

Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on  
Gender Socialisation and Violence:  
Exploring a Research Agenda  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
9-10 December, 2002

GENERAL  
LC/CAR/G.721  
18 February 2003  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON  
GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:  
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA**

**Table of contents**

Agenda item 1: Welcome and opening .....	1
Agenda item 2: Review of gender socialisation research in the Caribbean.....	2
Agenda item 3: Discussion: Identifying research needs and priorities .....	5
Agenda item 4: Developing an integrated research agenda: Proposals for research themes .....	7
Agenda item 5: CIDA/ECLAC/ Meeting on the justice system and gender-based violence.....	8
Agenda item 6: Close .....	8
Annex: List of Participants.....	9

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON  
GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:  
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA**

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) convened a meeting of experts in the field of gender socialization and violence over the period, 9-10 December 2002, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The focus of this meeting was to develop a research agenda to examine the linkages between gender socialisation and violence in the Caribbean. The experts reviewed the existing research on gender socialisation in the Caribbean and identified research needs and areas of possible inter-agency collaboration.

The participants at the meeting were researchers in the field of sociology, social work and gender studies. The list of participants is annexed to this report.

Agenda item 1: Welcome and opening

The representative of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat welcomed the participants to the meeting and explained that domestic violence was a very gendered phenomenon, both in terms of the type of violence being perpetuated and the reasons for its perpetration. She also pointed out that most of the perpetrators of domestic violence, specifically, and of violence, in general, were males. This fact was important to the kinds of interventions necessary to address and eradicate all forms of societal violence.

The ECLAC Officer said that there had been many conferences held and research conducted, all aimed at better understanding the problem of domestic violence and these investigations had led to a number of recommendations for dealing with the problem. Recent perceptions of the initial programmatic interventions to the problem of domestic violence, however, had been that they were largely 'responsive' - women were largely seen as victims in need of help, leading to social welfare type responses.

This perception had led to calls for a deeper and better understanding of the 'root causes' of domestic violence. In this regard, the ECLAC/CDCC representative referred to studies that had been conducted which referred to the links between domestic violence, poverty and substance abuse. There were also other studies that attempted to identify a link between the high acceptance by society of corporal punishment against children and the high acceptance of domestic violence. The calls for a deeper understanding of the root causes of domestic violence were made at various forums, including the

Third ECLAC/CDCC Ministerial Meeting on Women (October 1999) held in preparation for the Beijing Plus Five Special Session.

The present expert group meeting represented another step in the process of advancing research into the root causes of domestic violence. One of the objectives of the meeting was to more sharply delineate the research agenda in order to facilitate greater collaboration among agencies with research interest in the area of gender socialisation.

Agenda item 2:

Review of gender socialisation research in the Caribbean

A number of experts reviewed the existing research on gender socialisation in the Caribbean. The main presenters were Dr. Barbara Bailey, Professor Rhoda Reddock and Ms. Rowena Kalloo.

In her presentation, Dr. Bailey reviewed gender socialization research in the Caribbean, reporting on the findings and methodologies employed. She observed that the studies pointed to distinct gender identities among boys and girls. In one study that looked at gender socialization in Jamaica, Barbados and Dominica<sup>1</sup>, boys were reported as being more outwardly directed in their socialization while girls were more inwardly directed. One of the overriding reasons for the inwardly directed socialization of girls was the concern around teenage pregnancies. Boys were allowed more freedoms; they were found more often on the street and therefore more exposed to the influence of violence. Toughness was a trait positively associated with masculinity. Boys were also exposed to more violence as punishment than were girls. On the other hand, girls were encouraged to be passive and to stay in the house.

One of the effects of these differences in gender identities was that the outward direction among boys was in conflict with the behavioural requirements of the education system. Dr. Bailey observed that the works of Odette Parry<sup>2</sup> and Mark Figueroa<sup>3</sup> also supported the point that Caribbean male gender identity was incompatible with the school system and good grades.

