

**The Evolution of Social Welfare Services
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INTRODUCTION

In attempting to address this theme it is first necessary to acknowledge that there is a seriously incomplete collective record of the historical evolution of social welfare services and of social work, even in the English-speaking countries which share a common colonial history. We therefore have the immediately identifiable task of remedying that deficiency by assembling and organising the relevant body of information for ready access by scholars, practitioners and students, especially those within the region, but also those from outside who have a keen interest in comparative studies. This new *Caribbean Journal of Social Work* should offer further encouragement as a ready vehicle for disseminating scholarly work which will promote a deeper understanding of the historical foundations of current Caribbean social work practice and critical analyses of the present reality.

The common colonial history which the former British West Indian islands and the mainland territories of Guyana and Belize share, and the standardisation of the administrative systems and service institutions which were developed, have produced many similarities if not actual replications of the social welfare agencies and social work settings in the various countries. Where there is incomplete knowledge of specific dates for the introduction of services, it is still therefore possible to suggest that patterns of development may have been similar, or followed a common sequence.

In treating with this subject, it is useful to establish some definitional parameters. Social work is classified as a helping or human service profession. Macht and Ashford's synthesis of a variety of earlier definitions states as follows (1991: 21):

The goal of social work practice is to strengthen the ability of people to cope with the tasks and problems they face. A second goal, which

supports the first, is to promote improvements in the social environment that enable people to meet their everyday needs. If people cannot meet the demands of their environment, then planned, purposeful intervention aimed at individual and social change is indicated.

These activities which characterise the social work practitioner occur in a setting of services and institutions. This contextual framework is popularly labelled 'social welfare', described by Friedlander (1980: 4) as

the organised system of social services and institutions, designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life and health, and personal and social relationships that permit them to develop their full capacities and to promote their well-being in harmony with the needs of their families and the community.

The integral relationship between social work and social welfare is not only basic, but in any evolutionary appraisal of the field, the reality, to quote Skidmore et al. (1991: 4) is that "social services came first, and methods of social work developed out of social welfare".

This paper, if it is to attempt to give some picture of the emergence, development and transition of social work in our region, has therefore to treat with both social welfare and social work. An overview follows of the historical development of a range of services which offer one or more social work function which contributes to developing/restoring the coping mechanisms of client systems, and/or promotes improvement in the social environment. The sequence of presentation is determined by the chronological order in which the respective types of service were first offered in the largest of the English-speaking Caribbean countries—Jamaica (the one about which the author has most information). As a measure of convenience, the term 'West Indies' is used to refer to the islands and mainland states in this group of Caribbean countries.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following description of various forms of service will be presented in three significant historical stages in the development of social welfare and social work in the West Indies.

The first is the pre-twentieth century colonial era which covers (a) the period from European colonisation to the abolition of slavery in 1838, and (b) the post abolition years from 1838 to the end of the century. These may be termed 'the background years'.

The second stage, which is largely characterised by the development of the Voluntary/NGO social service sector, runs from the beginning of the twentieth century to the year 1938, a century after the abolition of slavery, and the culmination of a five-year period of strikes and labour uprisings throughout the region. These led to the establishment in August of that year of the West Indian Royal Commission, headed by Lord Moyne, to investigate social and economic conditions in the West Indian colonies and to make recommendations.

The third stage is post 1938—the World War II period to the present—which has witnessed the development of the government social service sector, the strengthening over the last two decades of NGOs, especially of the developmental kind, and the slow emergence of social work as a professional field, though with much still to be accomplished to achieve recognition alongside other human service professions.

THE BACKGROUND YEARS: BEFORE 1900

State-sponsored poor relief (early forms of public assistance)

Provision of the most basic survival needs of the population has traditionally been the earliest form of organised social welfare. So it has been in the West Indies. The early days of European colonisation, which implies the period of the earliest recorded history of the region, saw, by way of formal measures, transplants of the provisions for relief of the poor which obtained in the metropolitan countries. So English colonies had adaptations of the Elizabethan Poor Law (1602) which, in keeping with the Puritan ethic of the period, was punitive in its provisions for the able-bodied poor and vagrants and really offered relief only for the sick and aged. However, as the great mass of the population from the latter part of the seventeenth through to the first third of the nineteenth century (i.e. until 1838) were slaves, this did not apply to them. The plantation system required a feudal type 'responsibility-dependency' relationship between master and slave, which meant that the most basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and health care were provided. It was therefore only a small minority of the free poor who fell under the jurisdiction of Poor Law provisions.

After the emancipation of the slaves in 1838, however, there was a massive increase in the need for relief provisions but, as Cumper observed concerning the Jamaican situation (1972: 72): "The abolition of slavery was not accompanied by any provision for meeting the needs of those too old or too young, too ill or too impoverished to provide the necessities of life for themselves."

