EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN INDEPENDENT JAMAICA

Errol Miller

Introduction

Jamaica became politically independent, constitutionally, in August 1962. The era of national sovereignty in education, however, dates back to 1953 with the creation of the Ministry of Education under the direction of an elected representative, the Minister. The latter replaced the Colonial Director of Education, who had run the system without the benefit of direct accountability to the Jamaican people. The significance of 1953, however, goes beyond the date of establishment of the Ministry of Education. It is a convenient marker of the major point of departure for reforms in an education system that had remained virtually unchanged for the first half of the twentieth century.

The approach adopted here, in discussing education reforms in independent Jamaica, is not to recite dates at which different changes took place at various levels of the education system, but rather to identify themes and time-frames over the last 40 years. The intention is to come to a better overall understanding of educational reform within the context of shifting power relations among competing groups in the Jamaican society.

In a real sense, reforms can be considered as products, policies that chart a new course at a particular time. At the same time, reforms also represent a process, particularly where the initial policies are refined during their implementation. While the generic form remains, aspects are crafted to fit the specifics of the context more fully than was initially the case. In discussing education reform in independent Jamaica, therefore, attention will be paid to both the process and product dimensions of the policies discussed.

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Time Frames in Jamaican History

The overall status of power relations between competing groups in the Jamaican society can be conveniently divided into three eras over the course of the twentieth century.

- **The era of colonial rule.** In this period the colonial administrators, acting in conjunction with and greatly influenced by the dominant minorities in the society, set policies as they balanced directions from Whitehall with local imperatives. This era lasted from the beginning of the century to about 1944 when constitutional change brought adult suffrage and responsible government. In fact, it could be said that it lasted for the entire first half of the twentieth century in that it took another nine years, after 1944, before power was transferred from the colonial administrators to the elected representatives, in 1953.

- **The era of populist government.** During this period the elected representatives, of the mass of the people, possessed of new constitutional powers and acting within the context of strong economic growth and an agenda for social change, addressed the concerns of the marginal majority group within the society. This era lasted for about 25 years and dates from about 1953 to the late 1970s and can be labeled the era of development.

- **The era of structural adjustment.** During this period the elected representatives, acting within the constraints of external conditionalities of bilateral and multilateral agencies, increasingly served the interests of the reconstituted minority groups within the society. This era dates from the late 1970s to the present.

Ruby King, in her chapter on education in the British Caribbean, dealt with the education reforms and policies that guided Jamaican education in the first half of the twentieth century under the colonial administration. This chapter will concern itself with educational reforms within the periods of populist government and structural adjustment.

Themes in Education Reform in the Populist Era

Reforms in the populist era centered around four themes: nation building, expanding access, equality of opportunity, and nationalism/regionalism. Several reforms were related to each theme. These will be discussed in turn. In discussing the themes, while attention will be paid to the sequence in which the reforms emerged, no particular attention will be attached to dates and the related details.
Nation Building

The movement from being a colony, ruled by minority interests, to being a sovereign state, governed by democratic principles, required major reforms in governance, legal framework, and the administrative machinery of the State as they related to education. Adult suffrage and responsible government were democratic concepts that could not be confined to the political sphere but had to be addressed in the education system as well.

This became the first order of business in the transition from colony to sovereign nation. Jamaica was the first colony, of any imperial power in the post-war era, to be granted adult suffrage. Creating a democratic society was, therefore, high on the agenda of the reforms that emerged. Functioning in a democracy required more than marking a ballot every five years. It also required an informed citizenry, knowledgeable about the society in which they lived and schooled in the democratic processes.

School-based Management

During the colonial period two systems of public school management were practiced. While these two systems were related to the levels of the education system, it was their social antecedents that defined them. The elementary school system catered to the marginal majority of the Jamaican society, while the secondary school system catered to the privileged and powerful minority groups. The governance of these two systems reflected the power relations of these two groups within the Jamaican society.

The elementary school system was administered directly by the State through the Board of Education and school managers appointed by the different religious denominations that owned the majority of the schools. These arrangements were the essence of the Church-State system that had been inaugurated in 1892. The Board of Education, chaired by the Director of Education, was responsible for overall policies, while the school managers had the power to hire and fire teachers and were responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the school. The head teacher was the chief executive officer accountable to the manager, usually a minister of religion.

The public secondary school system was administered in a fairly autonomous manner through the Schools Commission, which had loose regulatory powers, and the School Board. Each school was managed by a Board of Governors. While the Boards of Governors had similar powers to the school managers in that they could hire and fire teachers, they had greater autonomy in the financial affairs, setting salaries for teachers, set-
ting school policy with respect to student admissions, and in other such matters.

The Board of Education and the Schools’ Commission had managed two separate educational systems, along different lines, for over 70 years. Teachers Colleges were integrated into the elementary school systems and, therefore, came under the jurisdiction of the Board, while fee-paying private preparatory schools offering primary education were integrated into the secondary school system and, therefore, came under the jurisdiction of the Schools Commission.

The reforms in the governance of schools during the independence era can be summarized briefly as follows:

- The Board of Education and the Schools Commission were abolished and the functions integrated into a single Ministry of Education, headed by a Minister.
- Each primary and secondary school was to be operated by a Board of Management with powers to hire and fire teachers and admit and expel students subject only to appeal to the Ministry of Education. The School Board was also given responsibility for the financial affairs of the school and was subject to annual reports and audits by the Ministry of Education.
- The School Boards were to be appointed by the Minister of Education, who, in the case of Church and Trust schools, would accept nominations for approximately half the members of the Board.
- While the School Boards were to have authority for the day-to-day running of the school, they would exercise this authority within the framework of overall policies set by the Ministry of Education.
- The Ministry of Education would set common salary scales for teachers in primary and secondary schools.

While the reforms of the 1950s set the general framework for the system of school-based management in Jamaica, a number of refinements were subsequently made. First, the composition of the Board was democratized to broaden the base of participation and strengthen community involvement in the management of schools. Principals became members of the Board. The owners of the schools, be they church or State, would nominate a minority of the members, the exact number being different at the different levels of the school system. The majority of the Board would be nominated from other interest groups, namely, students, academic staff, administrative staff, ancillary staff, past students, parent-teacher associations, and community groups. The Minister of Education would only nominate those nominated by the owners in the case of Government schools, and one Government representative on the Boards of Church- or Trust-owned schools.
Second, while initially the Minister appointed the Board, even where nominations were made from different sources, those powers have been transferred to the National Council of Education, whose composition is bipartisan and broad based. This latter refinement was predicated by the removal of partisan political influences from the appointment and operations of the school Boards. The convention that developed was that each time the Government changed, all Boards resigned to give the new Government the opportunity to appoint a new Board. However, the normal life of a Board is three years and often does not coincide with the cycle of change in the political arena. The disruption caused by automatic resignation coupled with the charge that effective Boards were changed for no other but partisan political reasons, led to bipartisan agreement on the new arrangements.

The defining features of the system of governance of schools that have evolved in Jamaica in the independence era are as follows:

- Individual school boards, with broad-based composition, accountable to community interests, that, in turn, generates substantial community support for schools over and beyond government subvention.
- Parental choice in the selection of the schools to which they enroll their children, provided they can convince the principal to accept them. This puts some obligation on the students to justify their place in the school.
- Teachers employed to individual school boards, who cannot be transferred to other schools and who are not Civil Servants. An offshoot of this is that teachers are free to participate in the partisan politics and are indeed important contributors to the political process.
- Autonomy of the schools once they operate with the quotas, ratios, and procedures prescribed by the Ministry of Education that is unable to make decisions on the schools. The Ministry must persuade Boards, principals, and teachers through participatory mechanisms.

The Legal Framework

The 1950s reform of the governance of the education system required corresponding legal reform to define the functions, roles, rights, and powers of the Boards, the Minister, principals, teachers, and students. This legislation took years to emerge in its fully developed form of the Education Act of 1965. The democratic and decentralized nature of the school-based system of management that has been created, with its balance of
powers between central Ministry and decentralized school board, is best illustrated by matters that went to the courts to be settled.

In the appointment of the principal of the school, the Board has the right of nomination, while the Minister holds veto rights based on advice from Ministry officials. This is the only appointment over which the Minister exercises any power. The balance of power is that the Board can nominate but cannot appoint, while the Minister can appoint but cannot nominate.

In the case cited here, the Board of a government-owned school nominated a principal whose appointment the Minister vetoed. However, in keeping with its powers to make acting appointments, the Board put the nominated principal in that position. Following the Minister’s veto, instead of nominating another candidate, the Board re-submitted its nomination that the Minister again vetoed. The Board continued to allow the acting appointment of the principal whose permanent appointment the Minister had vetoed.

The Minister proceeded to dismiss the Board. The Board challenged the Minister’s authority to dismiss the Board on grounds of disagreement with its nomination to the post of principal. The Supreme Court upheld the Board’s challenge, hence its dismissal by the Minister was squashed. The Board allowed the appointment of the principal.

The Minister waited until the term of the Board had expired and nominated six new government representatives by right of Government’s ownership of the school. The other persons nominated the representatives that had served on the previous Board, whom the Minister was obliged to re-appoint. When the issue of the permanent appointment of a principal came before the new Board, the representatives of the students, past students, parent-teachers’ associations, teachers, administrative staff, ancillary staff, and community out voted the government representatives to the effect that the acting principal was again nominated. This was the same person whom the Minister again vetoed, and whom the new Board continued to have act as the principal. The matter was finally resolved when the Minister was subsequently moved to another portfolio and the new Minister was permanently appointed the acting principal.

This case illustrates the democratic values embedded in the school-based system of governance in Jamaican public schools. The checks and balances enshrined in law, and the willingness of Boards to exercise their rights, constrains the manner in which the Minister exercises power in the school system.

The point to note here is that the issues of decentralization of decision making to the level of the school, the reform of governance to empower
teachers and communities exercise influence in the operation of schools, and the incorporation of democratic values in the management of schools have faced Jamaica's education system since the 1950s. This is not to say that these issues are not without contemporary relevance, but it is to say that these are at a different level than is currently advocated in the international discourse.

The Bureaucratic Arrangements

The 1950s reforms in the management of the education system had two contradictory tendencies. First, the concentration of policy-making responsibilities, financial provisions, and administrative services into a single central Ministry and second, the decentralization of the employment of teachers, admission and expulsion of students, and the day-to-day operation of schools to individual school boards. The practical result was that the central Ministry in Kingston was required to deliver administrative services to over 1,000 public institutions spread across the country.

The essence of the bureaucratic arrangements is that the Ministry of Education establishes quotas, ratios, guidelines, and budgets within which the Boards must operate subject to verification and validation by the Ministry from time to time. For example, the Ministry would establish admission quotas for students, teacher/pupil ratios for staffing, guidelines for teachers' qualifications for employment, and annual recurrent budgets for schools at different levels of the education system. Within these parameters Boards are free to select the particular students, hire individual teachers, and spend the government's subvention. The Ministry has the right to verify that the Board is operating within the parameters, but is obliged to validate and honor the Boards actions once they are within these parameters.

Experience, over time, proved that over 1,000 public schools and more than 20,000 teachers are not effectively served by a central Ministry in Kingston. Accordingly, in the 1970s five regional offices, located strategically in different parts of the island, were established to decongest many of the administrative services of the Ministry. These offices were later closed in the 1980s as a cost-cutting measure. In the 1990s six regional offices have been reestablished with the same mission, justified within the contemporary tide of decentralization. These offices are yet to be fully functional as there is resistance on the part of some officials in key positions within the central office to the transfer of several services to the regional office, notwithstanding the official policy and the establishment of the offices.