Physical strength was the marker or divider that supported much of the perception of the differences in gender identities. Playfield activity encouraged and reinforced aggression by boys. There were, however, class distinctions in

---

<sup>1</sup> Bailey, W.C. Branche, G. McGarrity and S. Stewart 1996. Family and Gender Relationships in the Caribbean. Kingston. Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Mona.

<sup>2</sup> Parry, O: In One Ear and Out the Other: Unmasking Masculinities in the Caribbean Classroom: Sociological Research Online, Vol. 1 No.2. Website: [www.socresonline.org.uk/1/2/2.html](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/1/2/2.html)

<sup>3</sup> Figueroa, Mark. Male Privileging and Male Academic Performance in Jamaica. Paper presented at Symposium on the Construction of Caribbean Masculinity. St. Augustine: Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of West Indies. 1996

the perceptions of gender identities. Middle class girls were seen as being more timid than girls from inner city or working class urban environments. While perceptions of gender identity were largely similar across a number of Caribbean countries, there were some variations in gender roles and expectations. An example of this was where, in Dominica, teaching was seen as a man's job.

Other findings that were brought out by Dr. Bailey in her review of research conducted in this area included:

(a) In the older age groups, violence was used by some boys and men as an expression of their frustration over their inability to provide material possessions. Violence among males also emerged in competition, as well as in relation to the perception of failure on the part of women to provide some function, whether that function was of a sexual or domestic nature;

(b) Much of the work on gender socialisation was concerned with violence even when the researchers did not specifically raise the issue;

(c) By age 10, boys began to recognize the importance of masculine traits, and in this context, physical dominance was seen as an important aspect of masculinity. By age 14, this recognition became very clear in the minds of the boys being studied; and

(d) Physical punishment was seen to be the father's role even in families where the father was absent.

Reviewing the work of Hyacinth Evans<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Bailey highlighted that boys were more likely than girls to suffer negative evaluations in school. This was consistent with the perception that an inwardly directed socialization tended to be more compatible with the school system and with good school grades. She also drew attention to the negative effects of streaming which was more likely to affect boys than girls, since more boys were likely to be found in the lower streams. The Evans research found that both teachers and students had stereotyped notions of the actions of boys in school. Similarly, boys had more gender-stereotyped notions than girls of what it meant to be a boy and what it was that boys were supposed to do. However, boys in households headed by a single mother were more likely to engage in child and house care, largely because they recognized that their mother was performing a number of roles for their benefit.

The Evans research also showed in the Jamaican context that the reasons given for dropping out of school were also gendered. Boys interviewed

---

<sup>4</sup> Evans, Hyacinth. Gender and Achievement in Secondary Education in Jamaica. Planning Institute of Jamaica, Policy Development Unit, Working Paper No. 2. 1999

cited lack of finances and violence, including school-based violence, as the main reasons for dropping out of school. Among girls, pregnancy was the number one reason for leaving school with lack of finances coming second.

Professor Rhoda Reddock added her review of research in this area, pointing to the fact that very little research on gender socialization and domestic violence had been done in Trinidad and Tobago. Pointing to the works of Barry Chevannes<sup>5</sup>, Professor Reddock said that the question of what were the expectations of fatherhood was very important to the understanding of the issues of gender socialization and domestic violence.

She also pointed to the work of Odette Parry, who used interactive classroom observation in her research, highlighting the findings of this study that she found to be relevant to the exercise of delineating a research agenda aimed at identifying the root causes of domestic violence. Among these findings were:

- (a) Teachers were very important to identity formation in children;
- (b) Teachers implied that learning English, especially English Literature, was ‘nerdish’; and
- (c) This perception that English Literature was ‘nerdish’, tended to be part of a general pattern of homophobia among teachers and was seen as very significant to identity formation among males in school.