The Guyanese experience was not as severe. Danns and Scott (1989: 516) reported that a Poor Relief Act introduced in 1839 "stipulated who should maintain whom, and in all other cases the central government accepted full responsibility for poor relief in the colony".

It is likely that the experiences elsewhere in the West Indies fall somewhere between these two extremes. What followed, however, from the time of abolition till the end of the century was a series of adjustments and revisions in the provisions for poor relief, with the larger more populous countries, e.g. Guyana and Jamaica—assigning the responsibility for administration of relief to local government authorities, although with some central supervision.

Personnel engaged by the State for the delivery of poor relief services in the latter years of the nineteenth century are to be recognised as the first public service welfare personnel. In Jamaica their functions included identifying, screening and paying out benefits to the indigent poor, recommending them for medical care or for institutional care in alms houses, as well as providing services for children of destitute adults. Paralleling these activities in Barbados was provision for casual relief through a Poor Man's Board set up in 1880, and by a Settlement of the Poor Act in 1897 to place destitute children in alms houses (Edmonds 1973: 229-48). The philosophy of practice was, however, limited to material support and custodial arrangement and did not in any sense enable the coping and developmental capacities of people—the hallmark of any meaningful social work involvement.

Religious charity and organised services

Concurrent with the formal provisions for poor relief provided by the State were the charitable contributions by the churches, especially the non-conformist bodies since the Church of England (Anglican), as the established State Church, was the vehicle through which State-provided poor relief was disbursed until the latter years of the nineteenth century. Parish Vestries in Jamaica and Barbados and a Board of Church and Poor Funds in Guyana were examples of the system which was used. The activities of the Church extended beyond charity to the poor to early and even clandestine efforts to provide basic education for slaves and, in the early post-emancipation years, to the initiation of primary education, primary health care and, later, institutional care for needy children. A significant role undertaken immediately after Emancipation and one which may, in a number of respects, be identified as the earliest demonstration of basic community development practice, was the involvement by missionaries in a number of islands in assisting ex-slaves to establish new settlements. (The names of rural villages do, in a

number of instances, commemorate these individuals.) These 'free villages', as they were called, fostered the development of an independent peasantry engaging in farming and artisan work, who functioned with significant motivation, in marked contrast to those who remained on the plantations as paid labour.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the role of the Church in the institution of children's services in Trinidad, as reported by Patrick (1989), was endorsed by the establishment of a home in 1857 run by the Church of England, and in the 1870s and 1880s the Roman Catholic Church initiated three institutions, including a Boys' and a Girls' Industrial School (Patrick 1989: 557). In Barbados, the pioneer effort to provide a home for destitute or ill-treated children was the establishment of the Bessie Yearwood Home in 1876 (Edmonds 1973: 240).

Self-help initiatives

An early form of collective action which the ex-slaves were encouraged to adopt from popular British working class practice, and which was rapidly adapted and institutionalised, was that of Friendly Societies (or variations known as Benevolent Societies and Burial Schemes). This represented a basic form of social insurance as members saved to provide for future illness, old-age, and funeral expenses. So popular was this innovation that in Jamaica it was deemed necessary to institute a Friendly Societies Act in 1842 to regulate the operation of those bodies. In spite of modern insurance companies and banking facilities, these bodies still survive to some extent among working class and peasant communities.

Among the small communities of Jewish people and later, with the arrival of new ethnic groups of Indians and Chinese introduced as indentured labour in the post-emancipation years, there was also the development of ethnic welfare organisations which catered to the needs of the particular groups (Bryan 1990: 44). Trinidad and Guyana, as the recipients of the largest constituency of new migrants, the Indians, had most experience of these groups.

THE EARLIER TWENTIETH CENTURY YEARS: 1901-1938

Social welfare services as they are today, and the evolution of social work from a charitable voluntary activity to a professional occupation have been essentially twentieth-century phenomena. This is largely consistent with the wider international experience. The progression to professionalism in the delivery of social work activities was far slower in the West Indies than in Western metropolitan societies, however, and the pre-1940 period was largely one in which the voluntary social services

emerged as a manifestation of willingness and commitment, but with limited appreciation of the need for trained professionals to deliver the programmes to optimum effect. Governmental activities, other than the ongoing provision of very basic poor relief, were extremely rare. The introduction of a Public Assistance Ordinance in Trinidad in 1931 (Marcelle 1989: 557), despite its avoidance of the label 'Poor Relief', was evidently no real advance on contemporary provisions in sister countries. Beyond relief services, the few token efforts in any of the countries were, in the main, subsidies to church or other voluntary services.