It is interesting to note that under the guise of decentralization the Ministry has repeatedly explored the possibility of creating regional or
district Boards of education that would assume some of the functions and powers of the individual boards. In effect this would constitute some measure of recentralization of governance within the school system, carried out under the rubric of decentralization. However, to date there has been little support and much resistance, hence the Ministry has not be able to proceed with any fundamental change in the governance of the school system.

Expanding Access

The second major theme of post-independence education reform was expanding access to education at all levels of the school system. Education was accepted as the right of every citizen and, therefore, as an obligation of the newly independent state. Moreover, the contention was that one of the major failures of the colonial government was its inadequate provisions. Expanding access to education, therefore, became a major goal of government in the independence era. This manifested itself in building new schools, expanding existing schools, with the resultant expansion of enrollment. It is necessary to comment on the outcome of the reforms to expand access at each level of the education system.

Early Childhood Education

Preschool education in Jamaica has a history that is as long as that of the education system itself. However, prior to independence the numbers enrolled were relatively small and catered mainly to the more privileged socioeconomic groups in the society. The major reform since independence has been the creation of the basic school system that caters mainly to the lower socioeconomic groups.

The elements of the current model of early childhood education are:

- Shared responsibility for providing schooling between the private sector, the churches, other non-governmental organizations, and government.
- User fees.
- Government subsidy for recognized preschools.
- Decentralized administration and decision making, with a high degree of involvement of communities in all aspects of governance.
- In-service training as the main modality of training teachers.
- Low costs per student enrolled.
- Poorly qualified and lowly paid teachers, the vast majority of whom are female.
It is important to note that there are very wide disparities in the quality of education delivered and in the output from this level of the educational system. The heavy dependence on community input means that the quality of education is largely determined by what the community can afford. Wealthier communities can provide better trained teachers, better pay and offer greater support services for the children resulting in better quality early childhood education. As such, this model of providing early childhood education reinforces the socioeconomic status quo and offers little opportunity for the children of poor communities. Without modifications to mitigate this weakness, this model readily becomes an agent of the status quo.

Notwithstanding these limitations, approximately 82% of children of the four to six years age group are currently enrolled in some form of preschool. This represents a significant expansion of access to education at this level of the independence period. The net effect is that large numbers of children from low income households now have the opportunity to start their education much earlier than was previously the case.

**Primary Schooling**

By 1953 about 75% of children of primary school age were enrolled in school. Although elementary schooling had existed in Jamaica for about 300 years, and free elementary education was inaugurated in 1892, approximately 25% of the children of primary school age were still outside of the school system. The independence reforms sought to achieve universal primary education. Initially the reforms focused on building more schools, expanding existing schools, training more teachers, and lowering the age of admission from seven to six years. Later they included provisions for children with varying degrees of disability.

By the late 1960s Jamaica had achieved universal primary education. This can be regarded as a major accomplishment of the independence education reform. It reflected not only the provision of more school places, but more importantly the motivation of all parents to seek basic education for children. The fact is that the amount of primary school positions was insufficient compared to the demand. Notwithstanding limited primary school capacity, parents enrolled their children in record numbers. There can be no doubt that this higher level of participation in the school system was engendered by the higher levels of expectations released by the independence process.

**Secondary Schooling**

While expanding access to preschool and primary education were important achievements, the major preoccupation was with expanding ac-
cess to secondary schooling. Prior to 1953 only about 5% of the population received secondary education. Government in the populist era, therefore, were proud to support reforms expanding access to secondary education. The reforms in secondary education brought with them an expansion of types of secondary schools, increase in the number of schools, and larger enrollment in each type.

Traditional grammar-type high schools were established in Jamaica in 1850. The reforms of the populist era expanded the number of such schools and their overall enrollment. Prior to 1953 the traditional high school was the only secondary school. By 1978 four additional types had been added: the technical high school, the comprehensive high school, the vocational high school, and the new secondary school. Each represented another policy initiative in secondary schooling.

The populist reform of traditional high schools was directed to increasing their number and enrollment. In 1950 only about 8,000 students were enrolled in 30 traditional high schools. By 1978 the number of schools had increased to 45 and their enrollment to more than 50,000 students. While the number of schools increased 50%, their enrollment increased 525%. This meant that the increases in the sizes of traditional high schools far exceeded the numbers of new schools that were included in this segment of the education system.

One of the principal means of increasing high school enrollment was the policy to significantly reduce boarding and to promote day schools. Prior to 1953 all high schools were boarding institutions. By the end of the populist period only seven of the 45 schools had boarders. Even then day students far outnumbered boarders. The conversion of boarding facilities into classrooms facilitated the expansion of enrollment and, therefore, in increasing access to traditional high school education.

The technical high school represented the transformation of trade training centers, established by a grant from the Carnegie Foundation in the early 1940s, into high schools with a technical bias, accessible by children who were slightly older than children entering traditional high schools. By 1978 there were only six such schools.

The comprehensive high school was yet another initiative to add another form of secondary education to the Jamaican school system. This type of secondary school was distinctive in combining both selective and feeder school entry strategies as well as widely diverse curricula and assessment procedures. By 1978 there were only three such schools.

The major reform of secondary education in the populist era was the creation of the new secondary schools through a two-step process. First, was the conversion of 16 senior schools, established in the 1940s, into
junior secondary schools and the building of 50 new schools. The establishment of 66 junior secondary schools constituted the largest single investment in education in the post-independence period. These were three-year schools, with non-selective, free flow, feeder school entry and a broad-based curriculum. Almost immediately after the creation of these three-year schools, they were converted into five-year institutions and renamed new secondary schools. Their enrollment by 1978 was approximately 80,000 students, which was more than all the other types of secondary schools combined.

The vocational high school represented another innovation in secondary education policy. Only two schools were created but they were geared mainly to careers in agriculture and catered mainly to rural students. They offered programs of two to three years duration but accepted students who had completed Grade 9.

The increase in total secondary school enrollment between 1953 and 1978 was spectacular. It went from 8,000 to 170,000. Even within the traditional high school, expansion in access was impressive, from 8,000 to 50,000. Certainly the populist reforms increased access to secondary education significantly in a relative short period of time. On the other hand, this massive increase only covered 60 percent of the 12 to 17 age years age cohort, 40 percent were still not accommodated.

What is also highlighted is the concern that in expanding access to secondary education the reformers could not come to a consensus on the type of secondary education to be provided. The result was five different types of secondary schools. The major reform was the creation of the new secondary school that surpassed the traditional high school in number of schools and enrollment. The other types of secondary schools were created as policy experiments involving a relatively small number of schools and limited enrollment compared to the traditional high schools and new secondary schools.

The new secondary school was substantially different from the other types of secondary schools in that its entry was non-selective, employing the neighborhood school concept, its curriculum was oriented to vocational training, and its school graduates were not required to take Cambridge examinations.

Accordingly, new secondary schools attracted the lowest social status of the five types of secondary schools although it offered the greatest access to secondary education. Put another way, the greatest access to secondary education was offered through a type of school that attracted persons of lower social status.
The interesting aspect of this paradox is that the new secondary school came out of reforms designed by UNESCO and financed by the World Bank with the expressed intention of increasing equity in the Jamaican education system. The argument was that the traditional high schools represented elitist education that catered largely to the middle and upper classes, and, therefore, did not qualify for assistance because this would further heighten the social cleavages in the society. On the other hand, the lower social classes placed the highest value on gaining entry to these so called elite schools. From their point of view, access to this type of school should have been the focus of all expansion in access to secondary education.

It should also be noted that the social classes that had benefited most from traditional high school education, were least enthusiastic about its rapid and massive expansion. For a different reason they agreed with creating other types of secondary schools as a means of expanding access to secondary education.

An interesting commentary on this situation is the fact that the government that carried out the junior secondary reform proudly campaigned on this achievement at the next general election. They lost to the party that had focused their reforms on expanding the traditional high school system. Subsequent research has shown that instead of reducing social inequity in the society, the new secondary reform has contributed to further cementing the historical cleavages. Mills (1990), for example, in a tracer study of secondary school leavers from that the youth labor market was segmented and that traditional high schools and new secondary schools supplied different segments of that market.

_Tertiary Education_

In the colonial period tertiary education consisted of theological education provided by different religious denominations for the training of their clergy, teachers colleges training primary school teachers, nursing schools training registered nurses, and a college of agriculture training agricultural technicians. Only a fraction of 1% of the labor force received any form of tertiary education.

The reforms in the populist period involved both the creation of new institutions as well as the expansion of those that had existed. New institutions that were created included the University of the West Indies, a regional university, the creation of the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST), the Maritime Institute, the Cultural Training Center with its four schools, community colleges, and several paramedical schools preparing technicians and paraprofessionals in the field of health, for example, the schools of physiotherapy and occupational therapy.
Among the teachers colleges and nursing schools, new colleges and schools were added and those established in the colonial period were expanded. The number of teachers colleges was increased from four to eight and the number of nursing schools from one to three. The school of agriculture was relocated and expanded.

By these measures access to tertiary education was expanded not only with respect to the numbers of persons who could receive this level of education, but also with respect to the types of programs of education and training that were available locally. The chief beneficiaries of this widened access to tertiary education were those in the society who could not afford to go abroad for such education.

The upper and upper middle classes had a long tradition of sending the children overseas for tertiary education. The provision of increased access to local tertiary education did not change this pattern. More than anything else it created opportunities for the traditional and emerging middle classes, and to a much less extent the lower classes, to gain access to this level of education.

Notwithstanding the significant expansion of education at this level, provision was created for only about 5% of the 18 to 24 years old age cohort. While this was a marked improvement over the less than one percent previously obtained, this provision was limited compared to the broad based expansion of the primary and secondary levels of education.

Comment on the Expansion of Access

When the reforms of the populist era to expand access to education are examined in their totality, the results are indeed impressive. Early childhood education was expanded to provide access to 82% of four- to six-year olds. Primary education was expanded so that it became universal, including all children between the ages of six and twelve years. Secondary education was expanded from 5% to 60% of those twelve to seventeen years old. Tertiary education increased from less than 1% to 5% of those 18 and 24 years of age. Such expansion of educational opportunity over a 25-year period is impressive from whatever perspective it is viewed. It surpassed any previous effort made in the history of Jamaican education.

Without detracting from its accomplishments, there are a number of observations that are worth noting. First, the level of coverage achieved at the preschool and primary levels was not matched at the secondary and tertiary levels. While the system is very broad at the basic levels, it narrows significantly at the secondary level and shrinks substantially at the tertiary level. Second, most of the expansion of access at the secondary
level occurred in a type of school that was least demanded and that had the lowest level of socioeconomic attractiveness. From the perspective of the participants in the education system, therefore, the expansion of access to secondary schooling is not as impressive as it appears, if no reference is made to type of school. The size of the expansion of secondary schooling masks a strong degree of dissonance concerning the types of schooling provided. Third, at the secondary and tertiary levels there is still a large amount of unmet demand for education. As impressive as the expansion in access was, it fell short of the social demand at the upper levels of the education system. This is important because these levels represent the most prized elements of the social demand.

Equality of Opportunity

The society that emerged from colonialism was marked by profound social cleavages with deep roots in color, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Mills speaks of the unholy trinity of race, class, and gender as the roots of all social equities in the society. Certainly these have been the foremost issues on the reform agenda. However, there were other concerns. One was region, the urban rural dichotomy, reflected in the differences in infrastructure between the Corporate Area, the Kingston metropolitan region, and the rest of Jamaica, generally referred to as the “country.” Another was with respect to handicapped children or those challenged by various disabilities.