The expectation of the ‘male breadwinner’ arose very early in schools. The research found that there was a perception among boys that some girls were not willing to enter relationships with boys their own age in school, instead, choosing to engage in relationships with older men who were seen as being able to provide material items for them. The research advanced that some boys therefore responded to this perception by leaving school in order to engage in economic activity in order to be able to have the resources seen as necessary to relationship formation.

Professor Reddock also pointed to the observation of Dr. Mark Figueroa that rather than ‘male marginalisation’, it was the traditional privileges enjoyed by men, including the freedoms, relative lack of discipline and outwardly directed socialization that were now working against their successful performance in school and life. She also pointed to the work on masculinity among East Indians in Trinidad which highlighted the ethnic-based contradictions in expectations about masculinity.

---

<sup>5</sup> Chevannes, Barry. *Learning to be a Man: Culture, Socialisation and Gender Identity in Five Caribbean Communities*. The University of the West Indies Press, Mona. 2001.

Ms. Kalloo presented on the campaign by the Trinidadian women's organization, Working Women, on the Abolition of Corporal Punishment in Schools. She noted that the campaign made clear that corporal punishment did not facilitate the attainment of educational goals; rather, children learned that corporal punishment/violence was a legitimate means of resolving conflicts.

Based on her study on gender factors in the classroom in Trinidad and Tobago, which used the methodology of participant observation, Ms. Kalloo reported that even with the best of intentions, teachers tended to use punitive measures to control children in the classroom. These approaches included silencing the voice of the children and/or denigrating them. Such approaches tended to produce uncritical and unimaginative children who were unable to think for themselves. Children were often not allowed to play and pursue childlike activities, since in the interest of control and tidiness they were punished for sweating.

Ms. Kalloo pointed to the importance of microclimate methodology in understanding how children coped in such situations. She explained that there was a strong correlation between academic capacity and children's ability to cope with the silencing and denigrating approaches to control in school. In this regard, Ms. Kalloo pointed to what she called the "new-age child". Such a child she defined as typically academically strong and coming from an environment in which he or she had strong ideas about autocratic systems and their rights.

Ms. Kalloo ended her presentation by observing that teacher training needed to facilitate more reflection by teachers on their classroom behaviour and teaching methods, and that, generally, schools needed to focus more on the interpersonal relationships among children and between children and teachers, and less on autocratic disciplining and control.

### Agenda item 3:

#### Discussion: Identifying research needs and priorities

The participants discussed possible reasons for the current underachievement of boys within the educational system, given that their socialisation patterns were not dramatically different than in the past. The meeting observed regional initiatives that were exploring whether boys did better in co-educational schools than in single sex schools.

Ms. Molly Wheeler, outreach worker with the Trinidad Rape Crisis Society, spoke about the extensive sexual knowledge that the boys and girls possessed and the accepting attitude of boys to the issue of forced sex. She also highlighted the negative attitude of teachers to children who were

perceived as being difficult. Such attitudes became obvious to students and led to rebelliousness and resentment towards the teachers.

Mr. Gregory Sloane-Seale, of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) spoke of the experiences in dealing with homeless boys and young men. He explained that it took a lot of discipline and resources to bridge the existing gap between where the young men were and where they wanted to be. According to Mr. Sloane-Seale, gaining the trust of the young men was the most challenging task in achieving the objectives of rehabilitation. There was also a need for non-material resources, such as counselling and family support services, to address the many emotional issues with which the young men were faced.

Mr. Sloane-Seale also spoke of the YMCA's experience in recruiting male mentors to help young men explore their masculinity. He explained that in the training of the trainers, it was often discovered that the prospective mentors themselves had not challenged traditional notions of masculinity which were linked to domination and aggression. He noted the need for increased support and coordination of these activities from the State.

In response to questions from participants about the existence of distinguishing characteristics between the young males who stayed in the programme and those who did not, Mr. Sloane-Seale pointed to the important factor of family support. He observed that although poverty was a problem in the lives of all of the young men in the YMCA programme, those who have had successful outcomes came from supportive families.