Examples of the voluntary services

The extent to which services established in the then British West Indies colonies were conceived as export models from the British 'mother country' is reflected in the names of the programmes established in the region. None demonstrates this more completely than the Kingston and Liguanea Charity Organisation Society founded in 1882, later reestablished as the Kingston Charity Organisation Society (KCOS) in 1900, which was promoted with a view to rationalising the delivery of private charity in the community (Bryan 1990: 34). It did not, however, assume the central prominence in the development of social services and the systematising and ultimate professionalising of social work service delivery that was achieved by the original London Charity Organisation Society of the 1850s or the transplanted models in Buffalo, New York, Montreal, and other prominent northern American and Canadian cities. The KCOS settled into being essentially a private relief-giving agency that helped to assist a number of persons who did not qualify for state poor relief. In later years its impact was surpassed by several other bodies.

Services for children

While the churches made a significant beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century with the establishment of homes and orphanages, especially in the more populous countries (examples of the Trinidad experience have been cited above), important initiatives by other voluntary groups and philanthropists, who were very likely motivated to act out of social conscience as well as a perceived moral (religious) responsibility, focused early on the welfare of young children. In 1916 the Child Welfare Association of Jamaica pioneered ante-natal services, pre-school child care and basic parent education. In 1918 a Baby Welfare League, actually founded by the Government of Trinidad, but subsequently maintained by the voluntary Child Welfare League, performed a very similar function and soon expanded to operate in a

number of centres throughout the country (Patrick 1989: 256). In 1920, also in Trinidad, the Coterie of Social Workers initiated a School Meal Service, and subsequently developed day nurseries as well as hostels for working girls, blind women and elderly women. Of significance, too, was the institution of government grants to children's homes during the 1930s. The Barbadian experience saw the introduction of the first Baby League Clinic by voluntary effort in the 1920s, and child nutrition programmes as well as the development of a crèche for working mothers by the Goodwill League, supported by Bridgetown merchants (Blackman 1990: 3). The role of the Salvation Army in offering such services was also a significant feature in the region, with the Army being present in most of the countries.

Youth services

Services for youth were first undertaken by Church affiliated uniformed groups at the turn of the century (e.g. the Boys Brigade, Church Lads Brigade and Girls Guildry). The Scouts and Guides assumed prominence by the early thirties, while the YMCA and YWCA were the early contributors of recreational, cultural, non-formal and educational activities for non-uniformed groups. These services relied heavily on volunteers, and the only paid organisers—the YM/YWCA secretaries—were persons who would sometimes have been ministers of religion or educators but would only have had in-service or short term specialist training for functioning within their organisations.

The role of the Salvation Army, prominent in several areas of social services, was specially noteworthy in terms of providing a de facto probation officer function in assisting young persons who were brought before the courts. This continued until state probation services were instituted in the 1940s in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad. State run Industrial Schools (Reformatories) for more serious cases of delinquency were established in these countries from the 1920s.

Services for the aged

A few small homes for the aged developed after the turn of the century, with sponsorship usually provided by the Churches or private benefactors. The standard facility was one which offered physical care, with the best likely to have been under the charge of religious sisters or retired nurses. Specialist knowledge of geriatric care was not a feature of these homes, but they were generally managed at a better level than the state-run Jamaican Alms Houses which were larger institutions, one provided to every parish or, for less populous parishes, one for two parishes. In Trinidad, the St James Infirmary was the principal public institution

offering residential care for the elderly. A significant measure, in the context of the times, was the introduction in 1937 of a modest old-age pension scheme in Barbados for persons of need who were over 68 years old (Blackman 1990: 3).

Services for the disabled/specially challenged

Very limited provisions for the disabled actually existed more than fifty years ago, and these were likely to have been church run. In Jamaica, a school for deaf or hearing impaired children was run by the Anglican Church and, during the 1920s the Salvation Army pioneered services for the blind or visually impaired—a school and eventually a sheltered workshop. The Salvation Army action to assist the blind was also evident in other parts of the Caribbean, as were programmes of the major church groups for other forms of disability.

Community development

A recognisable organised effort in the field of community development was not really apparent until almost the end of this second phase, and had its birth in the period of social unrest which characterised most of the West Indies for much of the 1930s. In 1937, on the initiative of Norman Manley—one of the founding fathers of modern Jamaica—Jamaica Welfare Limited was launched from a fund created by an agreed cess (levy) on the export of bananas. The activities were directed to assist peasant farming communities through a range of non-formal educational activities in the areas of literacy, craft skills, home gardening, nutrition, civics, drama and, most significantly, to promote a philosophy of self-help (the concept which is a major element of what is now advocated as the principle of 'empowerment').

THE MID TWENTIETH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

The move to professionalise the social services

The years immediately preceding the centenary of the abolition of slavery in 1938 were marked by labour unrest, social protest and the beginning of organised political agitation in various parts of the region, prompting the establishment of a Royal Commission by the British Government to look into the causes of the crisis. It is also to be noted that prior to this initiative, the Barbados Government had established its own Deane Commission which produced findings that were to prove similar to those of the larger region-wide enquiry (Blackman 1990: 1).

