Proyecto Estrategia Regional Docente
OREALC/UNESCO Santiago

NATIONAL REPORT ON TEACHERS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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November 2014

Executive Summary

This country report was prepared under a professional service agreement according to guidelines set by Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. It seeks to provide data about teachers' issues in early childhood education in Trinidad and Tobago, through a description and systematization of identified topics. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) which caters for the under 5 age group, is not compulsory, neither is it part of the formal education system, but steps are being made to provide universal access to quality ECCE services. According to the Education Act (1966) Primary education is compulsory from age 6.

The study seeks to capture critical data on teachers of children in the 0-6 age group, within two distinct cohorts: 0 to 3 and 4 to 6. Children of this age group are however served at various levels of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago – that is at Nurseries/Day Care facilities (children 0-2+), early childhood care and education (ECCE) centres (children 3 and 4 years) and Infant 1 of the primary school (children 5 to 6, sometimes to age 7). As such, the information has been extracted and presented in the context of their teaching and learning environments.

Education is high on the agenda of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) as each year the sector receives the highest budgetary allocation. This fiscal year - October 2013 to October 2014, education was allotted 24% - 9.820 Billion, way ahead of the other "Big Items" of National Security, Health, Housing and Works, that received 16%, 13%, 7% and 6% respectively.

An ECCE Division was established within the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2007, for the management of the ECCE sub-sector of the education system. This replaced the former Pre-School Unit that was set up in 1974. The Division was satisfactorily staffed and operationalized by 2008, however this no longer obtains. The terms of office came to an end for the contract staff in 2010/2011. Now, in August 2014, only 3 of the required 6 administrative staff members were hired. All other contract positions that were in place in 2008 were not renewed, namely: Director and Asst. Director, 5 programme assistants, 16 Family/Community Officers. 16 Quality Assurance Officers, and 8 curriculum officers. This has given rise to severe staff shortage which now minimises the strength of the monitoring and support structure that was formerly approved by the then government.

The above staffing scenario may have contributed to some extent, for the unavailability of current ECCE Data for:

- 0 to 3 cohort
- Quantum, age or sex of teachers specific to the 0 to 6 cohort.
- Years beyond 2011 when the last organised data collection exercise was undertaken at ECCE level

Enrolment according to the 0 – 6 age cohort

There are 25,461, 3 and 4 year old children enrolled at 894 ECCE Centres. (MOE ECCE Division, 2011) and 18,575 children, comprising 9.360 males and 9215 females in the 4 to 6 age group enrolled at 1007 primary schools (MOE Planning Division, 2009/2010). Note that there is a margin of error at the 5 yr. age group as the data captured the 5 year old at both ends - ECCE, and at the beginning of primary. The data provided categories of sex and age only at Primary school and within a total primary school setting from which the 5 and 6 year old cohort was extracted. For the ECCE sector, only total enrolment data was provided. Age and sex of children enrolled were not distinctly separated. Distinction of sex and age were also not identified or linked to the specific institution type beyond the broad category of government, government assisted or private in the case of the ECCE Centres and government and private in the case of the primary schools. Hence it is not possible to present such distinction of enrolment per age, sex and type of institution providing the service graphically.

At the ECCE level, there are only three (3) male teachers out of a population of 325 members of the teaching staff at government and government assisted centres. This is not documented, as categorised, but known to this consultant who is fully cognizant of the sector's teaching staff having worked extensively from the 1980's and up to 2012, with total staff members of government and government assisted centres and continue to teach the group at university level.

The original entry level qualifications to teach at an ECCE Centre were a certificate in early childhood and a minimum of three academic subjects, which later increased to five academic subjects. However, with the expansion of the ECCE sector, the entry requirement for the upgraded position of ECCE teacher is now a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.ED). No statistical data was available to quantify the number of ECCE personnel who now hold the Bachelor in Education Degree to qualify them for the position of ECCE teacher at this time (2014). 100% of the assistant teacher categories at ECCE Centre level possess the former basic entry level qualification of 5 academic subjects and the professional ECCE certification (MOE ECCE 2011). Similarly, teaching staff at primary level for the position of Assistant teacher also formerly required the 5 academic subject qualifications but the B.ED is also now needed to qualify as a primary school teacher. ECCE teaching staff members at government and government assisted Centre level are largely contract employees, while the teaching staff members at primary level are permanent employees (after a 2-year probation period on completion of degree training) with different terms and conditions of work and salary scales

Continuation education is not compulsory but incentive is there for nationals, via the Government Assistance Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme, which provides total tuition funding for undergraduate programmes and half tuition for post graduate programmes at Universities and other tertiary institutions. Teachers can voluntarily enrol in courses geared toward their professional development, thereby making them eligible for vertical promotion.

There are integrated national curricula guidelines for early childhood (both at ECCE and primary level) and training of teachers are aligned to the national agenda.

