reduces child mortality and improves the nutrition and general health of children, it also reduces population growth, since educated women tend to marry later and choose to have fewer children<sup>40</sup>.

**Box 5: Returns on Education to the Family**

- Parents with more education, income-earning opportunities and incomes opt for fewer children and dedicate more resources to invest in the education of those offspring.
- Children of working mothers actually attain higher educational levels than those of mothers who do not work.
- The total number of children in the household is another factor that influences educational attainment. Fifteen-year-old children in households with six or more children have an average of two years less education than children in households with one or even three children.

Source: Facing up to inequality in Latin America

Family size is also clearly influenced by returns to income, as data from selected countries in the region show the poorest households to have the largest number of children, as indicated in Table 15. Family size in turn influences decisions about schooling of children and the quality of education they receive.

**Table 15: Size of household by quintile (selected countries)**

Average Household Size	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Saint Lucia	5.3	4.6	4.2	3.7	2.6	3.8
Belize	6.3	6	4.9	4.2	2.9	4.8
St Vincent and the Grenadines	5.3	4.8	4.8	3.6	3.0	4.1
Grenada	4.8	4.6	4.0	2.9	1.7	3.6
Turks and Caicos Islands	3.9	3.2	2.7	2.2	1.8	2.8

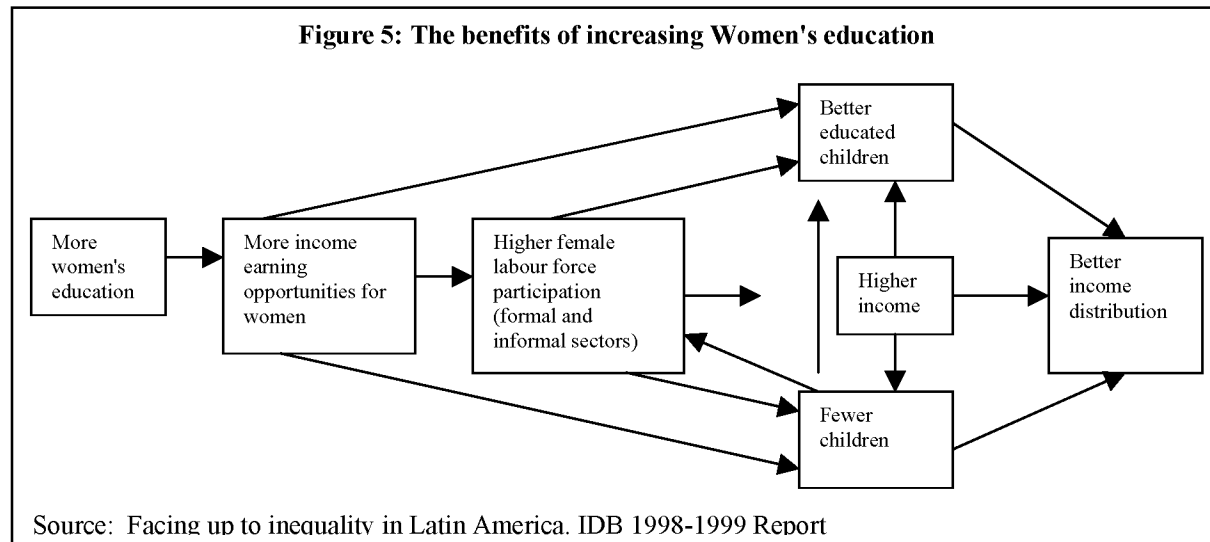
Source: Source: Kairi Poverty Assessment Study. Saint Lucia, 1995; Belize 1996; St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1995; Grenada, 1999; Turks and Caicos, 1999).

The World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen 6-12 March 1995, acknowledges the fundamental role of parents education, particularly that of mothers, to facilitate the struggle against the cycle of poverty and school failure, promote social integration, particularly that of marginal and underprivileged groups, and increase productive employment.

Figure 5 illustrates the way in which enhanced education opportunities for women results in better income-earning opportunities, better educated children, and less income inequality. Moreover, the diagram demonstrates a loop effect whereby fewer children results in increased labour force participation of women, higher income and better educated children.