The report of the Moyne Commission (so named for its chairman) presented in 1940, made recommendations to improve social and economic conditions in the West Indian colonies through the expansion of

education and health services, improved housing conditions, the establishment of labour departments, land settlements and social welfare facilities. Provisions were made by the colonial government to institute a range of principally social welfare services and/or to subsidise voluntary programmes already in existence. This took an organised form with the establishment in 1940 of the Central Council of Voluntary Social Services (CCVSS)—later to become CVSS—which sought to coordinate the roles of diverse voluntary organisations, offer information and training and serve as the agency through which government subsidies were channelled to the voluntary social services sector. The CVSS also became the national body represented in the International Council of Social Welfare. Concurrent political developments within the decade saw the larger or more developed countries move towards universal adult suffrage, and a significant measure of self-government. (The smaller or less developed ones followed in the process shortly after.) With nationals having a greater role in decisions concerning the governing process, there was further impetus towards the creation of government social welfare services in the 1940s and early 1950s.

With this move came the appointment of a significant body of persons designated Social Welfare Officers, to perform as multifunctional social work practitioners. Many of the recruits were teachers or otherwise experienced persons. To prepare them in some measure for their new responsibilities, a total of seven six-month training courses were held annually or biannually in Jamaica for persons recruited throughout the region, between 1943 and 1953. Funding was provided by the Colonial Development and Welfare Office and training was conducted initially by Professor J.S. Simey of Liverpool University. Subsequently, Ms Dora Ibberson of the Colonial Office (who worked throughout the West Indies for some years) and Thom Girvan—a Community Development pioneer from Jamaica—ran the courses under the auspices of the new University College of the West Indies Extra-Mural Department (started in 1948). Represented on those training courses were just about all the persons who played pivotal pioneering roles in the development of social services throughout the West Indies. In addition, selected persons were afforded the opportunity to do two-year diploma studies in Britain and these were the initial 'brigade' of first level professionally trained practitioners. Lower level line staff were, especially in the traditional case-work services, given short but intensive in-service training on appointment to their agencies.

By 1953, the following assessment was reported by the Comptroller of the Colonial Development and Welfare Office: "The climate of

public opinion in the West Indies has changed, and there is more acceptance of the need for skilled professional direction of social work" (CD&W Report 1953).

An overview of the development of services that has taken place principally during the last half of the twentieth century is presented here. It does not, however, lay claim to being a fully comprehensive record.

Services for children

The voluntary service sector, the churches, and international private voluntary organisations (PVOs) demonstrated increasing interest and active sponsorship of a range of services for children, including day care centres/crèches, children's homes for those in need of care and protection, as well as institutional care for those with various forms of disability. This has been a pattern throughout all the countries, with the effort being more intensive in the larger countries. A programme such as the Canadian Save the Children Fund (CANSAVE) in Jamaica and the Windward Islands, in addition to operating model day care and pre-school centres, was directed at providing assistance for children who showed special promise at school. Subsequently, Jamaica Save the Children Fund operated the pre-school programmes in Jamaica. However, this orientation was changed by the late 1970s, as the recognition grew that individually focused welfare assistance did not offer any meaningful benefit to a community of people, and that agency's programmes moved quite dramatically to a community development focus, to a great extent targeting mothers in promoting community economic enterprise projects, and giving great emphasis to parent education.

State provision of services with special responsibility for children has been most in evidence in Jamaica and Barbados. In Jamaica a Child Care and Protection Service was established in 1951, an Adoption Service shortly after, and in 1975 the juvenile court system had a significant improvement with the establishment of family courts in the two major municipalities. In Barbados a comprehensive Social Welfare Department was established but child welfare was a significant area of responsibility. Following the establishment of an adoption service in 1955, a day nursery programme was established under the Housing Authority in 1963, and in the early 1970s a Child Care Board took over the responsibility for day care centres that had been developed some years earlier by the Council of Women on Child Welfare. In Trinidad the state played a less direct role, but provided subsidies to programmes initiated by the voluntary sector day nurseries started by a Nursery Association in 1954, and by the National Council of Voluntary

Associations for Child Care in 1970, which included those programmes catering to the disabled. In the later 1960s the government did establish a child guidance clinic and, in 1979, an interdisciplinary Child Development Centre. At a regional level, what was initially a UNICEF funded Caribbean Child Development Centre was started in 1973 as a project of the UWI School of Continuing Studies on the Mona campus (Jamaica). Its earlier focus was on training personnel for work with pre-school-age children but it has since expanded to include a wider mandate of research and programme development in the areas of child care and parent education.