The theme of equality of opportunity represents the attempts of the reformers of the populist era to address education provision in relation to the issues of race, color, class, gender, region, and disability. The policies were never part of a coherent whole, set out in a single document. Rather, they emerged as an expansion of access to education, was contemplated and implemented. Accordingly, it is not possible to report all the equity reforms in a coherent and sequential manner.

Special Education

Special education was pioneered by private initiative, like most other elements of Jamaican education. Over time private bodies established special schools for children with different disabilities—mental retardation, deafness and communication disorders, physical handicap, blindness, and learning disorders. Churches and associations of concerned individuals were the main providers. The private provision, however, was much less than was needed.

In addressing the theme of equality of opportunity, advocates for the disabled argued strongly for the inclusion of special education in the pub-
lic provision. The first concession to this advocacy was government subsidy to some schools through the payment of the salaries of their teachers.

Continued advocacy brought about full integration in the public provision in 1974, that is, toward the end of the populist era.

At that time government undertook the following reforms:

- Payment of the full recurrent cost of special schools run by the various disability associations and churches. These private bodies undertook to direct their resources to capital expansion to increase the coverage of children with disabilities, particularly those with moderate to severe handicaps.

- The construction and integration of special education units in primary schools located strategically across the island. This would further expand the provision for children, particularly to those children with mild or moderate disabilities.

- The provision of training of teachers for special education in the public system to ensure that all special schools and special education units within primary schools were staffed with appropriately trained teachers.

- The establishment of a diagnostic and therapeutic Center to diagnose the educational problems of children with disabilities and to develop appropriate remedial learning prescriptions.

- The creation of a special education section within the Ministry of education to support, promote and monitor work done in this area.

While these reforms responded to advocacy predicated on the grounds of equality of opportunity, they did meet with some resistance—mainly on two grounds. Some persons, especially within the government bureaucracy, argued that the returns on investing in children with disabilities would be so modest as not to justify it in comparison to other pressing needs within the education system. Apart from the humanitarian considerations, this argument was countered by the number of parents who were sending their children abroad for such education for which the country had to find much needed foreign exchange. This would be saved if more adequate provisions were made locally.

An unexpected source of resistance came from primary school parents who did not want children with disabilities educated along their children for fear that the standard of education would be lowered. Such concerns had to be addressed by a careful program of public education directed at the particular areas in which special education units were going to be placed in primary schools. Parent resistance was considerably lowered by this strategy.
Region: Kingston and the Rest of Jamaica

At the end of the colonial period, while primary education was spread across the country, secondary and tertiary provision was highly skewed in favor of the Kingston Metropolitan area. Moreover, because many of the schools in the rest of the country were boarding institutions, residents of the city of Kingston also had access to institutions in the rural areas.

Providing access to rural residents became an important focus of education reform in the populist era. Reform focused on two approaches. The first was to build more schools outside of the Kingston Metropolitan area. The second was the modification of the selection process so that students in a particular parish had access to the secondary provision in that parish.

Accordingly, most of the secondary schools, teachers colleges and community colleges built in the populist period were sited outside of the Kingston Metropolitan area resulting in much greater access of rural residents to secondary and tertiary education. In addition, boarding was retained particularly at the tertiary level, as a means of ensuring access to this level of education by rural residents.

Notwithstanding these reforms, the bias in favor of the Kingston Metropolitan area has not been completely reversed. Up to the end of the populist era, the Kingston Metropolitan area had 35% of the population but 50% of the students at traditional high schools and most of the tertiary education students.

The location in Kingston of the University of the West Indies, the CAST, the Cultural Training Center, the Maritime Institute, and other institutions that are the only ones of their kind, still gives the impression that in order to advance in education, Kingston is the place to be. The emergence of Montego Bay as the second city of the nation has not brought with it the educational institutions that can rival those located in Kingston. The region, therefore, continues to be an axis of inequality in education despite reforms to promote equality of opportunity in this dimension.

Coeducation

During the colonial period, many schools were single-sex institutions, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels. A major reform was the system-wide adoption of coeducation. All new schools built from government resources were to be coeducational institutions. In addition, several of the existing single-sex institutions willingly adopted the coeducation policy. The interesting aspect of this was that while many boys schools became coeducational, very few girls schools converted to coeducation. Accordingly, the institutional provision among traditional high schools became biased in favor of girls. By the end of the populist era, of the 46
Educational Reform in Jamaica

traditional high schools there were 7 boys schools, 15 girls schools and 24 co-educational schools.

Jamaica is among the few countries in the world in which inequality in educational provisions in favor of boys has been almost completely reversed at all levels of the education system. While the seeds of this transformation were planted in the colonial period, they came to full fruition in independence.

Universal primary education brought about gender equality at the primary level. At the secondary and tertiary levels gender bias in favor of boys has been reversed and are now decidedly in favor of girls. Girls now start school earlier, attend more regularly, drop out less, complete the schooling cycles in greater numbers, and perform better than boys at all levels of the education system and in all subjects except physics and mathematics.

Selection for Some Types of Secondary Education

The major focus of reforms addressing the theme of equality of opportunity was on selection to some types of secondary and financial provision for secondary and tertiary education. In the colonial period, schools selected their students and the fees charged constituted a significant portion of their revenue. Notwithstanding these fees, public subsidy through government subvention, was the major plank of their financial sustenance. As such, public provision for high school education offered a substantial subsidy to many who could afford to pay for such education.

Both the argument and the fact was that the twin instruments of individual school admission policies and student fees worked to the disadvantage of the marginal black majority and to the advantage of the dominant light-skinned minority groups in the society. Since these were the main axes of inequality in the Jamaican society, structured on the basis of color and class, it is not surprising that the major effort on securing equality of opportunity was made in this area. Measures to ensure equality of opportunity to high school education among the different groups in the color and class system, therefore, targeted the selection to high school and the financial provision for secondary and tertiary education as their major foci of intervention.

A set of reforms evolved in the populist era that are best discussed in the chronological order in which they were implemented. The initial reforms were the Common Entrance Examinations (CEE), and free place system in 1957. The fundamental break with the past was that entry to traditional high schools would be based on academic merit and not on parents ability to pay. Schools would not select their own students but would
admit students selected through the CEE, that would be the means of assessing academic merit. Students from public primary and private preparatory schools would take the CEE somewhere between the ages of 10 and 12 years.

To make provision for the fact that because of a selection process based on merit there would be students from homes that would be unable to pay for their education, the reform introduced 2,000 free positions for which government would pay the full tuition cost. These positions would be awarded to the top 2,000 students based on their performance in the CEE. In other words, top performing students in the CEE would receive free tuition in high school. In addition, these students would be assigned to high schools by the Ministry of Education, based on the students' choice, and the high schools were obliged to admit them.

The reform also created a second category, the grant place students. These students would be those whose performance in the CEE would be below those receiving tuition, but certainly of the level that merits a place in high school. The policy was to award 2,000 grant places each year. Government would pay half the tuition fees charged by the school while the parents of grant position students would pay the other half. The grant awards would be to particular high schools as a general award. Parents would need to shop around high schools to gain acceptance for their children at particular schools.

The reform allowed for a third category of students, full fee-paying students. These would be students who did not merit a place through the CEE but whom the school would admit because of other considerations. In a real sense this contradicted the principle of merit, on which the reform was founded, but it was a concession to church and trust schools who wished to admit some students based on their affiliation or the connections of their families to those schools. The rider was that there would be no state subsidy for such students as there had been in the past. They would have to pay the full tuition cost. No cap was put on the proportion of such students that a school could admit. It should be noted, however, that the annual admission of 4,500 students, through free and grant places, was close to the intake capacity of the schools at the inception of the reforms.

Selection on merit through a common entrance examination was also imposed for admission to technical high school. The examination became known as the Technical Entrance Examinations (TEE). It was offered to children who were one year older than the age limit for the CEE. In the case of the technical high schools, there were only free positions, hence, all students were assigned to particular schools and received free tuition.
Grant position and full fee-paying students were not allowed. Two factors accounted for this.

First, the technical high schools were created by the same reforms that established the new selection policy. In a new situation the reforms would be implemented without compromise. Second, there were only a few technical high schools, hence they did not attract the same attention as the more numerous and prestigious traditional high schools.

Later when comprehensive high schools were added to secondary provision they were partially integrated into the selection process established for traditional high schools. While some of their students were selected through the CEE, the majority came through free flow from designated primary feeder schools in their neighborhood.

After the first five years of the implementation of the reform, it was found that the majority of the students obtaining the 2,000 free places awarded annually were students from preparatory schools. Strong arguments were mounted that this defeated the spirit of the 1957 reform because, in effect, it continued to subsidize students who could afford to pay for their education.

This argument has to be understood because of the fact that many students gaining grant positions were unable to accept them because their parents could not afford to pay the half cost for tuition plus the expenses related to books, uniform, lunch, and transportation.

Following a change of the government that instituted the 1957 reforms, the new government introduced what became known as the 70:30 policy. This reform prescribed that 70% of the 2,000 free places awarded annually should go to students from primary schools while 30% should go to students from preparatory schools. Basically this reform imposed quotas for primary and preparatory students in the award of free positions and shifted the balance that had existed to that point. This meant that some preparatory students, who previously would have gained free tuition, would obtain grant positions, while some primary school students, who previously would have obtain grant positions, would receive free tuition.

While the 70:30 reform was predicated on the basis of equality of opportunity, it attracted widespread criticism and resistance on the grounds of being discriminatory. The question around which the criticism centered was, if selection to high school should be based on merit, why should those meriting free places not receive them? This question highlights a major deficiency of the 1957 reforms that confounded the principle of merit as the basis of high school selection with financial assistance to children of merit who could not afford to pay for their education. If 4,000 students were to be selected annually to high schools on the basis of merit,
why should free tuition be granted to the first 2,000 if the intention is to ensure that poor students selected on merit are able to benefit from the education for which they are selected?

Instead of addressing the fundamental weakness of the 1957 reform, the 70:30 policy attempted to remedy the situation by use of a quota system. Not surprisingly the 70:30 policy became the most misunderstood and the most maligned in the history of Jamaican education. The general public believed that the 70:30 applied to both free and grant positions and, therefore, to the entire selection process thus denying preparatory school students access to high school education. The middle and upper classes criticized the policy and used it as justification for gerrymandering the selection process through abuse of the full fee-paying loophole. Principals of secondary schools, in sympathy with parents of children from preparatory schools, were willing accomplices in the gerrymandering process.

While in 1957 the fees paid by grant position students were half the tuition cost because fees were not raised by the schools in accordance with tuition costs that increased by the beginning of the 1970s, fees were no more than 15% of total tuition costs. In 1973 the government abolished fees and introduced the free education policy. This reform had five important elements:

- Tuition fees would be abolished, hence all places to the traditional high schools would be free.
- Selection would be based entirely on merit. Students performing best in the Corporate Area and each of the twelve other parishes would be selected based on the number of high school positions available in each parish. In other words, the 70:30 quota system would be abolished.
- All students would be selected through the CEE and assigned to the schools of their choice or placement, except for 5% that would be at the discretion of the principal.
- Students from poor homes, gaining entry to high schools, could apply for assistance from the Ministry of Education.
- Schools would be financed on the basis of a budget presented to and approved by the Ministry of Education annually.

The free education reform was based on the idea that it ensured equality of opportunity for all students whereas selection to high schooling was based solely on merit. The reform provided financial assistance for students from homes that could not meet all the ancillary costs involved. It should be noted that by the time of the free education reform more than 70% of the students were gaining access to high school solely on the basis of merit. While the preparatory school students still obtained a higher proportion of positions than the numbers warranted, the gap between them
and primary school students had narrowed considerably. Indeed, had the 70:30 quota system been continued it would have discriminated in favor of preparatory school students.