A study on Gender, Headship and Intrahousehold Resource Allocation<sup>41</sup> in Jamaica, supports this thesis. The study concluded that children of working female-headed households had higher school enrolment and lower

labour force participation rates. Despite being poor, these households, with working mothers, had slightly lower teenage labour force participation rates and higher enrolment rates than reported male headed households. It was concluded that “any disadvantages caused by the reduction in time spent with children is more than offset by the gains from participating in the labour force”<sup>42</sup>.



The quality and amount of education that can be provided for children is influenced by the amount of education that the parents themselves have received.

UNICEF suggests that the educational environment in which a child grows can influence his/her interest to achieve high levels of education or affect such interest adversely. They go on to suggest that in the Caribbean, four in five children under 15 live in households where the head has attended only up to primary education level.<sup>43</sup> The data from a Kairi-conducted Poverty Assessment Study in Grenada, supports the thesis that the educational environment of children affects their educational achievement. Table 7 in Annex 1 shows that a higher percentage of students who had completed the General Certificate Examination (GCE) A levels, diplomas and degrees, had parents whose educational attainment went beyond the primary and secondary levels.

## **SECTION V: CONCLUSION**

*“ ... the seeds of tomorrow's income inequality are being sown today...”*

A disturbing scenario is emerging from the foregoing discussion on the impact of poverty on education. Two distinct segments of society are becoming

more apparent, one highly educated, the other relatively uneducated – one wealthy, the other poor.

A number of factors point to this trend. Among them is the difference in access to the education system between the rich and the poor. This is evidenced at the post-primary level by lower enrolment ratios among the poorest quintiles and higher enrolment ratios for the wealthiest quintiles and by families in the poorest quintiles having the largest household size which seems to impact negatively on high levels of educational attainment. In addition, children from the poorest quintiles seem to be least likely to advance to secondary and tertiary levels of education. Added to this, children from households where the parents had achieved a high level of education - found more often than not in the highest quintiles - were more likely to advance to post-primary levels and complete, CXC, GCE O and A levels, and University degrees.

Another factor has to do with the quality of education. There is agreement that the quality of schooling provided to the majority of primary and secondary school students in the region is poor<sup>44</sup>. It is not however, poor for all. It is poor for those who have less. There is sufficient evidence that points to the variance between schools of different quality and the fact that it is poor children who attend the schools that record the weakest results in the national level examinations. Those parents in the richest quintiles are able to spend more on the education of their children while the poorest are able to spend less.

This rigid stratification of schools within the education system can act as a hindrance to social integration in the Caribbean. The region is already burdened with a social structure inherited from the period of enslavement and indentureship that is pyramidal in shape with light skin colour and wealth converging at the top and black skin colour and poverty at the bottom.<sup>45</sup> Some three decades after independence, the region could find itself trapped in the same framework with the attendant lack of cohesiveness and stability.

The discussion on the impact of education on poverty also points to a wage structure which is following the education patterns with highest wages accruing to those who have attained the highest level of education, as it should be. The impact of globalization on the wage structure may well be negative unless educational achievements are increased as all evidence points to a global labour market that is segmented between those who know and those who don't know. For the Caribbean to position itself within and to benefit from, the high income earning end of the global economy, it has to increase substantially its enrollment ratios in tertiary education to match those of the East Asian Tigers and Latin America.

At the same time there would seem to be a necessity for employment creation strategies targeted to women coupled with the removal of wage discrimination at all levels the reason being that employed women use their resources for their children's educational advancement and improved well-being. As well, data suggests that the children of working women attain higher levels of education and have lower labour force participation rates.

This, of course, in no way diminishes the necessity for committed action to reduce the levels of unemployment among all groups especially young men, across the region.

It would seem that one of the lessons that could be learnt from the foregoing discussion is that wealth alone is not enough, as countries with high per capita incomes did not achieve the highest level of human development. A committed policy towards growth and equity seems to be the key. This can be demonstrated in two ways – one through a macroeconomic policy framework that has employment creation as a central focus and long term development strategies that will push the economic structure of the economies into the knowledge-based segment of the global market. This should assure higher income levels generally. The other is to transform the current education product so that it truly develops persons to their fullest potential. Continuing education for today's young adults must of necessity, be a part of the new education product, as we have to transform the educational environment of today's children, today.

The window of opportunity which the demographics of the region seem to be presenting, regarding the low levels of primary and secondary school age children in the near future, should allow governments in the region an opportunity to improve the quality of education offered in the school system without having to increase expenditure levels. This seems to be one action that can be taken to arrest the deteriorating situation in the education sector.