The field of services to children has been one of the areas in which there has been a greater investment in professional training of social work practitioners although, in respect of residential care, this has not been given equal attention.

School social work

An associated field of service for children has been developed within the school system. School guidance counselling which, in the West Indian context, includes significant social work functions—as there are no complementary school social work services—was introduced in Jamaica, and subsequently in Trinidad, during the 1970s, and in Barbados in the 1980s. The functions of the guidance counsellor cum social worker included group sessions in life skills (special emphasis on family life and human sexuality), career guidance, individual and group counselling for students with identified problems, and some degree of family intervention and/or referral to appropriate social work agencies.

Services for youth

The activities of the voluntary uniformed youth groups and YMCA/YWCA programmes, which had started in a number of the countries earlier in the century but which developed in others in the post-World War II period, provided the foundation for government involvement. State promotion or subsidy of youth programmes was introduced, especially in the larger and/or more populous countries, as a direct outgrowth of the Moyne Commission recommendations. Modelled on the British youth club movement, there was certainly in Jamaica from the 1940s a network of youth clubs with volunteer leaders coordinated by a staff of youth officers.

Boys' Town (1940) a non-residential youth centre and the first such programme developed in the depressed inner city areas of Kingston, was in the vanguard of this initiative. For rural youth, the 4H movement, with a focus on increasing an interest in farming as a vocation,

was a significant concurrent programme. Youth centres in urban areas have developed in virtually all the countries, while in Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana and Barbados, as well as in Dominica there have been residential youth training programmes of various forms. These were initially perceived as activities for re-socialisation (through basic education, cultural and skills training, sports, etc., in a well disciplined setting) of youngsters in their latter teen years, who were often school dropouts or in other respects regarded as marginal in their progression to responsible adulthood. There has in more recent years been a stronger emphasis on developing the vocational training level of such institutions, which are now all largely non-residential, as the accommodation costs proved unaffordable. The Youth Training for Employment and Production Programme (YTEPP) in Trinidad and the Human Employment and Resource Training/National Training Agency (HEART/NTA) in Jamaica are among the most comprehensive.

In 1999 the institution of a National Centre for Youth Development in Jamaica, with the aim of achieving the better coordination and integration of programmes and services geared towards youth development, was an impressive indicator of increased state investment in addressing the needs of this very challenging constituency of young citizens.

Commencing during the war years, army and air cadet forces for boys were established in high schools in the more populous territories. Support for these has declined somewhat as, for one thing, the popular culture is less compatible with military style youth socialisation. The activities of the cadets have thus become more diversified, with less emphasis on 'the parade ground'. Mention should also be made of an innovation in 1994 by the Jamaican media houses (led by the *Daily Gleaner*) to establish a school-based dispute resolution programme, Peace and Love in Schools (PALS).

In the mid 1970s, the Commonwealth Secretariat established one of its four Commonwealth Regional Youth Programme centres in the Caribbean (in Guyana) and since then, training courses for youth leaders at certificate and higher diploma levels as well as youth forums and public education activities have been instituted throughout the region. The current Diploma in Youth Development now has accreditation from the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Guyana (UG), and since 1999 this programme has been directed from the UWI School of Continuing Studies' Social Welfare Training Centre on the Mona campus (Jamaica).

Community development

During the war years the export of bananas was severely affected and eventually ceased, and the fund which had sponsored the Jamaica Welfare Limited programmes was terminated. In 1943 the colonial government assumed responsibility for this community development agency, and it moved through various administrative changes to what has become known as the Social Development Commission (SDC) under a statutory board since 1965.

There was similar state investment in community development throughout the region in the postwar years. In Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados (Barbados Welfare Ltd. founded 1943), and in the smaller countries, although without necessarily having a specialised department for such work, the commitment to programmes which sought improvement in the quality of life, especially in rural areas, through adult literacy, home economics, craft skills training, dramatic arts and recreation, cooperative economic projects and development of community organisations, was also demonstrated in varying degrees. By 1953 it was observed by the Colonial Development and Welfare office that "community work has developed, especially in Jamaica, to a degree to attract international attention" (CD&W Report 1953). The experience in the pre-independence years (with particular reference to Jamaica) saw a concerted effort, despite the prevailing ethos of class patronage in the society, to promote a self-help ethic and to develop indigenous community leadership. A review of the work of the Jamaica Welfare/Jamaica Social Welfare Commission from 1938 to 1962 by Bryan (1990: 55-60) attests to the relative efficacy of the programmes. In post-independence years there have been various manifestations of political control and manipulation of the state community development agencies, and jostling for political patronage has too often been the reality of the way local community organisations have functioned. Lack of trained professional staff has also impeded the attempts to realise what remain the plausible and ideologically desirable mission statements of agencies such as the Social Development Commission in Jamaica. Somewhat by contrast, the development of a quasi government programme in the 1990s, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF)—partially financed by international agencies—has been structured to avoid public sector redtape and political interference. Its primary function is to assist community based organisations (CBOs) in programmes designed to achieve poverty reduction.

