12 Caribbean Regionalism, Education and Marginality

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In discussing the regional dimension in the Caribbean as it affects educational provision and operation, Errol Miller concentrates on the issue of marginality. Reference was made to this condition in several of the papers presented to the Pan-Commonwealth Meeting in Mauritius on Educational Development in the Small States of the Commonwealth (1985), where size, isolation and dependence were primary themes. For Miller, these defining characteristics are manifestations of the more basic condition of marginality.

After discussing the general notion of marginality Miller considers its educational implications, and the context of political change in the region over the past forty years. In particular, he examines the quantitative increase of educational provision and finds it lacking in respect of tackling the real problems of the mass of the Caribbean people. He finds that the particular problems of smallness have not been identified or addressed by those formulating policy and plans. There is, however, a considerable educational capacity within the region, but this has not addressed the task with sufficient radicalism. The University of the West Indies, having undergone an organisational reform may be becoming less regional, but he feels that the Caribbean Examinations Council still operates in this dimension.

There have also been important region-wide projects which have demonstrated the value of regional co-operation, especially to the smaller states.

Errol Miller sees the Caribbean 'at the crossroads', with education needing to be 'separated from partisan and insular politics'. In short, regional co-operation is imperative.

The context of Caribbean marginality

In the world community of nations small states are located on the periphery of power, status and wealth. They are unable to influence global outcomes so that these are consistent with their own interests. Their marginality has to be seen not only in terms of the variables mentioned above, but also in the culture that has emerged among the peoples of the region, which is an amalgam of European, Asian and African cultures. The locational and cultural marginality are closely related, and as power and economic relationships have changed, so too have values and customs. For example, Miami has replaced London as the cultural capital of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The peoples of the Caribbean have never accepted their marginality, and, as a result, this became a great source and motive for striving. One of the great hopes of political independence was the breaking away from the margin - both internally and externally. Similarly, the trend towards regional co-operation seemed to stem from increasing recognition that if these mini- or micro-states kept operating alone they were unlikely to achieve that break. Regional economic and political co-operation appear to offer greater possibilities of a future different from their historical position of marginality.

Even though Caribbean societies have been marginalised in an international context, there were certain sections of the population, mainly the white ruling class, who have benefited from this relationship. However, the blacks, at first through slavery, and the Indians through indentureship, were exploited by the system and became the marginalised sections of the population within these societies.

Since the granting of adult suffrage in the mid-1940s, the ethnic composition of the ruling class has changed somewhat but its basic relationships with marginalised groups have remained the same. Hence Caribbean societies are still marked by wide disparities in wealth, power and influence. Further, while the ruling class now has members from all social backgrounds there are still audible racial undertones in its relationship with the power sections of these societies. So there has not been that much change in attitudes and relationships between the current ruling elite and the marginalised groups, independence notwithstanding. The ruling class has partly sustained itself not only by virtue of wealth, status and influence but also by its relationship to the external powers of which the Caribbean states have become satellites.

Education and marginality

Education in the West Indies has always been caught up in the conflicts that have existed between the social segments of society. Originally the ruling class attempted to provide agricultural and vocational education for the masses with the object of keeping them in a subservient role, while seeking a more liberal education for their own children. But despite the efforts of the ruling groups to use education as a means of reproducing the existing social order, the marginalised masses saw it as an instrument of upward mobility by which hopefully they could improve their socio-economic position.

The educational systems have continued to reflect this history. The stamp of the past is easily discernible in both educational process and product. The educational system fosters a mentality which seeks authority outside of itself, is more likely to imitate than invent but at the same time is ruggedly individualistic with each person seeking his or her own salvation. These contrasting characteristics have led to numerous paradoxes. The most inventive and creative elements of Caribbean societies have often been the least educated. The most educated are often uncomfortable with and irrelevant to the main stream of local concerns and strivings, while the educational process

itself usually strips the individual of the distinctiveness of his/her Caribbean or national identity.

Education is still embraced by the mass of Caribbean peoples as an instrument of economic liberation and social mobility, a centrepiece of hope for which many sacrifices are made. Caught in this conflict of past history, present reality and future hopes some have taken the position that education has raised expectations which cannot be satisfied and as such is dysfunctional. A contrary view is that children and parents with expectations of the future created by circumstances other than education, view education as a legitimate means of achieving their goals. Should education not satisfy these expectations, other means will be found.