Nationalism and Regionalism

As would be expected in any country, just prior to and immediately after political independence, nationalism and regionalism became important themes in reforming the education system that had been fashioned in colonial times. This theme of the Jamaicanizing and Caribbeanizing of education centered around areas of university education, teachers, the curriculum, and external examinations. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

University Education

As soon as it became evident that political independence would be part of the political future of the Caribbean, university education was conceded as a necessary means of producing the future leaders of the countries and the region. While there was advocacy for a university in the Caribbean from as early as the 1830s, the British administrators only made feeble attempts to address this need. Interestingly, it was the Anglican clergy, through arrangements with Durham University, that had sustained some form of university education through Cordrington College in Barbados.

By 1948, however, the British had conceded the need and made the University College of the West Indies a parting gift to the region. The assumption was that some form of federation would emerge as the vehicle of the Caribbean state. However, even if this were not the case, university education within the region would have to be the subject of regional cooperation and not the national efforts of individual states. This emerged as a joint agreement and commitment by the British and the Caribbean governments.

The intention here is not to attempt to discuss the history of the development of the University of the West Indies, but rather to make the point that the citing of the original campus of the UWI at Mona, Jamaica had far-reaching consequences for Jamaican education with respect to the themes of nationalism and regionalism. The UWI itself became the most powerful Caribbean symbol and presence in Jamaica, and early interventions in outreach activities added substantial support to Jamaican nationalistic efforts. Indeed, the implementation of the reforms to produce Jamaican teachers, nationalize and regionalize the curriculum, and the external examinations, all drew heavily on support from and the resources of the
UWI. This connection will be more clearly demonstrated as each of the other areas are discussed.

Producing Teachers and Principals Locally

Teachers for primary schools were being trained through local teachers colleges from as early as the 1830s. Whether the teachers were trained or untrained, primary schools had been staffed and administered by Jamaicans for more than one hundred years. The thrust of the reform efforts for the training of primary school teachers was to upgrade their quality and ensure that the entire teaching force was trained. To ensure quality, teacher certification was devolved from the Ministry of Education to the Faculty of Education and particularly to the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE).

Teachers and principals for secondary schools were a different story. Prior to the establishment of UWI there was no Jamaican or regional capacity to train secondary school teachers. The pattern that emerged was that the vast majority of the trained graduate teachers and principals in secondary schools were expatriates, mainly from Britain, while the vast majority of the untrained undergraduate teachers were Jamaicans. Senior students often became junior mistresses and masters in the secondary schools until they moved on to some other jobs.

The reforms to expand secondary education in 1957 further aggravated the teacher supply for the high schools. Accordingly, expatriate teachers were actively recruited through annual missions to Britain undertaken by personnel of the Ministry of Education. Such measures necessitated reforms to replace expatriate teachers by establishing a local capacity to produce and recruit secondary school teachers. The elements of the reforms that emerged to address these issues can be summarized briefly as follows:

- The provision of scholarships, tenable at UWI, to read for Bachelor degrees in Arts, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The terms of these scholarships, granted by the Ministry of Education, included the recipients being bonded to teach for five years in the secondary school system.

- The recruitment of UWI graduates, including many from the other Caribbean countries, to teach in Jamaican schools.

- The establishment of the Diploma in Education program of the Faculty of Education, supported through annual scholarships granted by the Ministry, to offer initial teacher training to graduates desiring to make secondary school teaching a career. By the mid 1970s the Diploma in Education program was offered through both full-time pre-service and part-time in-service modalities.
• The expansion of the programs of teachers colleges to include the training of secondary school teachers and the addition of teacher training programs at colleges specializing in particular disciplines. For example, the establishment of the technical teacher training program at CAST, the training of teachers of agriculture at the Jamaica School of Agriculture, and the inclusion of a teacher training division at the Excelsior Community College.

As a result of these measures, Jamaica could abandon its recruitment of expatriate teachers despite the massive increase in primary and secondary enrollments and the consequential increase in the teacher supply needs. By the end of the populist period the teaching force at the secondary level had been Jamaicanized and Caribbeanized. The dependence on Britain to supply trained secondary school teachers had been broken by the establishment of local teacher education capacity.

The establishment of local capacity to produce secondary school teachers and the recruitment of such teachers for post in the school system led, in time, to the replacement of expatriate principals by Jamaican and Caribbean nationals. By the end of the populist period, the vast majority of secondary school principals were Jamaican nationals with a minority of nationals from other Caribbean countries. As with teachers, Jamaican and Caribbean nationals had replaced expatriates from Britain as the principals of the secondary schools.

One of the unintended consequences of the Jamaicanization of the teaching force was the lowering of teachers’ salaries. As long as Jamaica recruited teachers from Britain to staff its schools, the salaries had to be internationally competitive. In large measure, therefore, teachers salaries in Jamaica were comparative with similar salaries in Britain. Once the dependence on Britain had been broken and the teacher supply needs could be met from local sources, there was no need to maintain the competitiveness with British teachers’ salaries. The result was a comparative decline in teachers’ salaries locally. This decline took place in two stages. First, in the latter stages of the overseas recruitment the expatriate teachers were paid higher salaries than those recruited locally. As would be expected, this met with strong objections from local teachers and their associations representing them. Second, the higher salaries disappeared with the cessation of the overseas recruitment. This set the stage for bitter salary disputes at a later date.

The Curriculum

The criticism that surrounded the curricula that had developed during colonial times centered around three issues:
- The curriculum content, and the books to support it, often did not reflect local conditions. For example, in the biological sciences most of the species did not occur in the Caribbean except in the syllabi and textbooks. Also the images in the textbooks used did not resemble the vast majority of the people of the Caribbean.

- The imperial culture was promoted at the expense of local and regional culture. For example, children had to learn about British and European history and geography while scant attention was paid to Caribbean and Jamaican history and geography.

- Being a citizen in a sovereign country required substantially different socialization from being a subject in a colonial society. Emphasis had to be placed on developing allegiance to the nation through promoting its symbols through the education system as well as through teaching the responsibilities of citizenship in a newly independent democratic nation.

Nationalizing and regionalizing the curricula at all levels of the education system became a major focus of reform in the post-independent period. Curriculum reform became an important item on the education agenda. National curriculum committees were established, with broad based representation from numerous stakeholders, and mandated to reform the curricula to reflect Jamaican and Caribbean conditions, culture and citizenship requirements. In addition, nationals were encouraged to write textbooks in support of the new curricula that would emerge.

Interestingly, this supported the move, on the part of some interests within the society, to establish local publishing houses. It also prompted international publishers to establish national and regional subsidiaries to gain market shares with respect to the new materials and books that were being created in relation to the new curricula emerging from the reform process.

Again it is important to note the contribution of the University to the curriculum reform process. In most instances UWI personnel were invited to chair the national curriculum committees as well as the subject sub-committees that were established. Further, UWI personnel were often engaged as consultants in several curriculum reform projects. Also, both local and international publishing houses recruited UWI staff to write several of the textbooks that were put on the market to support the new curricula. In a nutshell, the location of the UWI at Mona facilitated and supported the reform of the school curricula to reflect nationalist and regional themes relating to content, culture, and citizenship.

By the end of the populist era substantial progress had been made in reforming curricula at all levels of the education system. However, as King and Morrissey observed, not all the old content, images, and biases
had been eliminated. While the nationalists and regionalists could feel some satisfaction with respect to the accomplishments, there is no sense in which they could declare the mission accomplished.

External Examinations

In the colonial period, students took two main examinations—the pupil teachers examinations, later called the Jamaica Local Examinations, and the Cambridge School Certificate examinations. The former was set locally and was taken by senior pupils of the elementary schools, while the latter was set in England and sat by students of the high school. The reform of the curricula to reflect national and regional content, culture, and civics raised the question of the appropriateness of the Cambridge Examinations as the major means of assessing the performance of secondary school students. Two schools of thought emerged, one favored national assessment and the other favored regional assessment.

Local discussion of these issues occurred at the same time that similar concerns were being expressed in the rest of the region. The school of thought favoring regional assessment, therefore, had support from similarly minded persons throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean. This lobby was sufficiently strong to persuade these Ministers of Education to take action. With assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the decision was made to establish the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). After five years of planning and preparation, CXC examinations were administered for the first time in 1979. These replaced the Cambridge Ordinary Level examinations, GCE “O” levels.

The nationalist position on examination did not go without some concessions to its position. In converting junior secondary schools from three-year to five-year institutions, the question arose with respect to the assessment of the performance of these students at the end of five years of schooling. This question arose in the early 1970s before CXC was established. The options were to integrate them with the Cambridge examinations until the regional examinations were in place, or create a unique national examination for students of this type of school.

The objection to integrating the New Secondary students into the GCE “O” levels, and later with CXC was argued on three grounds. First, the GCE or later the CXC examinations would be above the level of achievement of the vast majority of the students in this type of secondary institution, hence sitting such examinations would encourage new secondary schools to concentrate on a few students to the exclusion of the many. Second, Jamaica should develop its own examinations to meet the specific curricula approved for the particular type of secondary school that
may not coincide with the policies of other countries. Third, a national examination could be mounted at lower cost than a regional examination. This last argument was crucial given the socioeconomic background of the majority of new secondary school students.

The arguments in favor of the Cambridge and regional examinations were predicated on three premises. First, a national examination designed specifically for the type of secondary education least demanded by the public was unlikely to be highly valued by students, parents, or employers. However, the integration into the mainstream examinations would eventually build prestige for new secondary schools. Second, Jamaica by itself could not afford to establish and operate the machinery that would be needed to mount a high quality examination. While regional examinations may appear more costly they would be more cost effective. Third, while initially only a few new secondary school students would reach the standard, when both students and teachers had mastered these standards a much larger number of students would be involved.

The nationalist won the day and the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), was created to assess student performance in new secondary schools. In retrospect there were valid arguments on both sides.

On one hand, the SSC, after 20 years of operation, has not gained the wide acceptance among parents, students, employers, or tertiary education institutions. Jamaica by itself has not been able to put the machinery in place to operate the SSC as a high quality examination. On numerous occasions the examinations have been nearly one year late in publishing results.

On the other hand, CXC fees are often outside the reach of poor candidates and have resulted in their taking fewer subjects than they are intellectually able to take in any single examination. Also the high standard of the CXC has left an uncomfortable number of candidates unable to pass at the General Proficiency level. Several educators have therefore called on CXC to establish another level of performance that is approximately one year below the level of the General Proficiency. In other words, while the regional position appears more sustainable, there are still some critical issues, identified from the inception, that still need to be addressed.

Reclamation Education

This theme in education reform in the populist era arose from three considerations. First, the level of education required of citizens of an independent and democratic society was far greater than that required in an undemocratic colonial society. Second, the colonial provision in education was deficient even with respect to its own limited needs. Third, provi-
sion of education opportunities for children of school age could not compensate for the many adults who had missed basic schooling in the colonial period. These three considerations lead to the provision of reclama-
tion education for adults.

The focus of reclamion education in the populist era was functional literacy among adults. A 1964 literacy survey found that 42.9% of the population over 15 years were functionally illiterate. Most efforts were mounted by professionals in the field, whose primary contribution was that of developing the local materials and testing methods that were effective in the Jamaican setting. These paved the way for a national mobilization to address adult illiteracy in the 1970s through the creation of the JAMAL Foundation, in 1972, with its mandate to eliminate adult illiteracy in the shortest possible time.