Governments in the region have demonstrated a commitment in the past to development goals based on social equity and therefore in keeping with those expressed goals, need to adopt a rescue plan for the education system. Nothing less would do to stop this engine of growing inequality and transform it into a catalyst for change and genuine social equity. If this is not done, the stratification between rich and poor now found in the education system may reinforce, rather than correct income inequalities and perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

## Annex 1

Table 1: Summary table macro economic performance

	GDP Growth Rates		Inflation	External	Unemployment	Fiscal Deficit
	Average 1980's	Average 1990's	Rate 1997	Debt % GDP 1997	Rate 1997	as a % of GDP Average 1990's
ANGUILLA	...	4.3	0.60	13.1	...	-0.48
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	7.4	3.1	...	46.3	7*	-2.43
ARUBA	...	5.0	3.00	...	...	-0.80
BAHAMAS	4.53	...	0.50	9.2	15*	-2.10
BARBADOS	3.01	0.8	7.70	15.9	14.50	-2.17
BELIZE	4.39	4.4	1.00	44.8	12.70	-3.78
CUBA	2.16	-3.0	2.00	...	....	-0.89
DOMINICA	5.54	2.8	2.20	42.5	10*	-4.13
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2.98	3.2	8.40	23.7	15.90	0.03
GRENADA	4.74	3.1	0.80	33.6	16*	-3.56
GUYANA	-1.39	5.0	4.10	242.8	11*	-12.28
HAITI	1.09	-0.6	16.20	39.5	...	-1.34
JAMAICA	0.8	0.8	10.00	54.0	16.50	-0.76
MONTSERRAT	5.76	-6.6	...	34.5	...	-1.75
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES	...	-0.5	3.10	...	14.20	...
SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	5.24	4.2	11.30	44.2	12*	-3.53
SAINT LUCIA	3.95	2.4	11.30	13.6	16*	-0.96
ST. VINCENT & GRENADINES	5.94	3.6	0.80	35.3	20*	-2.37
SURINAME	-3.07	0.9	16.3	...	10.00	...
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	-3	2.1	3.70	26.9	15.00	-0.44

Source: ECLAC based on national data  
... Data not available  
\* 1996 Unemployment data



**Table 2: Poverty estimates of selected Caribbean countries**

Country	Head count index	Gini Coefficient
Antigua and Barbuda	12.0	0.525
Bahamas	5.0	0.515
Barbados	8.0	0.460
Belize	33.0	0.510
Brazil		0.590
Dominica	33.0	0.488
Dominican Republic	20.6	0.490
Grenada	32.1	0.504
Guyana	43.2	0.423
Jamaica	34.2	0.452
St. Kitts & Nevis	15.0	0.445
St. Lucia	25.1	0.468
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	37.5	0.448
Suriname	63.1	0.573
Trinidad and Tobago	21.2	0.420

Source: ECLAC, Poverty Statistics, Santiago Seminar 7-9 May 1997. UN Santiago Chile. L/CR.1814. Pub. 17<sup>th</sup> April 1998. and KAIRI CONSULTANTS. Poverty Assessment Report, Grenada: Volume 1 of 2. (1998)

**Sources of figures:** Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, St. Kitts/Nevis poverty estimates from IDB as reported in Greene, E. "Reducing Poverty in the Caribbean by Interventions in Health and Education", PAHO, Table 1.1. ; St. Lucia (1995), Belize (1996), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1996), Grenada (1998), - Poverty Assessment, Kairi Consultants; Dominican Republic, 1994, "Estabilizacion Apertura y Pobreza en Republicana Dominicana, 1986-1992", Fundacion Economia y Desarrollo, Inc.; Guyana (1993) HIES/LSMS as reported in World Bank 1994 "Guyana: Strategies for Reducing Poverty" Report No. 12861-GUA; Haiti (1987) Poverty Estimate reported in ECLAC, 1993, "Poverty Issues and Poverty Alleviation in the Caribbean," Working Paper; Jamaica, Survey of Living Conditions (1992) estimates derived from: "Jamaica: A Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, Country Economic Memorandum; St. Lucia (1995) Calculations from Survey of Living Conditions, as reported in CDB St. Lucia Poverty Assessment; UNDP (1999), prepared by Marcelo Neri and Jack Menke "Poverty in Suriname: Assessment, Monitoring and Capital Enhancing Policies"; Trinidad and Tobago (1992), Survey of Living Conditions as reported in World Bank, 1995, "Trinidad and Tobago: Poverty and Unemployment in an Oil Based Economy," Report No. 14382-TR.