Political changes since 1945

In the post-war period two fundamental political changes have taken place in Commonwealth Caribbean societies. First there was the granting of adult suffrage which shifted some amount of political power to the marginalised groups and meant that their numerical superiority could be used legitimately through the political process to serve their interests. But while this shift in relationship has led to the democratisation of opportunities in many areas, including education, it would appear that neither the rate nor the quantum of change has been to the satisfaction of the marginalised groups, judged by the regularity with which governments have been changed in Caribbean states.

The second fundamental change was the achievement of political sovereignty by several Commonwealth Caribbean states. This has in effect changed the external political relationships of these states making them, in name at least, masters of their own destiny. Given both their marginal status in the world community as well as their marginal history, during the period since political independence these Caribbean states have shown a marked tendency to move toward a satellite relationship with existing world super-powers. Largely because of its geographical location as well as the similarities

between the United States and the Caribbean in terms of common Anglo-history and culture, Caribbean states increasingly are being drawn into a satellite relationship with the United States. The relationship that is beginning to consolidate bears many characteristics of the former relationship with Britain except that there is no longer a British Governor but an American Ambassador.

As a result the bilateral relationship that is coming into existence between each Caribbean state and the United States, seems to play a more dominant role than the multilateral relationships between the Caribbean states as a whole and the metropolitan powers. This is most clearly seen in the Caribbean Basin Initiative currently operative in the region in which each Caribbean state is competing independently in the American market without any regional co-operation.

Overall it could be said that Caribbean states have been moving from a colonial relationship with Britain to a satellite relationship with the United States of America with a brief interlude of so-called independence, and that their position of marginality both in terms of the external relationship and the plight of the poor in these countries has remained fundamentally the same.

Quantitative increases in education

Part of the reason for this state of affairs could be attributed to the fact that in both the post-war and post-independence periods educational reforms have concentrated on quantitative issues. In this regard the results have been impressive. Caribbean states have made significant progress in putting almost every child of primary school age in school, even if in some states their attendance is not as regular as would be desired. There has been significant expansion of secondary education. Some states have achieved the position where almost one hundred per cent of their 12-17 year age cohort are provided places in some type of secondary school. The larger Caribbean states have been able to achieve almost a fully trained primary teaching force, from a situation in the colonial period where less than fifty per cent of primary teachers were professionally trained. In addition, in the

post-war period there has been the establishment of university education within the region and significant expansion of tertiary education in each state. Taken as a whole the quantitative increases in educational provision in the post-independence period in Caribbean states are nothing short of spectacular. The major weakness, however, is that these increases have merely expanded the institutional provisions that were consistent with a colonial society while leaving the fundamental relationships within the societies basically unchanged. In a number of instances it would appear that the quantitative increases have made matters worse and basic problems more difficult to solve in the future.

It is in this context that one should assess international assistance through various multilateral and bilateral agencies. Their intervention in Caribbean states has not been neutral. While almost every project impacting on the educational system in expanding educational provision has been mooted as giving assistance to the poor, that is, the marginalised groups, those inputs do not appear to have served the interest of these groups despite the stated intentions. By and large these additional inputs simply helped to maintain the status quo. They have served the interests of the ruling minority.

An example of this is junior secondary schools built, with World Bank assistance, in almost all Caribbean states. They represent the largest single capital investment in the history of Caribbean education. Notwithstanding, these schools are not accepted by Caribbean societies, including the marginal groups, as bona fide secondary schools. Social demand is still for the traditional high schools of colonial fame. In other words, the institutions financed by the World Bank to bring about social equality and increased opportunity for the marginalised groups are not perceived by these groups to have served their interests and given half a chance they would remove their children from these schools and send them to the schools offering a liberal education that have their origins in colonial times. Several Caribbean states are now in the process of reforming junior secondary schools into more socially acceptable alternatives.

The sad benediction to this development is that the funds

borrowed to establish these schools are now part of the national debt being paid for by the people who do not accept them as serving their interest. By and large, local politicians and educational planners as well as external lending agencies and foreign consultants have prescribed for the marginalised groups that which they have in their wisdom conceived to be in the interest of the marginalised groups. The marginalised groups have not agreed.

Major issues

The major concern in the provision of education in the West Indies over the last twenty to thirty years has been to prepare an adequate supply of trained manpower to fit into the various job openings that might become available in existing occupational structures. As a result of this narrow focus, the educational system has left unaddressed major issues confronting small independent states.