The JAMAL Foundation brought together a combination of different interests—government, the private sector, and individual volunteers. Indeed, it represented national mobilization around a common cause by enabling persons who had not learned basic functional skills to acquire them in order to enhance their lives. The program involved mass mobilization and by 1982 had been instrumental in making about 274,000 adults functionally literate. A literacy survey done in 1981 showed that functional illiteracy had been reduced to 24.3% of the population despite the fact that the adult population had increased substantially over the 17-year period. Interestingly, JAMAL found that only one in three of its recruits were absolutely illiterate, not having ever been literate. Two out of three recruits were lapsed literates who had acquired the skills but not the habit and had deteriorated for lack of application of the skill.

The important point to note about this reform is that it created a national organization and infrastructure for adult education that had not previously existed. While its mission of eliminating illiteracy was not achieved in the populist period, like in other areas substantial progress had been made towards its objective. Moreover, materials, methods, and manpower had been effectively mobilized on a national basis (Miller 1992).

Observations on Education Reforms in the Populist Period

When the education reforms in the populist era are examined in their totality, several observations appear warranted. These can be enumerated briefly as follows:

- Substantial progress was made with respect to achieving the goals set of transforming the governance of schools, the legal framework of the system, and the bureaucratic arrangements; expanding access to educational opportunity at all levels of the education system; equalizing opportunity to the marginalized groups in the
society; Jamaicanizing and Caribbeanizing several aspects of education including its personnel, materials, curriculum and examinations; and in providing basic education to adults who had missed such opportunities when they were of school age. However, despite the progress made, the tasks were not completed. In every area much remained to be done. The book could not yet be closed with respect to the mission to be accomplished.

- In several areas of reform the strategy was to retain the essence of the colonial system while substituting nationals for colonials and expanding the particular provision. In other words, there was not a fundamental break with the past but rather corrections with respect to who exercised control and size of the provision. Implicitly the judgment was that the colonial creation was inherently good and sound but was under alien control and was not large enough. The point here is not to question the soundness of this judgment of the colonial experience, but rather to draw attention to the fact many colonial structures were retained without question in independence.

- The education reforms in the populist era took place over 25 years. During this time there were three changes of government; each time the two major political parties switched position as government and opposition. Notwithstanding these changes, there was continuity in the themes in that each government built on what the other had done in seeking to achieve the populist goals. In a real sense, it is possible to speak of continuity in policy-making during this period.

- Although the country enjoyed strong and sustained economic growth in the populist era, local resources were not sufficient to finance and manage the reform of the education system. As in other sectors, governments sought assistance from the donor community. Indeed a new dependence was being forged at the very time the country was emerging from the yoke of colonial dependence. In this phase of the relationship, donor assistance was predicated on the basis of development. In many respects, donor assistance helped to ensure some of the substantial progress that was made in this era. However, the donor assistance constituted a new dimension of Jamaican education. Previously, educational development was financed largely from local resources, with some periodic and limited assistance from Britain.

Themes in Education Reforms in the Structural Adjustment Era

The structural adjustment era dates from 1977 to the present. The government has announced that the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which ended in 1995, will be its last. The government
has claimed that the adjustments have been made and the economy is on target to enable it to terminate the special agreements with the IMF. Jamaica and the International Monetary Fund had ten agreements from July 1977 to September 1995. These agreements were reached in the context of IMF conditions requiring that the Jamaican Government adopt policy measures designed to adjust the Jamaican economy. Bullock (1986) pointed out that IMF adjustment policies have had two main strands:

- **Demand management** measures that have focused on:
  - Import deregulation
  - Export expansion
  - Control of the fiscal budget including reduction in public expenditure
  - Restriction of central bank lending to the public sector
  - Restrictions on credit expansion by the banking and financial systems

- **Appropriate economy-wide pricing measures** that have focused on:
  - Exchange rate devaluation
  - Increases in the real interest rates
  - Controlling the rate of wage increases
  - The removal of subsidies and price controls

Both Davies (1986) and Bullock, in reviewing the impact of these policy measures on the Jamaican economy, have identified adverse effects on education and other social services. To date, only Miller has attempted to analyze in detail the impact of structural adjustment policies on any specific aspect of the education system. The attempt here is not to assess the impact of structural adjustment on the education sector per se, but rather to outline the educational policies and reforms that have been spawned during this period.

Adams (1994) highlights the fact that the decline in public expenditure that has marked the period of structural adjustment has resulted in major reductions of education expenditure in the school system. Several of the reforms spawned in this period attempted to take account of this fact. Reduction in education expenditure has formed an important context for education policy making over the last seventeen years. Several cost cutting measures that started as short term responses have become long term strategies by default.

Reforms in the structural adjustment period have encompassed many different themes. These include increasing efficiency, improving quality, expanding technical and vocational training, restructuring teacher education, rationalizing of secondary education, cost recovery/cost sharing, and
re-engineering instruction in primary and secondary education. Each of these themes will be discussed in turn.

**Reforms to Increase Efficiency**

While universal primary education has existed in Jamaica from the late 1960s, attendance has continued to be unsatisfactory, never rising above an overall average of 75% of those enrolled. School attendance, understood as a broad indicator of the opportunity to learn, offers itself as a key lever by which learning efficiency can be improved at a low cost.

The most recent policy measure to improve attendance was enacted in 1982 when the Government decided to make primary school attendance compulsory through the passage of appropriate legislation. The implementation would begin in two parishes, St. Thomas and Trelawny, and then extended to the rest of the island on a phased basis. Welfare measures would be associated with the enforcement of the legislation through the supply of uniforms and school feeding, directed at children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

It is important to note that Jamaica has achieved universal enrollment of the primary school population on the basis of voluntary participation. The introduction of compulsory legislation was, therefore, not to mandate enrollment but to compel the attendance of those who had voluntarily enrolled in school.

Coomarsingh (1984), Jones (1985), and Blair (1986) investigated the impact of the implementation of the policy in some of the target areas. From the three studies it was apparent that, apart from an initial response in St. Thomas, the compulsory policy has had no significant impact on improving attendance in the parishes studied. By itself legislation does not appear to be effective in inducing parents to send their children to school regularly. The major difficulty appears to be the enforcement of the law with the consequential punishment of the parents who are mostly poor.

The three researchers suggested that the desired results would have been achieved had the promised welfare support been forthcoming. Further, they implied that it was the absence of the materialization of the promised welfare support that undermined the successful implementation of the policy. The assertion here is that poverty alleviation is a critical element in addressing the problem of poor attendance.

However, it is still to be established that welfare support is not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition in improving attendance. While the conclusion of these three studies seem to support the work of Clarke (1990) that says that attendance appears to be an outcome of underlying social factors related to the socioeconomic status of the parents and com-
munities, the issue still remains as to whether these underlying social factors can be appropriately addressed by welfare measures alone.

It would appear that a critical issue is the cost of schooling to poor families who believe that education will make no difference to the lives of their children. If this is indeed the case, then poverty alleviation measures would need to be associated with strategies to improve the quality of the schools concerned while linking the improved schooling with access to educational opportunity that would change the life chances of the children.

New policy measures to address poor attendance would need to address the issues of opportunity cost, quality of schooling and access to educational opportunity that increases the life chances of children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. The experience of the compulsory and welfare support policy would seem to suggest that legislation by itself, and possibly even if bolstered by welfare assistance, may not be sufficient.

Reforms to Improve and Maintain Quality

Both the Government and Donor Agencies have been cognizant of the fact that the present structural adjustment policies, with their high social costs particularly for low income families, can be expected to have adverse short-term and long-term educational consequences. Reforms have been introduced in the education system to avert some of these adverse effects by addressing critical input related to educational quality.

The Provision of Textbooks

The lack of textbooks was identified as a major setback to students in Primary and Secondary Schools, mitigating against regular attendance, notable achievements and the development of positive attitudes to school and learning. To address this problem, in 1983, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Gleaner Company, several local private sector companies, CIDA, USAID, and UNESCO, planned to give every child of primary school age in Grades 1-6 textbooks in English Language, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Through the Primary Textbook Project, textbooks have been delivered, free of cost, to all children in primary and all-age schools in Jamaica.

A similar provision has been made for Secondary Schools through the Book Rental Plan. The capital provision for acquisition of the books has come from assistance from the British Development Division, Caribbean of the Overseas Development Agency. Through this plan, textbooks, at
low rental, have been provided for all secondary school students. Some of
the lessons learned so far can be listed as follows:

- The provision of textbooks will be most effective if associated with
teacher training workshops and short courses designed to improve
the actual use of textbooks in the classroom.
- Teacher perceptions as to textbook quality are critical. If project
texts are considered of poor quality, other (non-project) books will
be widely used. The role and educational value of project texts then
becomes problematical. Textbook projects must place at least as
much emphasis on the quality of textbooks (physical quality, pa-
per, color, illustrations, editorial quality, content, methodology,
relevance to curriculum, etc.) as on logistics, printing, and distri-
bution.
- Efficient management and book inventory systems are essential as
textbook projects move into recycling, with varying printing, life
span, and storage needs for different subjects and grade levels.
- In order to be most effective, textbook projects should be part of an
integrated process of educational improvement. This should in-
volve curricula development, examinations, textbook production,
teacher training, and upgrading in a planned and coherent time
frame.
- Both the Primary Textbook Project and the Book Rental Scheme
have proven counter-productive with respect to the Jamaican Pub-
lishing Industry, which saw its markets shrink as books were pro-
duced by the Project and given away free, or local books were ex-
cluded from the Rental Scheme by the conditionality of origin gov-
erning the capital provision.

The JTPT should logically have been designed as a publishing proj-
ect. Local publishers were not, in fact, included until 1990 when
Jamaican-published science and social studies texts were intro-
duced for Grades 1-3. Since then, the Ministry of Education (MOE)
has been moving towards more reliance on local publishers for pri-
mary texts. To date, however, there is no MOE policy related to the
publishing industry, nor does the MOE provide the longer term
contracts that would be of benefit to local publishers.
- Throughout the Caribbean, textbook costs are rising rapidly due to
a fragmented market, lack of supportive government policies, ineffi-
cient distribution, and currency devaluation as it applies to texts
published off shore.
- A regional publishing/distribution system, involving some stan-
dardization of core textbooks and longer print runs, would reduce
costs significantly and would clearly benefit education throughout the region and be more sustainable than the current arrangements.

Policies Related to Nutrition

Nutrition has been another aspect on which both Government and Donor Agencies have concentrated assistance, based on the assumption that some of the negative effects of structural adjustment could be mitigated. The School Feeding Program was established in the early 1980s to provide school lunches consisting of buns and milk fortified by nutritional supplements.

Researchers at the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the West Indies have carried out studies on the nutritional status of school children.

Simeon (1989) raised the question as to whether school feeding programs focused on providing lunch are as effective as programs that use breakfast as the locus of intervention. While the Ministry of Education’s school feeding program supplies lunch, several schools have, on their own initiative, implemented breakfast programs. Simeon’s findings seem to suggest that breakfast may be the more appropriate point of intervention for children suffering from malnutrition or some with a history of poor nutrition.

Clarke (1990), in her study of primary students attending schools in depressed communities in the city of Kingston, found that she could correctly place 87% of the students into succeeding or failing groups without reference to their ability, quality of school, training of teachers, or even attendance. The clear policy implications of Clarke’s well-designed and executed study is that for children residing and attending schools in depressed communities in the city of Kingston, poverty alleviation measures focused on improving their health and nutritional status would have far greater impact on their school achievement than policy measures designed to improve pedagogy or any other determinants of educational achievement. The study also provided evidence that suggests that attendance and achievement are two correlated outcomes of the same underlying set of nutritional, health, and socioeconomic factors. In other words, well-designed and well-executed nutritional, health, or welfare interventions are likely to improve both attendance and achievement.