Initiatives by NGOs, usually the product of partnerships between local and international voluntary agencies have, especially in the last

quarter of the twentieth century, been responsible for a number of noteworthy community development projects in several of the countries—with emphasis on support being given to genuine CBOs. The Mustard Seed Programme in Kingston (Jamaica) spearheaded by Brothers for the Poor from the Roman Catholic Church is one of the most impressive, encompassing a range of development programmes, including a community radio station (Roots FM). Umbrella agencies with responsibility for advising, offering training, and helping to source funds for these CBOs are in place and a regional coordinating body, Caribbean People's Development Agency (CARIPDA), has its headquarters in St Vincent in the Windward Islands.

Correctional services

In the field of correctional services, early records in Guyana (see Danns and Scott 1989) indicate the Salvation Army offering a part-time probation service from 1909 until a volunteer probation officer was appointed in 1930. In 1940 an Industrial School for Young Offenders was opened, and the Salvation Army resumed responsibility for probation work until a trained worker was appointed in 1945. Juvenile courts were first in operation in 1946.

The role of the Salvation Army in providing early service through part-time probation officers was also the experience in some other countries of the region until, eventually, Probation Departments were established by the government in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad between the late 1940s and the 1950s. The model was that of the British probation service, with staff being officers of the court. This was a branch of the social welfare services which invested in training its staff, initially in the UK, and after 1961 at the UWI. Worthy of note have been periods of experimentation when outreach preventative work has been a part of the service provided, in addition to the major activities of presentence reports for the courts, supervision of offenders, pre-release work with prisoners, and parole supervision.

Services for the disabled/specially challenged

Summary information from Trinidad and Barbados as well as data on the Jamaican experience indicate, from the 1940s through to the 1980s, the provision of a number of institutions, usually initiated by voluntary bodies including churches, with subsequent government subsidies. These catered for the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, the physically handicapped and the mentally handicapped. Associations for each area of these specially challenged persons were established and run by sympathetic and well intentioned persons without disabilities—

with, however, the common limitation of a perception that the disabled were, in effect, a group of second-class citizens who needed protection and help.

A signal development in Jamaica in the 1970s, during the heady days of social democratic and socialist rhetoric, was the takeover of the Jamaica Society for the Blind by the visually impaired membership. From token representation on its executive, they moved to occupy all the key offices, permitting sighted persons to play supportive roles only. By the 1980s, Combined Disabilities Associations were organised in some countries and the ability to impact on the political directorate to influence policy making was noticeably enhanced. An interdisciplinary School for the Multiple Handicapped, opened in Trinidad in 1988, is the most progressive institutional service to date, while throughout the region public awareness and the provision of facilities in public places have been significantly improved.

The constituency of the visually impaired, with coordination and direction proceeding mainly from the Caribbean Council for the Blind headquartered in Antigua, has been in the vanguard of the disabled persons in their attempt to develop professional standards, and an in-service programme to train rehabilitation officers has been instituted.

Services for the aged

In addition to the provision of homes—which, other than those run by the state for the elderly poor were the preserve of churches, voluntary organisations or other private groups—the single most important development in a number of the countries has been the establishment of Councils for the Aged or similar associations. These have been instrumental in developing non-residential services, such as day centres and golden age clubs; promoting public awareness through such things as a Senior Citizens Week; securing concessions on public transportation; and encouraging the involvement of senior citizens in productive activities and as volunteers to provide skills and services where they can be beneficially utilised. With the over-65 age cohort representing an increasing percentage of the West Indian population, the need to maximise the potential of our elder citizens as active contributors rather than as dependents is increasingly apparent.

Services for women

While women have, directly or indirectly, been a significant part of the client systems that have been addressed in many areas of social service delivery, the establishment of services focusing specifically on them has been of more recent vintage. The Jamaica Federation of Women,

formed in 1945, did target women as home-makers and community builders, and mobilised a voluntarily led programme of consumer education, literacy, nutritional awareness and family planning. It is within the past twenty-five years (since the mid 1970s), however, that regional governments have established women's bureaux to address a range of social and economic issues that have reflected discrimination against women in many aspects of the society. At a more personal level, the issues of conjugal violence and carnal abuse have been treated much more prominently, and the decade of the eighties saw the establishment in a number of the countries of Women's Crisis Centres and of special Rape Units within the Police Forces. The developments in this sphere have been influenced by the increased sensitivity to gender issues on the wider international scene, as well, no doubt, as by the great dominance of women in nearly all areas of the social services in the region.