**Table 3: Adult literacy in selected CDCC countries**

COUNTRY	ADULT LITERACY		
	1994	1995	1997
Antigua and Barbuda		95.0	95.0
Bahamas	98.1	98.2	95.8
Barbados	97.3	97.4	97.6
Belize	70.0	70.0	75.0
Cuba	95.4	95.7	95.9
Dominica		94.0	94.0
Dominican Republic	81.5	82.1	82.6
Grenada	98.0	98.0	96.0
Guyana	97.9	98.1	98.1
Jamaica	84.4	85.0	85.5
St. Kitts & Nevis	90.0	90.0	90.0
St. Lucia	82.0	82.0	82.0
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	82.0	82.0	82.0
Suriname	92.7	93.0	93.5
Trinidad & Tobago	97.9	97.9	97.8

Source: UNDP. Human Development Report 1997,1998,1999

**Table 4: School age population projections for selected countries**

<b>BAHAMAS</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	12.1	5.7	5.5	11.4
2000	12	5.5	5.4	10.2
2005	11.8	5.6	5.3	9.9
2010	11	5.5	5.4	10
2015	10.1	5.2	5.3	10.2
2020	9.2	4.8	4.9	9.9
2025	8.8	4.4	4.5	9.2
2030	8.7	4.2	4.2	8.5
2040	8.3	4.1	4.1	8
2050	7.8	3.9	3.9	7.9

<b>BELIZE</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	16	7.6	7.4	12.7
2000	15.7	7.1	6.8	12.8
2005	15.1	7.2	6.6	12.1
2010	13.7	6.9	6.7	12.1
2015	12.2	6.4	6.4	12.4
2020	10.2	5.6	5.8	11.8
2025	9.7	4.6	5	10.7
2030	9.7	4.6	4.3	9.2
2040	8.8	4.5	4.5	8.6
2050	7.9	3.9	4	8.2

<b>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	14	6.4	6.2	11.7
2000	13.3	6.5	6	11.2
2005	12.2	6.1	6	11.1
2010	11.3	5.7	5.7	11.1
2015	10.5	5.3	5.3	10.4
2020	9.9	5	4.9	9.7
2025	9.4	4.7	4.7	9.2
2030	8.9	4.5	4.5	8.8
2040	8.2	4.1	4.1	8.1
2050	7.8	3.9	3.9	7.6

<b>HAITI</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	17.8	7.6	6.8	11
2000	15.9	8.2	7.4	12.2
2005	14.5	7	7.5	13.4
2010	14.2	6.7	6.3	13.1
2015	13.8	6.5	6.2	11.5
2020	13.2	6.4	6.1	11.4
2025	12.4	6.1	6	11.3
2030	11.5	5.8	5.8	11.2
2040	9.9	5	5.1	10.2
2050	8.9	4.5	4.5	9.1

<b>SURINAME</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	14.2	7.5	6.4	12.6
2000	12.3	6.7	7.3	12.3
2005	11.1	5.9	6.1	13.3
2010	10.2	5.2	5.4	11.4
2015	9.3	4.8	4.8	10.1
2020	9.1	4.4	4.5	9.2
2025	8.9	4.4	4.2	8.6
2030	8.3	4.3	4.3	8.2
2040	7.4	3.8	3.9	8
2050	7.1	3.6	3.6	7.2

<b>BARBADOS</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	9.4	4.9	4.7	10.7
2000	8.8	4.5	4.7	9.2
2005	7.7	4.4	4.4	9.1
2010	7	3.7	4.1	8.6
2015	6.8	3.4	3.4	7.8
2020	6.7	3.4	3.3	6.8
2025	6.5	3.3	3.3	6.6
2030	6.3	3.2	3.3	6.6
2040	6.2	3.1	3.1	6.4
2050	6.2	3.2	3.2	6.4