Clarke’s findings underscore the soundness of enacting policy measures designed to address the nutritional and health status of children, especially those residing in depressed urban communities. It also calls into question the adequacy of the existing policies and provisions through the School Feeding Program. Nutri-buns and fortified milk at lunch time ap-
pears to be inadequate compared to the needs of these students. Despite the present School Feeding Program, children from depressed urban communities are experiencing significant educational deficits that can be traced directly to their nutritional and health status.

Restructuring Teacher Education

Teacher training in Jamaica has operated virtually unchanged for over one hundred years. In the 1960s the reform focused on expanding teacher supply while maintaining the basic structures and relationships that had traditionally defined the sector. The reforms of the 1980s focused on qualitative change. The reforms sought to redefine teacher education in the education system and to improve the quality of the teachers. The rationale was that improving teacher quality was the key to improving the general quality of schooling.

The elements of the new policies are set out below.

- Returning to the intramural modality of teacher education.

The programs to prepare teachers would be three years intramural in all colleges involved in teacher education. The qualification award would be a Diploma in Teaching.

- Redefining teacher education and teachers colleges within the educational system.

Teacher education would overlap with university education, and not with secondary education as was previously the case. This would be accomplished by:

— requiring entry to teacher education to be dependent upon successful completion of secondary schooling. This was defined in operational terms as four passes at CXC General Proficiency 1 or 2, including a pass in English Language, or its equivalent.

— requiring that at graduation teachers from the new program should attain a standard that would qualify them for exemption from the first year of the Three year Bachelors Degree in Education of UWI

- Introduction of a Preliminary Year.

By linking admission to teacher education programs to successful completion of secondary schooling, the new policy was making a significant break with the past. This admission policy had the potential to exclude a significant number of students who did not come from a high school background. A bridge was necessary between the old admission standard of five passes in the JSC and the new standard of four passes in CXC. The Preliminary Year would be that bridge.
• Re-definition of different types of teacher education programs.

The new policy sought to re-conceptualize and re-define the types of teachers to be prepared for the school system. Four levels of the school system were recognized: early childhood, special education, primary, and secondary.

The new policy mandated that from the outset of their training, students had to choose the level of the education system for which they would be educated and trained to teach. Further, it asserted that there was a fundamental difference between early childhood, special education, and primary teachers on the one hand and the secondary teacher on the other hand. The former teachers had to possess a general intelligence that allowed them to learn and master a wide variety of subject matters and skills. The secondary teacher, on the other hand, must be a specialist in one or two subjects and as such must have special abilities in those areas and the capacity to pursue those areas to great depth. A secondary school teacher could, therefore, have great weaknesses in some subject areas, but this need not affect their competence provided these weaknesses were not within their particular area of specialization. This was not the case with primary school teachers who had to be generally good in all the subjects of the primary curriculum, even if none are pursued at great depth.

Although each type of teacher must be trained in relation to their specialization, all teachers of each level share a common core of knowledge and experience as teachers. The common areas were personal competence in language and communication, professional knowledge in education foundation, competence in practical teaching, capacity to execute action research, and continuing personal development. Both the common core of shared knowledge and experiences and the fundamental differences between the types of teachers, had to be reflected in admission requirements, curriculum provisions, and evaluation criteria.

• Improving shifting the balance between academic education and professional training.

The assumption was that the key to improving the quality of teachers was improving their academic preparation. This would be accomplished by the following:

— Higher academic requirements for entry into the programs.
— Continuing academic education over the three years.
— Upgrading academic content in the various programs.

The general rationale for this approach was that while greater concentration on academics would result in some loss of pedagogic competence, over time and with experience, the young teacher would gain the desired pedagogic competence. On the other hand, if academic weaknesses were
allowed to go unremedied, teachers are unlikely to rectify them on their own, regardless of the amount of experience gained in the classroom. Accordingly, the balance in the teacher preparation programs should be struck in favor of academic and technical competence.

- Making the colleges the main suppliers of secondary school teachers.

Traditionally, the stated ideal had been to staff secondary schools with university graduates. While a few high schools had come close to this ideal, none have actually achieved it. Neither were there good prospects for achieving this ideal in the foreseeable future. Several factors accounted for this. First, UWI does not produce graduates in the full range of subjects taught at the secondary level. Second, even in those subject areas in which it does produce graduates, the flow of graduates into the school system has been modest. Third, with the increasing cost of university education to foreign students in the United States, Canada, and Britain and the continued devaluation of the Jamaican dollar it is unlikely that graduates trained abroad would make up for either the limitations or the shortfalls of the local training capacity.

Cognizance was taken of the fact that some research on teacher effectiveness has shown that above a certain threshold of knowledge of subject matter, additional increments seem to add little to teacher effectiveness.

While no research has so far isolated and identified the threshold, this finding is significant from a policy perspective. The assumption made here is if secondary school teachers are to teach up to the CXC General Proficiency standard, then if student trainees, who have themselves obtained this standard in the subjects they are being prepared to teach, are given an additional three years of content in those subject areas, they should cross the threshold required to be effective secondary school teachers in Jamaica.

- Adjusting the teacher supply to primary and secondary schools.

The need to adjust the supply of teachers was manifested by several developments:

- Demographic data had indicated that there had been a decline in the number of children entering primary schools but an increase in the numbers of children being transferred to secondary schools.

- Primary school teachers graduating from colleges were having increasing difficulty each year in finding jobs in the public school system.

- Secondary schools had many vacancies that they were unable to fill even after several advertisements in the press.
— An increasing number of primary school teachers were being employed in posts in the secondary school system.

The situation described above required that the number of primary school teachers being produced annually should be reduced while the number of secondary school teachers should be increased.

- Expanding the use of technology in the delivery of teacher education.

The irreversible trend in the world is for increased technology and technological applications. If the Jamaican society is to make technological advances, then teachers must play a significant role. The use of technology by teachers in the schools is likely to be facilitated if their own learning in college is assisted by the use of various educational technologies.

Accordingly, teacher education institutions should be equipped with a wide variety of audio-visual equipment and materials and also with computers and other digital machines with memories. These should be integrated into the instruction of all teacher trainees.

- Incorporation of curriculum developments in the primary and secondary school systems.

From the mid 1960s and into the 1970s the Ministry of Education has sponsored the redesigning and installation of curricula at the primary level. In the 1970s the Caribbean Examination Council was established and had produced new curricula for secondary schools.

It was therefore decided that the new curricula developed for the new Diploma program should prepare teachers to teach these new curricula in the primary and secondary schools, by incorporating their major objectives and methodologies in the pedagogic courses. Teachers produced through these programs should have mastered the content and methodologies required to teach the curricula currently in place in the primary and secondary school systems. Teachers should also be au-fait with the principles, philosophies, attitudes, processes skills, and achievement outcomes prescribed by these curricula.

- Incorporating successful innovations in teacher education.

In the 1970s, following the New Horizons Conference in 1971, several colleges embarked on pilot projects testing various innovations. The decision was therefore taken that all successful innovations that were relevant and meaningful to the new program would be incorporated. In other words, these innovations would be upgraded from pilot status to system-wide implementation. Some of the innovations that were incorporated were:
The preliminary year, from a similar program that had been developed at Shortwood.

The semester system developed at Mico.

Language Arts and Education courses developed at Mico.

Primary Science courses developed at Moneague.

- Improving the articulation of teacher education programs with UWI.

While there has been some articulation between teacher education and the University, this has never been as close or smooth as that between the University and Sixth Forms. The new policy sought to address the two issues.

- The articulation with the University’s matriculation requirements. The experience has been that while secondary school teachers produced by the colleges have had little difficulty with the matriculation, this was not the case with early childhood, special education, and primary school teachers. The major difficulty has been that these teachers had difficulties satisfying specific Faculty requirements. The University was unable to identify an area in which these teachers had the equivalent of one advanced-level subject.

Accordingly, the decision was taken to include in the programs for early childhood, special education and primary teachers, at least one subject that these teachers would need to study in depth.

- Articulation with the undergraduate programs of the Faculty of Education. The decision was taken to articulate the new Diploma with the three-year Bachelors Degree in Education, so that the teacher would qualify for one year’s exemption.

- Upgrading of the teachers in the school system from the Certificate to the Diploma level.

In designing the new Diploma, the level of attainment was set so that the level of attainment at the end of the second year would be roughly equivalent to that of the old Certificate program. Teachers who had graduated with the Certificate would require an additional year of full-time instruction in order to reach the Diploma standard.

The basic rationale for the provision to upgrade the teachers in the field was as follows:

- Providing the teachers in the schools with the opportunity to improve both their academic and professional competence would be the quickest and most direct route by which to impact the schools.
— The two plus one system had led to some deterioration in the quality of teachers that had been produced over the 15-year period. The teachers so affected needed to be given the opportunity to upgrade themselves.

— The senior and more experienced teachers in the school system should not be placed at an academic and professional disadvantage to their younger colleagues graduating from the colleges.

Several different strategies and modalities would need to be employed if all the Certificate teachers in the school system were to be upgraded to the new Diploma. The strategies would include full time, part-time, vacation and distance teaching packages.

• Improved salaries for holders of the Diploma in Teaching.

Teachers graduating with the Diploma in Teaching would be paid substantially more than teachers holding Certificates, and at the same rates as Specialist I and untrained Graduates. The rationale for these salary relationships were as follows:

— Certificate teachers would have strong incentives to seek to be upgraded to the Diploma level.

— These salaries should attract into teaching a higher caliber of students.

— This salary structure gives a clear advantage to teachers who are professionally trained.

• Phasing the implementation of the new policy directions.

It was decided that the new policies, and specifically the new Diploma, would be implemented over a three-year period, starting in September 1981, just as the old Certificate program was being phased out. By June 1984 therefore, the old Certificate program was entirely phased out and the new Diploma entirely phased in.

One of the ironies, of the structural adjustment period, has been the degree to which reforms designed to address unsavory aspects of the adjustment process have been undermined or retarded by the adjustment process itself. Nowhere is this better illustrated than with respect to the reforms in teacher education. No sooner had the reforms been phased into the system in 1983, than the restructured system was disrupted by further demands of the adjustment process.

The list of further adjustments to teacher education after 1983 could be listed as follows:

• The closure of Moneague Teachers College and Teacher Education Department of the EXED Community College in 1984.
In 1984, the downsizing of the overall teacher training capacity in the country by the suspension of the preliminary year, the restricting first-year student entry, and the reduction of staff of colleges through layoffs and early retirement.

The closure, in 1984, of the Science Center at the University that offered in-service support to science teachers across the country.

The closure, in 1985, of the In-service Teacher Education thrust, ISTET, through which unqualified primary school teachers were given the opportunity to receive formal teacher training leading to certification.

The closure, in 1985, of the In-service Diploma in Education through which untrained graduate teachers received professional training leading to certification.

Interestingly, the 1981 reforms survived the disruptions of the mid-1980s. The Preliminary Year was reinstated, student entry was returned to the previous levels and the Moneague College was reopened in 1987. However, by 1987 the country experienced a shortage of trained teachers that has, subsequently, led to increased numbers of unqualified teachers employed in the schools. In 1987, the primary school teaching force was 97% trained. However, by 1994 only 80% of primary school teachers were trained.

Re-engineering Instruction in Schools

Knowledge at the current time is that the wealth of the world is no longer based on natural resources, a surfeit of cheap labor, excessive amount of capital, or the ability to manipulate monetary instruments such as money supply, exchange rates, interest rates, and tariff regimes within national borders. Rather, wealth and prosperity reside in the ability to compete in the global marketplace, especially in the markets of industrialized countries. This shift demands new and dynamic relationships between business and national management and profound changes in market systems since competitive advantage will not flow from labor or capital but rather from science, technology, and human resources.