Medical social services

Although the role of the almoner has been a well established field of social work practice in metropolitan countries from the early years of the century, it was only in 1943 that such posts were established in two hospitals in Trinidad, and not until the 1950s and 1960s that cadres of what became known as Medical Social Workers were established in larger hospitals in the region (Barbados, Guyana and, later, Jamaica). A strangely interesting contrast in the attention given to this field is to be seen between Trinidad and Jamaica. Medical social work became established in the former country as the most professional form of social work practice, and by the 1970s every hospital in the country had social work units, with almost the cream of available social work personnel. In Jamaica, where the University Hospital introduced a social work unit in 1965 and the large mental hospital also had a social work department, for the next twenty-five years no other hospital (i.e. from a total of 20) had a social work unit and, since then, only four have added very limited programmes. Jamaican health services have certainly neglected this important element of the team that is required to effect a holistic treatment approach for their patients/clients.

Family life/parent education

While not traditionally a specialised field of service, there has been increasing attention over the past quarter of a century, in almost all branches of social work practice, to the need to strengthen that most fundamental institution in the life of any community—the family. Programmes of family life education or parent education, of which the Barbados programme 'Paredos' (started in the 1970s) is one of the

pioneering and best examples, reflect increasing attention to the need for proactive approaches to prevent dysfunction of the family unit, and to forestall many of the social problems to which social workers are required to react—through children's services, remedial youth counselling programmes, correctional services, school guidance counselling and even more specialised forms of therapeutic care. Where staff are limited and trained personnel are in short supply, the focus on such work is all the more critical.

With the active encouragement and sometimes sponsorship of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), there have been a number of initiatives within the last decade to offer Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Programmes throughout the Caribbean. A new example of a private service is 'Help for Parents', initiated in Jamaica in 1990, which offers principally group training sessions for parents as well as workshops in schools and other institutions.

Drug abuse and HIV/AIDS counselling services

The newest additions to the social welfare service scene within the past two decades have been those directed at the awesome problems of drug abuse and the scourge of AIDS. While the use of drugs has been evident for some time, with the use of marijuana, in particular, being widespread in Jamaica, it was treated as an adjunct problem to be handled through one or other of the existing primary service agencies. With the spread of hard drugs such as cocaine, crack and heroin, and their established connection with increasing serious crime, there has been a concerted effort with international funding assistance to provide treatment programmes as well as ambitious preventative measures. The National Council on Drug Abuse in Jamaica initiated a comprehensive community development strategy during the 1980s, working in conjunction with other agencies. The intent is to address the social and economic factors that, if unattended, increase the chances of young persons in particular falling prey to drug abuse. The approach is labelled Integrated Demand Reduction (IDER). Counterpart activities are also to be found in all parts of the region, with Trinidad possibly having committed most resources and programmes for dealing with drug addicts to date. At the regional level the Caribbean Institute on Alcoholism and other Drugs (CARIAD) has been responsible for offering summer training institutes.

Programmes directed at HIV/AIDS are primarily large-scale community education and specialised counselling for these patients and their families. Social workers, to date, play a largely supportive role in working with the health personnel who spearhead the HIV/AIDS

programmes. (It is, however, noteworthy that since 1995 the Centre for HIV/AIDS Research and Education Support (CHARES) at the University Hospital (Mona) has had a complement of social workers on staff.)

Industry-based social work/EAPs

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), tantamount in fact to industrial social work—although not formally recognised as such—are not much beyond the experimental stage in most of the countries. Trinidad, however, is in the vanguard in relation to positions created in some larger industrial settings. (Doubtless, many personnel managers will want to claim longstanding comparable work experience.) In Jamaica, while a few industries have actively encouraged such programmes, the impression is that they are still shy of proclaiming them a social work activity and there is a concurrent downscaling of support services in the public sector. The social services have consequently become a significant casualty and this has underscored the reality of the need for the industrial sector to build in such services as employee assistance. The engagement of social work professionals is therefore expected to become increasingly popular.

Public assistance

The final word in this descriptive overview of social welfare services and practice settings, bringing the story full circle, relates to programmes which offer basic economic relief to the poor—referred to in more sophisticated societies as 'income maintenance provisions'. There have been a number of measures that provide increasing degrees of public assistance to the needy by comparison with the earlier years of the last century, and there are also private initiatives (e.g. Food for the Poor, 1984, initiated by a Jamaican Catholic layman with a base in Florida) that seek to provide assistance throughout the Caribbean for needy unemployed persons, assisting them to become income earners. However, there is still among the countries a significant variation in levels of professional service involved, especially in the administration of state provided assistance. In Barbados and Trinidad, trained social workers are part of the welfare agency staff, while in Jamaica the personnel are still uniformly at the pre-professional level and their mandate is principally the administration of relief grants.

There is much that needs to be done to bring to the administration of public assistance, certainly in Jamaica, more emphasis on an approach that promotes the development of coping skills and enhanced social functioning, rather than perpetuate dependency by doling out relief.