<b>CUBA</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	9.3	4.1	4	10.9
2000	8.8	4.7	4.2	7.7
2005	7.7	4.2	4.6	8.3
2010	6.9	3.7	3.9	8.7
2015	6.5	3.3	3.5	7.6
2020	6.5	3.2	3.2	6.9
2025	6.4	3.2	3.2	6.4
2030	6.4	3.2	3.2	6.4
2040	6.2	3.2	3.2	6.5
2050	6.2	3.1	3.2	6.5

<b>GUYANA</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	12.8	6.4	5.5	12
2000	12.1	5.8	6.1	10.6
2005	11.3	5.8	5.5	11.2
2010	9.8	5.3	5.5	10.4
2015	9.3	4.6	4.8	10.2
2020	9.1	4.4	4.3	9.1
2025	8.9	4.4	4.3	8.3
2030	8.6	4.3	4.3	8.3
2040	7.9	4	4	8.2
2050	7.8	3.9	3.8	7.7

<b>JAMAICA</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	13.1	6.4	6.2	11.8
2000	12.5	5.9	5.9	11.3
2005	11.7	5.8	5.5	10.8
2010	10.7	5.4	5.5	10.4
2015	9.8	5	5	10.2
2020	9.2	4.6	4.7	9.5
2025	8.8	4.3	4.4	8.9
2030	8.5	4.2	4.2	8.3
2040	8	4	4	7.9
2050	7.6	3.8	3.8	7.6

<b>TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO</b>				
YEAR	6-11	12-14	15-17	18-23
1995	13.1	6.9	6.2	10.9
2000	10.5	6.3	6.8	12.1
2005	8.3	4.9	5.6	12.7
2010	7.6	3.9	4.3	10.5
2015	7.9	3.6	3.6	8.2
2020	8	3.9	3.6	7
2025	7.5	3.9	3.9	7.2
2030	7	3.7	3.8	7.7
2040	6.7	3.3	3.3	7
2050	6.6	3.4	3.4	6.6

Source: United Nations World Population Prospects 1998 Revision, Volume 1

**Table 5. Proportion of households and unemployment rates by sex for ECLAC/CDCC member countries**

Country	Head of household by sex (1995)		Unemployment rate by sex (1996)	
	Proportion of males (%)	Proportion of females (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Anguilla	67.8	32.2	6.3 <sup>b</sup>	9.0 <sup>b</sup>
Antigua & Barbuda	58.5	41.5	6.4 <sup>a</sup>	5.6 <sup>a</sup>
Aruba	77.3	22.7	5.4 <sup>d</sup>	7.9 <sup>d</sup>
Bahamas	64.1	35.8	8.6	14.7
Barbados	56.5	43.5	12.4	18.9
Belize	78.0	22.0	11.7	18.6
Br. Virgin Islands	71.3	28.7	3.4 <sup>a</sup>	3.1 <sup>a</sup>
Cuba	72.0	28.0	...	...
Dominica	62.7	37.3	9.8 <sup>a</sup>	9.2 <sup>a</sup>
Dominican Republic	70.0	30.0	...	...
Grenada	57.3	42.7	14.6 <sup>a</sup>	12.7 <sup>a</sup>
Guyana	70.5	29.5	8.4 <sup>b</sup>	18.1 <sup>b</sup>
Haiti	61.3	38.7	...	...
Jamaica	58.0	42.0	9.9	23.0
Montserrat	60.0	40.0	...	...
Netherlands Antilles	66.0	34.0	10.4	18.1
Puerto Rico	72.0	28.0	...	...
St Kitts and Nevis	56.1	43.9	...	...
Saint Lucia	59.6	40.4	13.8	19.3
St Vincent and the Grenadines	60.5	39.5	18.4 <sup>a</sup>	22.1 <sup>a</sup>
Suriname	80.0	20.0	7.9	16.4
Trinidad and Tobago	73.5	26.5	13.2	21.0
U.S. Virgin Islands	67.0	33.0	...	...
Mean	66.0	33.9		
Low	56.1	20.0		
High	80.0	43.9		

Source 1: Poverty Eradication & Female-Headed Households (FHH) in the Caribbean (POV/96/2) ECLAC.  
Source 2: International Labour Organization Digest of Caribbean Labour Statistics 1997

**Table 6a: Female percentage enrolment at primary and secondary levels for selected Caribbean countries.**

Country	Year	% Primary	% Secondary
Antigua & Barbuda	1991/92	49	50
Bahamas	1992/93	50	50
Barbados	1991/92	49	47
Belize	1994/95	48	52
Br. Virgin Islands	1994/95	48	51
Dominica	1994/95	50	54
Grenada	1992/93	49	54
Jamaica	1992/93	49	51
Montserrat	1993/94	46	49
St. Kitts & Nevis	1992/93	49	51
St. Lucia	1992/93	48	63
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	1993/94	49	55
Trinidad & Tobago	1993/94	49	50
Turks & Caicos Islands	1993/94	50	50

Source: Women's Education: The Caribbean Situation by Dr. Barbara Bailey, August 1997.