Sections of the Jamaican private sector that hold to this view, the Business Partners, have joined with the Ministry of Education and the Computer Society Foundation to re-engineer instruction in primary and secondary schools through the application of information technology to address the learning needs of students.

Through this partnership, computer labs are being placed in primary and secondary schools. This program, operative since 1993, seeks to place computer labs in all secondary schools and subsequently in all primary schools.
The labs are being placed in schools for the purpose of computer-assisted and computer-based instruction. Initially the CAI programs being used have focused on improving learning in English and Mathematics. Teachers are being trained, however, to use computers to teach their subject of specialization. The initial results of this innovation has been quite impressive.

In 1995, the Inter-American Development Bank provided a grant to assist the Business Partners to experiment CAI in urban and rural primary schools. Mobile labs will be employed in urban centers and fixed labs in remote rural primary schools. Included in the experiment is the use of CAI in the communities in which the schools are located to address the learning needs of adults, especially with respect to the economic activities in which they are engaged.

Apart from the innovation, with respect to the use of information technology to address the learning needs of children and adults, this program represents new directions with regard to the partnership between the State, the private sector, and the international donor community. While the partnership is still in its embryonic stage, it signals fundamental reform of the relationships in the provision of education.

Neither the Government nor the donor community projected the inclusion of computer-assisted or computer-based instruction in schools. The official policy is that the use of information technology, while desirable, is outside the reach of developing countries such as Jamaica. The Business Partners have taken the opposite view and provided the leadership in formulating and implementing this reform. The extent to which this reform succeeds is still to be determined. The important point to note is the change in leadership during the reform process. The private sector has literally dragged the Government and the donor community into this reform.

Restructuring the Education System

The period of structural adjustment has not been without attempts to fundamentally alter the structure of the education system. Reforms under this heading relate to rationalizing secondary education, changing the alignment of technical and vocational education within the education system, and restructuring tertiary education. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

The Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE)

The 1983 UNESCO report of Secondary Education has formed the basis for the most recent attempts to reform the system of secondary education.
In the Five-Year Development Plan 1990-95, priority is given to the improvement of secondary education by streamlining the structure and providing common curriculum for grades 7-9. A major aspect of this development is the strengthening of the all-age and new secondary schools to deliver this common program.

The Reform of Secondary Education Project (ROSE) was designed to rationalize the system of secondary education and to further reduce the remaining inequalities by ensuring that all children are provided with equal opportunities to complete nine years of basic education.

This will necessitate:

- Expanding enrollment at the lower secondary level and providing school positions for all children ages 12-14 years.
- Postponing selection until after the grade 9 year is completed.
- Providing a common curriculum for grades 7-9.
- Improving the quality of education for all children in grades 7-9 by instructing all-age and new secondary schools to deliver the common curriculum.
- Training grades 7-9 teachers in the delivery of the common curriculum.
- Rationalizing the examination system.
- Providing textbooks and other instructional materials.

ROSE particularly targets the all-age schools that lag far behind the secondary schools in qualitative terms. The Ministry of Education and Culture proposes to implement the following reforms with respect to all-age Schools:

- Lower the pupil/teacher ratio from 42:1 to 30:1
- Increase the per capita grant to grades 7-9 students in all-age schools to the level provided for secondary schools
- Where possible, cluster grades 7-9 students from a number of schools into one location and upgrade the level of teaching/learning in the new environment by providing facilities and equipment such as exists presently in secondary schools.

The reform of secondary schools is being facilitated through a World Bank loan under the ROSE Project. The essence of the reform is the development of a common curriculum for all types of secondary schools. The reform is therefore being driven by the revision of curriculum upon which the teacher training, textbook provision, examinations and evaluation, the provision of teaching materials, and equipment are all being predicated.
The reforms are being introduced on a phased basis and are expected to have been introduced into approximately 150 of the eligible 660 schools by 1998. It is also expected that the reforms begun at the Grades 7 to 9 level will be extended to encompass Grades 10 and 11.

A seeming contradiction is that at the same time that the Ministry is proceeding with the reforms under ROSE, it is converting new secondary schools into technical, comprehensive and traditional high schools. It is also creating junior high schools. If there is to be a common curriculum in all types of secondary schools, why should the different types persist? Why should there not be only one type of secondary school?

*Technical and Vocational Training as Post-Secondary*

Historically, technical and vocational education has been part of either primary or secondary education. This is manifested through either the establishment of technical and vocational schools, or through technical or vocational programs in schools offering a diversified curriculum. For a wide variety of reasons these arrangements for providing technical and vocational training have proven less than satisfactory. The inability of schools to keep abreast of changing technology, the high capital outlay involved, the resistance of many parents to this type of education, and the practice of schools to channel the less able students into these options were all contributing factors.

An alternative way of organizing such education is to treat it as post-secondary and articulate the training more with the world of work than with the school system. The Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART) Trust was established as a statutory corporation by an Act of the Jamaican Parliament in 1982 to provide out-of-school training in basic skills and to monitor and coordinate non-formal skills training projects. The major functions of the Trust are:

- Financing, developing, and monitoring employment training schemes.
- Providing employment opportunities.
- Helping to place persons seeking employment.
- Promoting employment projects.
- Developing and maintaining standards in the various areas of vocational training.

The HEART Trust is funded through three main sources:

- Employers’ Contributions. All employers who have payroll of $86,000 per year are required by Law to contribute 3% to the Trust or to assist with on-the-job training of school graduates. This is the main source of income of the Trust.
• Grants and Loans. Several multilateral and bilateral agencies have contributed to the Trust through grants and some loans. Since 1982 the Trust has benefited from over J$24 million from this source.

• Subvention from the annual budget of government. The governance of the Trust is through a Board of Directors consisting of 20 members, 10 from the private sector and 10 from the public sector, appointed by the Minister of Education. The Board operates with the assistance of an Executive Committee, three Advisory Councils, and seven Management Committees dealing with different aspects of the work of the Trust.

The administration of the Trust consists of a Managing Director, a Deputy Managing Director, and eight Divisional Directors. HEART operates six major programs that can be briefly described as follows:

• The School Dropout Program. This is the earliest HEART program and is operated in conjunction with the private sector. It caters to school graduates between the ages of 17 and 20 with at least two GCE “O” level passes, or four passes in the Jamaica Schools Certificate, or their equivalent. Training is offered to these school graduates either through on-the-job placement in private sector firms or through classes organized by the Trust. These trainees are given an allowance while they are being trained. The training period varies between one to three years. The firms have the option of either offering such training to the school graduates or paying the 3% contribution to the Trust. HEART helps the firms by providing training guidelines and workbooks in 25 occupational areas.

• The Academy Program. Entry to this program is restricted to youths between the ages of 17 and 25 who have attained a minimum academic standard of at least 9th Grade English and Mathematics. Priorities in deciding the particular skills to be taught in the Academies is based largely on information and guidance from the Planning Institute of Jamaica concerning the projected numbers of job vacancies in the labor market. There is great flexibility in the numbers recruited as they relate to the changing circumstances of the economy and the demand for skilled and semiskilled manpower. The vocational areas in which the Academies offer training are: Commerce, Construction, Agriculture, Resort, Cosmetology, Small Business, and Training for Security Careers.

• Industrial Training. Currently HEART offers training for both the garment and the data entry industries. Training for the garment industry is largely focused on the needs of factories engaged in the 807 Program. Specialized short- and long-term courses are offered. Short-term courses vary in duration between three to fourteen weeks. Longer term courses are offered over periods up to 12 months. Courses are offered in such areas as Basic Sewing Ma-
chine Operating, Basic Grading, Sewing Machine Mechanics, Garment Construction Technology, and Machine Embroidery. Trainees in this area are given an allowance.

- Craft/Apparel and Sewn Products Program. HEART, working in conjunction with Things Jamaica, has instituted a national craft development program aimed at tapping the creative talents of Jamaicans engaged in local craft production. The program is geared to improve Jamaica's potential as a producer of quality craft items especially for the tourism and the export market. The program offers training in a wide variety of crafts.

- The Solidarity Program. This program is designed to cater to the needs of unemployed youths who will neither go on to further training nor be able to find gainful employment. This program focuses on youths between the ages of 18 and 30 years with minimal academic achievement, little or no training or skills, school graduates, and HEART graduates with no access to funding to undertake self-employment projects. Solidarity provides opportunities for them to establish small business ventures either on an individual basis or in groups. Funding is provided through the Self-Start Fund, a Government Agency funded by USAID. Self Start works through banks, credit unions, and other approved lending agencies. An independent committee vets applications for project loans and extensive work is done by Solidarity Staff to ensure the feasibility of the proposed projects. Low interest loans are linked to basic business training, supervision of project management by individual and group sponsors within the community, and by Solidarity officers. A special Marketing Unit helps project operators with sales and processing orders. Women receive special encouragement through a component sponsored by the Dutch Government.

- Learning for Earning Activity Project (LEAP). This project was designed to enrich the curriculum of selected urban schools serving marginal communities and to provide income earning opportunities to students whose chronic absence from school was related to economic factors. Funding for this project came from the Organization of American States (OAS). More recently the project was expanded to income street children and UNDP provided a Center for this aspect of the project.

Since its establishment in 1982 well over 100,000 youths have benefited from vocational training offered through HEART. Knight (1992) in a study of the HEART program found that it placed more emphasis on training than on employment, although the latter function is specified in the HEART Act. She also found that when the employment rates of HEART graduates and that of youths in the wider society were compared, it was found that there was no difference in the employment rate. This included
the period of increased youth employment between 1982 and 1987. Knight concluded that this finding supported to view that training may have a long-term but not a short-term effect in youth employment.

Knight reported that the major factors that appeared to be related to youth unemployment were:

- Sluggishness in the economy resulting in insufficient job opportunities. Indeed, without a healthy growing economy youth unemployment problems are insoluble.
- A lack of equality between the skills possessed by youths and the requirements of the available jobs. Some of the skills training offered in both formal and non-formal education are unrelated to the current demands for skills in the labor market.
- Frictional factors of location, communications etc. that impede the match-up between persons, skills, and jobs.
- The unattractiveness of some job opportunities as perceived by youths.
- The high cost of labor in relation to alternative inputs of production.

An important observation from Knight’s study is that even where vocational training is provided in relation to the working world, there are other critical factors, apart from the training provided, that have important consequences for youth employment, a primary goal of the training. Training cannot substitute for jobs.

HEART represents an important reform of the structural adjustment period that establishes a new paradigm for vocational training. At the same time, the school system persists with technical and vocational schools and programs. Probably the reform is too recent to dictate rationalization.

New Directions in Tertiary Education

While only about 5% of the 18 to 24 years age cohort in the Jamaica receive tertiary level education, there are close to one hundred institutions, private and public, that cater to this rather small population. Historically, colleges have been characterized by their small size and single discipline focus. Three major trends have marked the development of tertiary institutions over the last twenty years:

- The movement toward the creation of larger institutions, mainly through the amalgamation of several small colleges and the establishment of community colleges.
- The diversification of program offerings so that colleges move from being single discipline to being multi-disciplinary in scope and orientation.
The raising of the level of programs offered to include degrees in addition to the traditional certificates and diplomas that these colleges have historically offered.

If tertiary institutions in Jamaica were to be classified by size, type as defined by being single or multi-disciplinary, and level of qualification awarded, colleges could be properly placed in each cell of the matrix. Any framework developed to address the needs of the tertiary sector must be sufficiently broad-based to accommodate this wide range of developmental stages that are to be found among the colleges.