One such issue is the nature and future of small states in the current world community of nations. This has been regarded largely as a political question and the subject of foreign policy. Failure to address such an essential question within Caribbean education would seem to leave open the possibility for the Commonwealth Caribbean states to follow their old colonial relationships under the aegis of one of the existing superpowers of the world. Basic questions concerning the marginality of these states and of the history of local elites forming linkages with external powers in order to perpetuate themselves to the disadvantage of the marginalised groups are left unaddressed. The fact that Caribbean peoples have never accepted their marginality and have constantly sought to overcome it in some way, often against the opposition of the ruling minorities whose interest it is to keep the marginal internal and external relations intact, is not addressed in any constructive way at any level of the educational system. Neither is any consideration given to harnessing the motives and the energies inherent in the position of marginality in the power sections of these societies. This would have the potential of unleashing creative energies and efforts, in fashioning new institutions and new forms of

provision in respect of these expectations and ambitions. Rather, the educational system seems directed more towards suppressing these energies and neutralising creativity.

A second major issue is the wide social disparities existing in many Caribbean societies. While certain concessions have been made, the recent economic crisis within the world community and the Caribbean, is reversing many of these gains and re-emphasising the deep divisions which have characteristically defined Caribbean societies. For example, in Jamaica, as a budget saving device, government has closed one teachers' college and one teacher education department of a community college despite the fact that the teacher-pupil ratio for primary education currently stands at one teacher to fifty-five students. By imposing this ratio the government has artificially created an over-supply of teachers and acting in accordance with this artificial situation it has proceeded to close teacher training institutions. Following this same pattern it has closed seven primary and all-age schools in remote rural areas of Jamaica in communities where there is no public transportation and where the nearest schools are at least three or four miles away. These communities have been traditionally those in which there has been the least participation in education and the highest rates of illiteracy. The closure of schools offering primary education in these areas is bound to have an adverse effect on literacy levels in some of the poorest and least educated rural communities in Jamaica. Certainly such measures are bound to increase the disparities between social groups in the society as well as between urban and rural areas.

One is not saying that the Jamaican government has willingly and enthusiastically carried out this reduction in educational services. It is operating within the context of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement which requires reduction in public expenditure including education. In carrying out these reductions the government appears to be in fact acting against its own best knowledge. This makes no difference to the consequences.

The overriding point here is that education has not been harnessed systematically to serve the ends of social integration and of

bridging the historic social divisions. Given the diversity of origin of Caribbean peoples and deep social divisions of the societies, the educational system must play the role of social broker in nation building. To a large extent this function of the education system and of the educational process has been neglected.

Another basic question is that of sovereignty. Why would a sovereign state act against its own best knowledge in implementing reductions in education? Caribbean states are certainly not in the position to exercise economic sovereignty. The vast majority of Caribbean economies are dependent economies. This means that the linkage of education to the economic system by definition makes it also subject to the same dependency relationships. In several Caribbean states capital development in education comes through foreign loans and grants. Increasingly, through the activities of the IMF, recurrent expenditures are also coming under external direction. Because education constitutes almost twenty per cent of the recurrent budget of most Caribbean states it is a significant item of recurrent expenditure that cannot escape fiscal policies that include reduction of public expenditure and particularly reduction in social services. The harsh reality is that several Caribbean states now have less effective control in determining directions in their educational system as independent states than they had when they were colonies. The essential question is whether education should be one of the areas of dependence as is the economy, or whether it should be an area of sovereignty. Or even more important, can one have sovereignty in the area of education in the situation of a dependent economy?

Another question is whether it is feasible for each Caribbean state to exercise absolute sovereignty in education without reference to any other country whatsoever? It is quite clear that no Caribbean country, including the larger countries of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados and The Bahamas, is in a position in which it can be totally self-sufficient and self-reliant in educational provision. It is precisely at this point that the possibility of regional interdependence emerges not only as a desirable direction but rather as an absolutely essential one. The common history, common current

circumstances would suggest a common future. All of these would seem to suggest regional interdependence among sovereign Caribbean states as an absolute necessity.