In beginning to frame a possible research agenda around the issues that were brought out in the presentations and in the discussions, the need for interventions, starting in schools and at the primary level, was highly recommended. Recommendations for research also included the following:

- (a) The continued importance of the concept of the male breadwinner and the female nurturer to issues of gender socialization and domestic violence;
- (b) The relative advantages and disadvantages of single sex versus co-educational schools for boys and girls;
- (c) The effects of migration on the lived realities of children;
- (d) Homophobia and its relationship to and impact on hegemonic masculinities;



- (e) The tailoring of the education system to the economic imperatives and how this constrained the identification of career choices among young people;
- (f) The identification of violence as a masculine trait; and
- (g) The increasing complexities of the transition from primary to secondary school and the way that this transition impacts on children.

Agenda item 4:  
Developing an integrated research agenda:  
Proposals for research themes

Dr. Bailey reported that the Center for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus would be embarking in 2003 on a project to look at the root causes of gender-based violence in Jamaica. This project has been funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Equality Program and the Lima Consensus arising out of the Third ECLAC/CDCC Ministerial Meeting on Women in 1999 and the ECLAC Eighth Regional Conference on Women 2000.

The activities surrounding the research include: (a) a documentary review and analysis of research already conducted in the area of domestic violence to see what was said about the root causes of violence; and (b) an institutional study on the way gender socialization contributes to domestic violence. Institutions to be reviewed include schools, correctional institutions and the family.

Various methodologies, including media content analysis, loosely structured interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation, will be used in the proposed research. Dr. Bailey informed participants that a meeting to more thoroughly discuss the design of the research will be held by the middle of 2003.

The ECLAC/CDCC representative reported that in response to the concerns for better understanding of the causes of violence against women as well as the growing concern about the issue of social alienation among young men in the Caribbean, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat will be undertaking research on the socialisation practices of juvenile offenders in correctional institutions in two or three ECLAC/CDCC member States.

In looking at the linkages between gender socialisation and violence, ECLAC/CDCC research had shown that violence was gendered in two distinct ways - first, violence as an expression of unequal power relations between men and women and second, violence as an expression of aggression seen as central to the experience of masculinity.

She sketched the proposed methodology for the research which, she said, would include loosely structured interviews with young people in correctional institutions, with institutional caretakers, policy makers and guardians. Focus group discussions with communities will also be undertaken to ascertain perceptions on the causes of gender-based violence and the perceptions around the opportunities and challenges faced by youth and, in particular, young men. This research is to be undertaken in 2003.

The participants thought that the research proposed by ECLAC/CDCC and the CGDS was timely and of direct and immediate relevance to the needs of decision makers, in relation to youth policy as well as to the policy and programmatic work on violence in the Caribbean.

The meeting agreed that both institutions would collaborate closely around the development of a research methodology to look at policy and programmatic responses to young offenders in two or three countries in the subregion. In this regard, it was also agreed that the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat would be invited to participate at the roundtable discussion to be held by the CGDS in June 2003 at which its documentary review would be presented.

#### Agenda item 5:

##### CIDA/ECLAC Meeting on the justice system and gender-based violence

The meeting discussed the proposed agenda for the ECLAC/CIDA Regional Conference on “The Justice System and Gender-based Violence” to be convened in February 2003. It was agreed that the focus of the workshop would be on the police responses to gender-based violence; and social service support to the justice system, with particular attention to counselling.

The targeted participants would include persons with responsibility for implementing and monitoring policies and programmes for the eradication of violence against women in the justice system, namely police, social workers, psychologists, magistrates, researchers and national machineries for women.

The participants discussed conference arrangements and agreed on the roles and responsibilities of the collaborating agencies.

#### Agenda item 6: Closing

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat thanked the participants for their interventions and attendance at the meeting.