**Table 6b: Enrolment in 1994/95 undergraduate and graduate program by faculty & sex.**

UNDERGRADUATE			
Faculty	Female	Male	F : M Ratio
AGRICULTURE	147	140	1 : 1
ARTS & GENERAL STUDIES	2054	554	3.7 : 1
EDUCATION	273	62	4.4 : 1
ENGINEERING	152	622	1 : 4
LAW	287	122	2.4 : 1
MEDICAL SCIENCES	589	583	1 : 1
NATURAL SCIENCES	1255	1287	1 : 1
SOCIAL SCIENCES	2706	1351	2 : 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7463 (61.3%)</b>	<b>4721 (38.7/5)</b>	<b>1.6 : 1</b>
GRADUATE			
AGRICULTURE	51	56	1 : 1
ARTS & GENERAL STUDIES	228	77	3 : 1
EDUCATION	204	60	3.4 : 1
ENGINEERING	63	190	1 : 3
LAW	16	14	1 : 1
MEDICAL SCIENCES	112	108	1 : 1
NATURAL SCIENCES	173	166	1 : 1
SOCIAL SCIENCES	419	365	1.1 : 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1266 (54.9%)</b>	<b>1036 (46.1%)</b>	<b>1.2 : 1</b>

Source: Women's Education: The Caribbean Situation by Dr. Barbara Bailey, August 1997.

**Table 6c: Distribution by sex in regional entries for technical & vocational general level CXC exams**

SUBJECT	MALE		FEMALE	
	#	RATIO%	#	RATIO %
METALS	774	96.99	24	3.01
<b>WOODS</b>	1451	96.22	57	3.78
MECH. ENG. TECHNOLOGY	457	94.42	27	5.58
ELECTRICITY/ ELECTRONICS	1007	92.47	82	7.53
BUILDING TECHNOLOGY	460	91.45	43	8.55
TECH. DRAWING	5097	90.52	534	9.48
ART & CRAFT	407	44.77	502	55.23
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	179	44.75	221	55.25
P.O.B.	10,076	32.90	20,548	67.10
P.O.A.	7,265	30.67	16,421	69.33
OFFICE PROCEDURES	2,462	18.69	10,933	81.62
TYPEWRITING	536	7.51	6,600	92.49
FOOD & NUTRITION	313	7.21	4,026	92.78
HOME ECONOMICS	134	5.83	2,164	94.17
SHORTHAND	15	3.14	462	96.86
CLOTHING & TEXTILES	42	2.85	1,430	97.15

Source: Women's Education: The Caribbean Situation by Barbara Bailey, August 1997.

**Table 7: Highest examination passed by mother's and father's highest education attained**

	None		Primary		Secondary		Post Secondary		University		Other		Don't Know		Total			
	Mom	Dad	Mom	Dad	Mom	Dad	Mom	Dad	Mom	Dad	Mom	Dad	Mom	Dad	Mom		Dad	
None	3.4	3.5	54.7	49.6	1.5	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.3	-	0.2	0.3	39.3	44.5	100	654	100	651
School Leaving	2.2	2.2	71.7	56.5	2.2	2.2	2.2	-	-	-	-	-	21.7	39.1	100	46	100	46
GCE O'Levels	1.1	1.1	68.5	55.1	1.1	5.6	-	-	-	1.1	-	-	29.2	37.1	100	89	100	89
GCE A'Levels	-	-	55.6	66.7	-	-	-	-	-	11.1	11.1	-	33.3	22.2	100	9	100	9
Diploma	3.4	-	69.0	48.3	-	6.9	-	-	-	6.9	-	-	27.6	37.9	100	29	100	29
Degree	-	-	41.7	36.4	41.7	27.3	8.3	18.2	-	9.1	-	-	8.3	9.1	100	12	100	11
Other	-	-	55.0	45.0	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.0	55.0	100	20	100	20
Total	2.9	2.9	57.4	50.4	2.1	2.1	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2	36.4	42.8	100	859	100	855