Regional capacity in education

Over the last thirty years, particularly through the development of the University of the West Indies, the Caribbean has developed an indigenous capacity for both the maintenance and development of educational systems of the region. The region as a whole has moved away from a situation in which locals occupied subordinate positions while expatriates occupied the top positions. Over the last thirty years the Caribbean has developed a cadre of suitably trained nationals that currently man all levels of the educational system. This is true of all the leadership positions, in schools, as well as in ministries of education. In addition, again mainly through the University of the West Indies, a regional research capacity has been developed which has given the West Indies the capability of studying perennial problems and identifying feasible solutions.

The major criticism that can be levelled at local educators - planners, curriculum developers, measurement specialists, technology specialists, administrators at both the central and institutional levels and teacher educators - is that the substitution of local personnel for expatriate personnel has not necessarily led to any fundamentally different strategies, approaches, outlooks or practices. By and large, these highly trained Caribbean nations have been largely imitative in their practices. They have worked within paradigms that have been borrowed from outside of the region. When this is taken in context it may seem understandable that in the first decades, in which the major task was the transfer of responsibility from expatriates to locals, the first actions of the locals would be to justify their own capabilities and this could only be done within existing standards which were externally defined. From this point of view, it can be explained as an expected first response.

Education by definition is both culture and society specific. Not many universals have emerged in any area. It still admits of the impromptu, the virtuoso performance, use of the peculiar circumstance and the intuitive understanding of the performers, although these performers may draw on findings and experiences that can be objectively verified in different locations. The specific challenge that therefore exists now for Caribbean educators is one for the development of innovative and creative responses within the educational system worked out on the basis of first principles applied to particular problems facing our educational systems and not necessarily based on responses elsewhere. Secondly, the proper use of local talent through co-operative sharing and pooling of efforts. As one travels through the Caribbean region and speaks to educators working in the same area one finds an absence of knowledge of what each is doing. This insularity leads to isolation and needless repetition. Mechanisms are needed to ensure regional pooling and sharing of expertise to the common good of all. It is necessary at this point to note the regional mechanisms that have been developing for regional co-operation in education.

The University of the West Indies

First and foremost among the mechanisms that have been established for regional co-operation is the University of the West Indies. This institution has made an inestimable contribution to regional co-operation not only in terms of being an institution which has a presence throughout the region, but also by virtue of the fact that it has brought people from the different Caribbean territories together in a single place providing them with a shared experience. The recent restructuring of the university has focused on the needs of the campus territories, Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica, and the devolving of financial responsibility to the campus governments. This will make the university on its various campuses less regional in focus. The future of the university seems to rest along the lines of the integration of other tertiary institutions, which currently are all national enterprises,

into a college system under the umbrella of the University of the West Indies' academic mechanism. CARICOM Ministers of Education have already taken a policy decision to open their tertiary institutions to nationals from the various countries. While this has been more a statement of principle, than a corner-stone of action, it underscores the underlying principle that in tertiary and higher education, in order to create the critical mass necessary for the development of viable programmes at this level, it is necessary for Caribbean countries to pool their several efforts.

Mico College in Jamaica, in developing its Special Education Programme, now accepts students from the region and in so doing is currently serving the needs of the entire Caribbean. This has been through the instrumentality of the Government of the Netherlands which has been providing scholarship funds for Caribbean students to prepare themselves for work in the field of Special Education. The same is true of programmes at the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST) in Jamaica which is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in providing scholarships for students from other Caribbean territories. The Polytechnic in Barbados as well as the John Donaldson Institute in Trinidad are other tertiary level institutions which cater to students outside of their national borders.

The Caribbean Examinations Council

A second major development in regional co-operation is that of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), set up by governments to be the external examining body for secondary education in the region. The Caribbean Examinations Council which started to offer subjects in 1979, will by the 1990s be offering all subjects at 'O' level and also subjects at 'A' level. It has been taking over from Cambridge and London Universities examining functions in the Caribbean region. By assuming these functions as mandated by Caribbean governments, CXC has *de facto* taken over curriculum development in secondary education in the Caribbean by virtue of the fact that the external examinations prescribed the syllabuses for secondary schools.

While each national government will continue to determine access to secondary education, CXC will by its examinations and syllabuses determine its content. CXC now takes over the responsibility as a regional mechanism not only to provide syllabuses with Caribbean examples but also to lay the foundations for Caribbean peoples to understand their own societies as well as to develop a world view. While CXC's first efforts have been concentrated on subjects, it still has the challenge of developing an integrated curriculum with themes running across the various subject areas.