Professional social work education²

Following the description of the service delivery scene, it is necessary also to indicate briefly what measures have been taken to provide training and professional education for the social workers staffing the various service agencies.

Following the earlier reported training programmes for social work practitioners during the years 1943-53,³ it was not until 1961 that the UWI introduced a two-year Professional Certificate in Social Work programme at the Mona campus. In 1963 a four-month residential paraprofessional course was initiated at the Extra-Mural Department (now School of Continuing Studies) Social Welfare Training Centre (SWTC), which continues to be offered annually. For the intra-mural programme, additional training leading to a Bachelor's degree was effected in 1970 and, with various amendments over the succeeding two decades, a full-scale BSc Social Work paralleling other degree offerings in the Faculty of Social Sciences was implemented in 1989. At the same time, a one-year pre-professional Certificate in Social Services was introduced to cater to persons without degree matriculation requirements. This Certificate programme is now offered at a number of Community Colleges, as well as at the UWI SWTC. By the early 1990s, the Barbados (Cave Hill) and the Trinidad (St Augustine) campuses of the University were also offering social work programmes, and by the end of the century the UWI was registering approximately 300 persons at the baccalaureate level annually. While many graduate to work in the region, regrettably, a significant number move out of mainline social work or migrate to the metropolitan countries.

In addition to the UWI, the University of Guyana (as from 1970), the College of the Bahamas (1981), and the new University of Belize (1996) also offer undergraduate programmes which train persons for work in those countries.

At the graduate level, a Master of Social Work degree was introduced at UWI (Mona) in 1993 as the only one in the region. Concentrations in 'Advanced Practice' and in 'Administration and Management of the Social Services' are offered in alternate years for annual intakes of ten to fifteen students.

CONCLUSION

The above attempt to present an overview of the historical development of social welfare services and the practice of social work in the English-speaking Caribbean/the West Indies will certainly have failed to do justice to much that is of significance in the evolutionary processes that

attended particular fields of practice or to particular variables that influenced what happened in the different locations within the region. The limitation of using one country, albeit the most populous one, as the major source of information, has been acknowledged. However, there will have emerged, hopefully, enough of a picture to reflect a progression from (a) the early years (pre-twentieth century) characterised by relief and charity for the poorest, through (b) the development of a range of services provided in the main by voluntary organisations and churches that attempted to address specific categories of social problems and needs in a caring but largely non-professional manner, to (c) the attempt to develop a more comprehensive range of services that relate to the increasingly complex demands of the society, and to invest in offering a more professional level of intervention. While many agencies have focused on offering direct casework (and only occasionally group work) intervention in providing treatment and rehabilitative services, there has been, especially over the last two decades, an expansion of programmes that may be labelled as developmental, where proactive intervention is undertaken to address a range of issues in the social and economic environment. Of note is the fact that many of the latter initiatives are spearheaded by persons without conventional social work qualifications, which may be indicative of a challenge to the profession.

In sum, it can be claimed that, by the end of the twentieth century, social work practice in the West Indies was broadly representative of the elements identified in Macht and Ashford's (1991) definition cited in the introduction to this paper. This has attempted to be an essentially descriptive piece which aims to familiarise readers with the setting to indicate *what* has happened over the years and is happening in respect of social service agency development and the offering of social work services. The challenge to address the *how* and the *how well* of social service provision and social work practice will be the objectives of the succeeding pieces in this four-part series which aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Caribbean social work reality.

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NOTES

- * I wish to acknowledge the contribution (through interviews and correspondence) of Innette Cambridge and Letnic Rock of the St Augustine and Cave Hill campuses of the University of the West Indies, and of Janet Cupidon-Quallo, Social Work Consultant from Jamaica.
1. This presentation appears here as a revised version of an earlier work "Caribbean Social Work: its Historical Development and Current Challenges" (1st Caribbean Social Work Educators Conference, Barbados, June 1993). It also appears here as the first of a four-part series entitled *Social Work in the English-speaking Caribbean: Overview and Critique*, to be published in each of the first four issues of our newjournal. Targeting readers from both within and outside of the region, the purpose is to offer information on the development of the profession in this part of the world, to identify the critical issues which affect the realities of practice, to set the stage for descriptive and analytical discourse, and to encourage scholarly initiatives that will lead to the development of indigenous theory and contribute to policy formation.
 2. The next issue of the journal will have a paper that critiques Caribbean social work education. The serialised presentation will comprise the following papers:
 - The evolution of social welfare services and social work in the English-speaking Caribbean (with major reference to Jamaica) (this issue)
 - Social work education in the West Indies (2nd issue)
 - Various perspectives on social work theory and practice in the Caribbean (3rd & 4th issues)
 3. See p. 19 above.

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