Source: Kairi Consultants. Main Report - Poverty Assessment Study, Belize, Grenada and Saint Lucia

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- 21 In studies conducted by ECLAC, following the devastation in the Caribbean caused by Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn, in 1995, it was concluded that for the island of St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, the total amount of damages and losses caused by the disaster was estimated at US\$1,070 million. This total represented more than twice the amount of the estimated gross domestic product for St. Maarten in 1994 (US\$465 million). For the island of Anguilla, the study indicated that the "total amount of damages and losses caused by the disaster is estimated a US\$ 55 million". This estimate of damage was equivalent to nearly 94 per cent of a year's gross domestic product of the island. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, had been affected by two devastating hurricanes within a three-year period. Hurricane Luis which hit in 1995, caused damage in the vicinity of US\$197 million. In September of 1998, the Federation was once again hit, this time by Hurricane Georges, which resulted in the loss of five lives and an estimated damage totalling EC\$1.0 billion or US\$402.1 million which was 2.2 times over the 1997 real GDP.<sup>21</sup> The studies concluded that the main effects of the hurricanes were on the natural resources of the islands, on which their main activities are based: tourism, commerce and agriculture, as well as on the social and physical infrastructure of their populations.
- 22 The State of Eastern Caribbean Children. UNICEF 1998
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- 25 *ibid.*
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- 32 Reassessing and Rationalising Resources for Greater Results. A Tracer Study of Graduates of Jamaican Secondary Schools 1991-1992. Dennis A. V. Brown. P42
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- 35 Facing up to inequality in Latin America. *Op cit.*
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- 37 In "The socioeconomic and political context" T by Dr. Karl Theodore and Dr. Edward Green, it was reported that in Trinidad and Tobago households in the top quintile earned 49 per cent of the income in 1988 and 50% in 1992. In Guyana, the highest quintile earned 43 per cent of the income in both 1988 and 1993, while the lowest quintile slipped from earning 7.5 per cent in 1988 to 5 per cent in 1993.
- 38 The State of the Eastern Caribbean Children. UNICEF 1998 p15
- 39 Figure 4 illustrates the Gini coefficients as listed in the Annex, Table 2. The Gini index measures how far real distribution is from a hypothetical reference point. If incomes were distributed in a fully equitable manner each person in a society would receive the same share of income. This fully equitable position would be represented by zero. Complete concentration of income in a single person, or complete inequality, would be represented by one. In theory, the Gini coefficient can vary between zero and one. In practice however, Gini coefficients of per capita income vary between 0.25 and 0.60. The document, "Facing up to Inequality in Latin America", indicates that inequality indices in Latin America, which are considered the highest among all regions of the world, are on average 0.52 with a minimum of 0.43 for Uruguay (URUG) and a maximum of 0.59 for Brazil (BRA). Figure 4 then, helps us to understand the degree of inequality within Caribbean countries, provides a comparative view and positions the Caribbean next to its Latin American neighbors.
- 40 The State of the World's Children 1999. Education. UNICEF
- 41 Gender, Headship and Intrahousehold Resource Allocation. Sudhanshu Handa. World Development ,Vol. 22, No. 10 p 1539
- 42 Gender, Headship and Intrahousehold Resource Allocation. Sudhanshu Handa op cit. p. 1539
- 43 The State of the Children in the Easter Caribbean 1998. Op cit.
- 44 UNICEF, The State of Eastern Caribbean Children 1998, concluded from the seven national Situational Analyses, conducted in the Eastern Caribbean, that the quality of education was less than satisfactory. The World Bank Report on Access, Quality and Efficiency, dated 1992, reached the same conclusion for the region, that "the overall quality of schooling is poor as achievement levels are generally low as measured by the Regions most commonly used benchmark – pass rates at the CXC examination"
- 45 Dennis Pantin in a study on "The Challenge of Youth Employment in the Caribbean – the role of youth employment training programmes", prepared for the ILO Caribbean Office in December 1996 makes the point that because of the legacy of prejudices and racial discrimination inherited from the experience of enslavement and indentureship the social structures still possess inherent biases against people of African descent in particular, East Indian descent to a lesser extent and those in the society of a darker hue in general.