The UWI/USAID Primary Project

An interesting development of the 1980s was the UWI/USAID Primary Education Project. USAID, using the University of the West Indies as a regional intermediary, collaborated with ten Caribbean governments in the development of primary curricula, including teacher and student materials in four subject areas: English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The Project involved Barbados, the Windward and Leeward Islands and Belize. Through this project, involving Caribbean personnel only, a common primary curriculum was developed in the four subject areas mentioned. A number of aspects of this project are worthy of note. Firstly, it was funded by USAID but did not involve the use of US personnel or methodologies. In other words, the project did not bear the dependency stamp of US economic policy in the Caribbean region. This project allowed Caribbean personnel to carry out the research, development and innovations prescribed by the project. Secondly, it involved UWI as the regional intermediary linking the various territories. The Primary Project was a sub-project of a larger operation. Other components of this major project were a secondary sub-project involving CXC as the regional intermediary, as well as the Caribbean Development Bank as a regional intermediary in the development of primary school buildings. In other words, what this project proved was that there were regional bodies in various fields with the capacity to mount successfully large scale programmes of regional co-operation in education. The three sub-projects were

carried out within the specified time frame and budget and accomplished the stated objectives. In other words, the overall project tested and proved the capability of regional co-operation mechanisms currently existing in the region.

In addition, it pioneered a successful model of linking several sovereign governments, with an international donor agency through regional intermediaries of proven capability. The third aspect of this project is that it pioneered co-operation in primary education. This has been an area in which there has been a great deal of insularity and isolation in the past. For the first time, regional governments were co-operating and pooling their efforts in tackling problems at this level of the education system. The economies of scale that can be achievel by having common curricula at this level are obvious. This is especially important where parents have to provide books so necessary for the delivery of basic education. With the escalation in the cost of books and generally depressed economies, it is imperative that costs be kept as low as possible.

The second important aspect of the project is that when one looks at many of the small systems, for example St Kitts with twenty-five primary schools, British Virgin Islands with fourteen schools, Montserrat with twelve schools, it is virtually impossible for these small systems to establish curriculum units in their several ministries capable of maintaining curricula at this level. By sharing regional expertise through a curriculum development unit located in the University, it was possible to draw together an expert team of Caribbean nationals from different Caribbean territories who then composed a viable regional unit. Although this project is now over, the lessons learned are important and the challenges to Caribbean governments for continued co-operation in the possible emergence of a common primary curriculum in the region is clear. The benefits are enormous, the technology and the methodologies have been pioneered and proved successful, the rest is a matter of political will.

The Caribbean at the crossroads

Commonwealth Caribbean states approached nationhood along a federal path. Insularity defeated federation. The result was the establishment of twelve small nation states. After twenty years experience, Caribbean peoples are increasingly questioning the suitability of the nation state concept to Caribbean reality. There are voices now calling for a new federation.

While debate continues about the appropriate political framework, Commonwealth Caribbean countries have created regional structures to promote co-operation between them. These include CARICOM, the Caribbean Development Bank and co-operation in meteorological services. The University of the West Indies and the West Indies Cricket team existed before and survived the break up of federation. They remain focal points of Caribbean co-operation.

Nevertheless, Caribbean states are at the crossroads. Now that the euphoria of self-rule is over, the stark and harsh realities of internal and external relationships have to be faced, and basic questions have to be answered. These include: will these states continue to be satellites of powerful countries; is it the destiny of the Caribbean states to be the satellite of one or the other of the superpowers; how can these small states retain some autonomy in the world community? Answers to these questions have important implications for education because it has to do with how future generations are socialised and in addition, how the socialising patterns of the past can be reversed. In terms of internal social relationships the fundamental question is, how long will societies in the Caribbean continue to remain viable entities without dealing with the wider social disparities that currently exist in them?

It would appear that regional co-operation has a fundamental place and an important role to play in the future development of these small nation-states. Caribbean countries acting together can have a more significant input and impact on the world community than

acting singly. In addition, if Caribbean states were to pool their shared expertise and knowledge in an effort to work together, they would be better able to reduce the internal disparities within their societies, as well as being better equipped to deliver the services and provision required.

In all of this education has an important part to play in developing both the ethos and the understanding which must be the foundation of such co-operation. It requires that curricula at all levels focus on Caribbean content and on Caribbean unity. Caribbean peoples from their earliest ages need to be socialised to perceive a regional identity and to understand the necessity of regional co-operation. In other words, education has a pro-active role to play in the development of regional co-operation. Hence regional co-operation is both an end in itself and a means to an end.