Annex**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)	Ms Gemma Tang Nain Deputy Programme Manager Caribbean Community Development & Women's Affairs Bank of Guyana Building Avenue of the Republic P.O. Box 10827, Georgetown Guyana Telephone: (592) 2- 51960/1 Facsimile: (592) 2-58039 E-mail: <a href="mailto:gemmatn@caricom.org">gemmatn@caricom.org</a>
Caribbean - CIDA	Ms. Jeanette Bell, Coordinator Gender Equality Program Development Section Canadian High Commission P.O. Box 404 Bridgetown Barbados Telephone: (246) 429-3550 Facsimile: (246) 429-3876 E-mail: <a href="mailto:jbelle@sunbeach.net">jbelle@sunbeach.net</a>
	Ms. Denise Noel-De Bique Regional Adviser Gender Equality Program c/o Canadian High commission 3A Sweet Briar Road St. Clair, Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago Telephone: 868-622-6232 E-mail: <a href="mailto:denise.noel-debique@dfait-maeci.co">denise.noel-debique@dfait-maeci.co</a>
Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad and Tobago	Ms Molly Wheeler 40 Woodford Street Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago Telephone: (868) 622-7273 Facsimile: (868) 622-1079 Email: <a href="mailto:rapetnt@tstt.net.tt">rapetnt@tstt.net.tt</a>

University of the West Indies (UWI)

Dr. Barbara Bailey  
Regional Coordinator  
Centre for Gender & Development Studies  
Mona Campus  
Kingston 7  
Jamaica  
Tel and fax: 876-927-1913  
Email: [bbailey@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:bbailey@uwimona.edu.jm)

Ms. Michele Davis  
Centre for Gender & Development Studies  
Mona Campus  
Kingston 7  
Jamaica  
Tel and Fax: (876)-927-1913  
Email: [mvdavis@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:mvdavis@uwimona.edu.jm)

Dr. Adele Jones, Lecturer  
Coordinator  
Masters in Social Work Programme  
Department of Behavioural Sciences  
St. Augustine Campus  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Telephone: (868) 662-2002  
Facsimile: (868) 663-4948  
Email: [ajones@fss.uwi.tt](mailto:ajones@fss.uwi.tt)

Professor Rhoda Reddock, Head  
Centre for Gender & Development Studies  
St. Augustine Campus  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Telephone: (868) 662-2002 or  
645-3232-9 ext. 3573/2533  
E-mail: [gender@cgds.uwi.tt](mailto:gender@cgds.uwi.tt) or  
[rreddock@cgds.uwi.tt](mailto:rreddock@cgds.uwi.tt)

Women Working for Social Progress

Ms Rowena Kalloo  
Activist  
C/o Valsayn Teacher's College  
Valsayn  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Telephone: (868) 662-8874  
Email: [rkaloo@yahoo.com](mailto:rkaloo@yahoo.com) or [johnh@tstt.net.tt](mailto:johnh@tstt.net.tt)

Young Men's Christian Association

Mr. Gregory Sloane-Seale  
National Youth Outreach Director  
Benbow Road  
Off Wrightson Road,  
Port of Spain  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Telephone (868) 627-7835 or 754-5034  
Facsimile: (868) 627-8764  
Email: [sloaneseale@yahoo.com](mailto:sloaneseale@yahoo.com)

### **ECLAC System**

Ms. Roberta Clarke, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, CHIC Building, 3rd Floor, 63 Park Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Telephone: (868) 623-5595; Facsimile: (868) 623-8485; E-mail: [rclarke@eclacpos.org](mailto:rclarke@eclacpos.org) or [registry@eclacpos.org](mailto:registry@eclacpos.org)

Ms Asha Kambon, Social Affairs Officer, E-mail: [akambon@eclacpos.org](mailto:akambon@eclacpos.org)

Ms. Karoline Schmid, Social affairs Officer, [kschmid@eclacpos.org](mailto:kschmid@eclacpos.org)

Ms. Lynette Joseph-Brown, Research assistant, [lbrown@eclacpos.org](mailto:lbrown@eclacpos.org)