Given the broad base of primary and secondary education that exists in Jamaica, the current small size of the tertiary sector and the increasing difficulties of Jamaicans to study abroad due to the continuing devaluation of the currency, it can be reasonably expected that the demand for tertiary education locally will increase.

Faced with this reality in 1987 the Government established the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). The UCJ is mandated and empowered to guide and direct the development of tertiary education. It will exercise its role by doing the following:

- Register and monitor all tertiary institutions and programs operating in Jamaica.
- Accredit the programs of such private and public institutions that are authorized to offer certificates, diplomas and degrees provided they satisfy the criteria and standards prescribed by the Council.
- Award certificates, diplomas and degrees where institutions, public or private, make such requests to the Council and observe the procedures and comply with the standards so prescribed.
- Offer developmental and technical assistance to tertiary institutions in the development of their programs and in the operations of their institutions.

The general understanding is that the UCJ will work with the University of the West Indies to reduce duplication, ensure cooperation, enhance collaboration, and maximize the use of resources in the delivery of tertiary education. By bringing all tertiary education institutions in Jamaica under a single umbrella, the UCJ, articulation with the regional university is facilitated and enhanced.

Reforms Related to Financing Education

There is no other area of education that has been more profoundly affected by structural adjustment than the financing of education. In the populist period free secondary and tertiary education was introduced in the 1973. However, shrinking public expenditure could not leave the edu-
cation budget untouched seeing that by 1979 education constituted 21% of total recurrent expenditure.

The sequence of reform in the public financing of education can be set out as follows:

First, there was the discontinuation of certain policies established in the populist period. These included the provision of school uniforms for primary school students and boarding grants for university students.

Second, there was the introduction of new taxation specifically related to education. These were the employers’ payroll, tax of 3% for HEART, and the employee’s Education Tax, of 2% of gross wages or salaries. While the use of the payroll tax was prescribed by law as being exclusively for HEART, there was no such similar stipulation for the use of the Education Tax.

Third, there was the reintroduction of fees at the tertiary and secondary levels. Fees were introduced for university and CAST students in 1986 and for secondary students through cost-sharing in 1993.

Fourth, private sector and community support for financing schools has come through the Adopt-a-School program and other such partnership programs.

The point to note is that despite the Government’s policies to: increase its revenue collection base by introducing taxes specially related to financing education, secure greater support for education for communities and private sector, and re-introduce user fees, the public provision for education in the 1990s is substantially less in real terms than it was at the beginning of structural adjustment. The decline is noticeable whether expenditure is judged from the perspective of public allocation to education, unit costs, or relative to macro-economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The decline over the last decade is illustrated by the data in Table 1.

The tax paying public has raised the question of how many times should they pay for education? They pay through regular taxes including income tax, the general consumption tax, and indirect taxes. They pay again through the Employers’ Payroll and the Employees’ Education Taxes. They pay yet again through user fees charged by the schools. They are asked to contribute yet again through voluntary fund raising activities of school and the supporting organizations. Yet both the quantum and quality of the education provision is far less than it was when only regular taxation financed the entire education budget.

It would appear that with the complicity of the international donor community, the Government has exploited the peoples’ commitment to
education and has imposed reforms that have increased public revenue bases and decreased government expenditure more than they have benefited education. There can be no doubt that in the structural adjustment period, education has been exploited and left unprotected at the same time that public utilities have been protected, external tariffs have been lowered to facilitated free trade, and debt repayment has been guaranteed.

Another important point to note is that during the period of structural adjustment, Government came to rely almost exclusively on the international donor community for any capital input into the education system. Externally funded projects became the vehicles of capital investment in education. The donor agencies through the conditionalities attached to the loans and grants became the de facto policy makers in Jamaican education.
Sovereignty in Jamaican education was virtually surrendered, or only accorded rhetorical respect, over the last eighteen years. When it is considered that total input of the donor community into the Jamaican education system has been no more than 5% of total expenditure, then the remarkable phenomenon has occurred whereby in a free market economy a 5% outlay has attracted controlling interest in an enterprise.

**Bottom-up Reforms in the 1990s**

The introduction of computer-assisted instruction in primary and secondary schools in Jamaica in the 1990s represents an instance of bottom-up educational reform. In 1990, neither the Ministry of Education nor the international donor agencies, on which the Ministry relies for capital development, placed any priority on introducing computers in primary and secondary schools in Jamaica for the purpose of improving instruction and achievement. While both the Ministry and the international agencies recognized the potential of CAI for different reasons, neither saw it as a feasible option. However, the success of the efforts of schools and their communities, the Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation, and the private sector in mounting this reform, on their own initiative, has made it impossible for the Government and the international agencies to ignore the energy and excitement that was generated.

The sequence in the evolution of the reform was as follows:

- The genesis of the reform was the initiative of ten secondary schools, in the first half of the 1980s, to attempt to produce school graduates who could pursue careers in the emerging occupational specialization in the computer industry. The intention to meet this new demand of the labor market exceeded the human, physical, and financial resources of the schools.

- In 1989 the Jamaica Computer Society, concerned with the limited supply of computer professionals in relation to the demand, decided to offer assistance to secondary schools in order to increase supply and improve the quality of the preparation. The Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation (JCSEF), was established in 1990 as the instrument of assistance.

- In mobilizing private sector and government support, the JCSEF had to broaden the scope of its objectives to include improving standards in English and Mathematics of secondary school graduates through the use of computer-assisted instruction (CAI), in secondary schools. The Jamaica 2000 project was launched in 1992 with the objective of placing fully equipped computer labs in all secondary and tertiary institutions by the year 2000 as a means of both producing computer professionals as well as improving general educational standards.
The formula for financing the project was that schools and their communities would provide the labs plus 20% of the cost of the equipment, while the Business Partners and HEART, a Government statutory body, would each provide 40% of the cost of the equipment.

In 1994, a think tank sponsored by the Business Partners, a private sector group, recommended experimentation with CAI in small rural primary schools as a means of both improving the quality of primary education as well as providing a boost for these schools and their communities. This resulted in a project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), mounted in 20 rural primary schools in four clusters, each cluster being related to a secondary school or teachers college in the Jamaica 2000 project.

By 1997 a new phase of the reform began to emerge, namely, the use of information technology in knowledge production. This involved the use of productivity tools by teachers and students to write, publish, solve problems, and create data bases for use by others; the use of multimedia for research and enrichment; and the use of network capabilities to research and share information. This objective and related content emerged among the more proficient users of the computer labs in the schools. Support to the JCSEF in this phase came from the World Bank through the Info Dev Project.

A Ministry of Education survey of schools in April 1996 found that computer labs had been installed in 101 of the 161 public secondary schools and tertiary institutions in the country. Of this total, 71 were part of the Jamaica 2000 project, while 30 schools and colleges had installed labs and introduced CAI on their own. Miller (1996) found that there were 18 schools that had constructed their labs and raised their 20% contribution but was on a JCSEF waiting list, since the private sector contribution was still to be raised. The target of putting labs in all secondary and tertiary institutions by the year 2000 appear well in sight.

There is clear evidence of great enthusiasm and undisguised pride in schools and communities in the implementation of the reform. There is also some evidence of improvement in education quality in English and Mathematics performance. One small rural school raised the level of functional literacy of its school leavers from 50% in 1995 to 80% in 1996 (Miller 1996).

The main challenges facing the evolution and implementation of this reforms can be listed as follows:
The training of teachers to fully utilize the potential of CAI in their classes.

- Resolving the problems attendant on the disproportion of class size to lab size in the schools.
- Technical support to facilitate full use of the labs and also to reduce down time.
- The inadequate size of the project implementation capacity of the JCSEF compared to the scope of the work in the schools.
- Holding in constructive tension the varying vested interests and alliances among the actors and stakeholders in the reform.
- A more active role for the Ministry of Education without its assumption of a regulatory role which could dampen enthusiasm and kill initiative.

The case of bottom-up reform in Jamaican education is best explained in terms of competing and cooperating vested interests and the trade-offs negotiated as schools and their supporters attempt to modernize Jamaican education through the most widely accepted symbol of modernization, the computer.

Concluding Discussion

When education reforms in the post-war period are examined in their entirety, several observations appear warranted. These can be summarized briefly as follows:

- The educational reforms in the immediate post-war and post-independent period were predicated on positive values: nation building, nationalism, establishing democracy, and expanding and equalizing opportunity. As such, these reforms were associated with optimism, hope, idealism, and enthusiasm. This is to be contrasted with the reforms of the era of structural adjustment that have been predicated on the basis of cost reduction and retrenchment. While some of these reforms have been innovative and far-sighted they have not been able to attract the same quality participation or commitment. It is the absence of a positive philosophy, or noble vision, that has been the bane of this latter period.

- The Jamaican society and the educational system are currently in a state of flux. Retrenchment and retrogression occurred before the mission of the post-independent period could have been said to have been accomplished. While substantial progress had been made in the era of populist government, the legacy of the colonial era of social inequality and marginalization of the majority of the citizens from the mainstream of the socioeconomic life of the country had not been eradicated. The retrenchment and social retrogress-
sion of the structural adjustment era therefore came as a betrayal of trust. Further, it provided the opportunity for the dominant minority groups in the society to reimpose their hegemony over the marginal majority.

To those who cling to the promise of the post-war and post-independent period, structural adjustment is but a temporary setback. Their hope is for recovery, the expectation of which has remained unfulfilled for at least a decade and a half. To some others, the promise of independence has been betrayed. While they waited, others helped themselves and now there is nothing left. To still others, the current situation presents the opportunity to return to the state of affairs that existed prior to adult suffrage and representative government. To a minority, structural adjustment presents fresh opportunities that must be grasped with both hands. In this melange of perceptions and intentions, clear leadership and directions are yet to emerge.

- While the development of the post-war and post-independence periods advanced, enhanced, and strengthened democracy, the outcomes of the period of structural adjustment could undermine democracy in the country in the long term. Already voter apathy, distrust of political parties, and disillusionment with politicians is widespread. The elected representatives of the majority political parties, voted into office on popular mandates, have repeatedly proven impotent against the terms of trade dictated by powerful nations, the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund, and the manipulation of monetary instruments by the wealthy elite within the country. Electoral mandates have lost credibility. Historically, education has been the means of escape from persistent poverty and socioeconomic marginalization. Now that the capacity of the education system to provide upward social mobility is being undermined by increasing its cost and accessibility, many youths, especially males, are turning to illegitimate means of prosecuting their interests. The rise in crimes against property and persons is clear evidence of this trend. The corruption of the political machinery, through the infiltration of criminal element’s manipulation of the electoral process, is yet another worrying sign.

- While there are those who advocate private enterprise and the free market as major pillars of future progress, the market system as it has developed internationally has not yet demonstrated the ethical base or the social commitment required to address and resolve these social issues. Reforms that propose the further privatization of education have not taken root in Jamaica. This is probably because of Jamaica’s long history of private education and its tendency only to serve the interests of those who can pay.
The point to note that many of the internationally popular reforms—decentralization, school based management, parental choice of the schools their children should attend, community support for schools, the maximum use of the school plant, and the reduction of tertiary education to provide broad based primary and secondary education—have long been part of the Jamaican education system. The present state of Jamaican education remains the same despite these reforms.

- Partnership involving professional associations, the private sectors, communities and the Government appears to hold some promise as exemplified by the bottom-up reforms that have introduced computer assisted instruction into schools and colleges. The fact that in less than a decade a newly formed NGO could lead a national reform process appears to indicate room for fundamental change within the Jamaican education system.

- Currently, a multiplicity of intentions are contending within the Jamaican education system and the society. Old patterns are persisting while new forms are emerging. Which will prevail depends on the alliances and coalitions that are formed.

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