One source of the inspiration in all of this has to be the West Indies Cricket team. Acting singly, not even the mighty Barbados may have been able to conquer the world on the cricket field. But acting together the pooled resources of the region are sufficient for the Caribbean to emerge in the world cricket community as a significant force.

A final issue deals with the interventions of external agencies. It goes without saying that interventions into any situation are seldom neutral. It would appear that most of the interventions, certainly within the last twenty to thirty years, have benefited those already in power or those with wealth, or those already with high social status rather than the marginalised and dispossessed. This is despite the fact that the vast majority of interventions are couched in the rhetoric of equality of opportunity with stated intentions to assist the marginalised. Part of the problem resides in the fact that these interventions have prescribed what was considered to be for the good of the marginalised. If the results to date are unintended then it needs to be pointed out that planning and development have ignored Caribbean history and social structure. In impacting on Caribbean realities more than economic knowledge is required. Meaningful impact requires an understanding of its sociology, its history and its psychology.

Narrowly conceived and hastily constructed actions responding to immediate needs seem destined to lead to frustration by the failure to achieve desired outcomes. Nowhere has this been more obvious than in the field of education.

The Caribbean in the latter half of the 1980s has a cadre of qualified professionals who are nationals of the region. They run the system on a day to day basis. In addition, they have inputs into plans and developments. The central question becomes this: to what extent will these professionals take responsibility for educational outcomes? To what extent will they derive their own mandate for action from the strivings of Caribbean peoples to overcome marginality, internal and external? To what extent will they serve the interests of the social and economic status quo and of foreign penetration of the society through the educational system? Will they be agents of insularity or of regional co-operation? Certainly these professionals have a significant part to play in the directions taken by Caribbean governments and peoples, for they are a critical part of the leadership, educational and otherwise, in the region.

The clear indication from the history and experience of Caribbean people is that education must contribute the following:

1 The promotion of values and views authenticated by and derived from Caribbean experiences and realities. This is essential if Caribbean culture is to move from being an amalgam of disparate elements dominated by external power relations, to being an integrated coherent whole.

2 Help to prevent the penetration and domination of Caribbean societies by the ideologies and cultures of the superpowers by the promotion of critical independent thought and confidence in indigenous patterns and practices.

3 Assistance to facilitate and enhance the empowerment of the marginalised groups through access to quality education at all levels.

If education is going to serve the end of regional autonomy and equality of opportunity then a few harsh realities must be faced. Firstly, superpowers cannot be expected to aid education which will diminish their penetration of Caribbean societies. External borrowing and aid cannot continue to be the source of financing educational developments. Caribbean peoples must again finance capital and recurrent costs in education. New formats for financing education need to be worked out, and new ways have to be found to combine individual fees with public voluntary contributions and government subvention so that educational development can be under local and regional control. If Caribbean peoples are to think for themselves and develop their own ideas and ideals then we must be prepared to pay for it.

Secondly, the educational mandate of politicians and professionals is the development of all the people not the maintenance of the status quo. If local resources are to be fully mobilised for the support of education then parents and students, after conducting their own rate of returns analysis, must be convinced that the sacrifice is worth it. A common failing of Caribbean societies is that the poor majority pays for the high living standards of the privileged minority. This pattern is not unknown in education in the past. Future educational developments must include restructuring of the educational system so that it meaningfully serves the marginalised groups in the various societies. Minority interests cannot continue to dominate institutional provision and access to opportunity at all levels.

Thirdly, for a period at least, education needs to be a matter of national and regional unity separated from partisan and insular politics. The broad support required, the fundamental changes that are necessary and the time that such transformation will take, make continuity a vital and essential element. In addition, consensus is indispensable. The educational developments envisaged here must survive changes of government, cabinet reshuffles and the transfer of bureaucrats.

While the prospects of national and regional unity on educational development are quite daunting, the desire of Caribbean peoples to be self-determining, authentic and respected in the world community runs so deep that it would appear that the political will for national and regional unity on educational development in service of these ends can be found.

The destiny of the small nation states which make up the Commonwealth Caribbean cannot merely be to become a pale imitation of the industrialised and technological advanced countries. To find their destiny the Caribbean must overcome the past, face the harsh truths of the present and chart bold new paths for the future. Such a scenario becomes much more possible if there is a strong and active co-operation among the many small nation states in the region.