Lack of available documented data made this work difficult. While the consultant is aware of most of the required information having worked in the sector, no further documentation was done beyond 2011. Consequently, critical contemporary early childhood information is not included as there is no documentation to authenticate such information. An Appendix folder is attached to this work for reference in areas so identified

1.- Context Items

1.1 General characteristics of the Early Childhood Programme in Trinidad and Tobago.

According to Gordon and Browne (2008), the term Early Childhood (The child from birth to eight years), offers its own professional challenges.

Early: How do young children grow and learn best?
Childhood: How do children think, feel, and learn?

Within the Trinidad and Tobago context, the education of children from birth to eight years of age is catered for within different settings.

0 – 2: at Nurseries or Day Care facilities
3 – 4: at Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres (pre-schools)
5 – 6: at infant 1 and Infant 2 of the primary school
7 – 8: at standard 1 (locally referred to as First Standard or junior level of the primary school).

This study seeks to capture critical data on teachers of children in the 0-6 age group, within two distinct cohorts: 0 to 3 and 4 to 6. The distinction was specified within the Annex of the Terms of Reference for this work. It required information on the "population benefiting from the system age 0 to 6: 0 to 3 and 4 to 6…" pg.4. As such, the discussion will be presented within the context of their teaching and learning environments – that is at Nurseries/Day Care facilities, ECCE Centres and the Infant Department of the primary school

1.2 Goals and Conceptions of Education

The following excerpt from the Government of The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 'Standards for the Operation of all Schools' document (2005) aptly describes the education system of Trinidad and Tobago.

> The system of education in Trinidad and Tobago is organized and regulated by the provisions of the Education Act Chapter 39:01 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Minister gives the overall direction as to how schools are to be conducted, established, managed and maintained. Over time, the education system has evolved into its present form with various sectors coming together to provide a service to the nation. Currently, schools in Trinidad and Tobago can be categorised as either public or private educational institutions. Public Schools include government schools which are those wholly owned and funded by the government, denominational schools are owned by various religious denominations and are financially assisted by the government. Private schools are those schools which are owned and funded by private individuals or bodies. At present Early Childhood Care and Education falls under the non-formal education sector and steps are being taken to formalize this sector. (Ministry of Education, 2005, p.1)

Compulsory education according to the Education Act of Trinidad and Tobago begins at age 6 and ends at age 12. However for decades, the primary school which was established in 1851 was seen as the hallmark of beginning education and although compulsory education begins at age 6, children have traditionally enrolled at primary school from age 5. This practice continues up to this day. If we are to interpret early childhood education rigidly according to the defined age group, we can say that early childhood education is compulsory from age 6. However, if we are to use the term to mean children under the age of 5 (referred to as early childhood care and education in Trinidad and Tobago), then we can safely say that early childhood care and education is not compulsory.

Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the 1990, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education for All (EFA) initiative launched in Jomtien Thailand where every citizen in every society has the right and benefit from a quality education. Of particular significance to early childhood care and education in Trinidad and Tobago was the expansion and improvement of early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The purpose of this expansion was to ensure that the educational needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme.

The follow up to the EFA initiative, which formed the Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum which was held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 is also of great significance to Trinidad and Tobago. The Dakar Framework states that all aspects of education quality should be improved, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all. Measuring learning outcomes provides information on what particular knowledge, skill, or behaviour students have gained after instruction is completed. The World Bank (2013).

Thus, Trinidad and Tobago being a signotary to the above mentioned UNESCO document identifed education as being crucial to the development of the human capital in Trinidad and Tobago. The government also identifed that there was need to reform the education system. Ministry of Education, (2006). In so doing, the policies and plans instituted to effect this reform were: The Education Policy Paper (1993-2003), Education for All (2000), and the National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago (2007). Early Childhood Education was included in these documents as a critical part of the education system.

In keeping with the mandate stated by UNESCO's Education for All initiative, which hightlighted the importance of providing quality early childhood education for all, the Trinidad and Tobago government reformed ECCE through a masive construction of ECCE centers programme in 2006 coupled with the provision of qualified staff members, also in 2006 and the introduction of the draft National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Curriculum Guide in 2006.

The ECCE Curriculum Guide was developed on the foundation of a philosophy of developmentally appropriate content, instruction strategies and holistic goals for children's learning (Ministry of Education, 2006) perspective. From a philosophical stance, four building blocks are identified as the foundation of the National ECCE Curriculum Guide of Trinidad and Tobago, (2006). They are:

1. The four pillars of education (UNESCO, 1996), based on four ideals – of learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.

2. Philosophical and Educational Objectives which are statements of the Ministry of Education wherein beliefs are espoused, such as; that every child has an inherent right to an education, that every child has the ability to learn, that education is fundamental to the overall development of Trinidad and Tobago, among other similar expressed beliefs.

3. Aspirations and Ideals for Three and Four Year old children, which are national ideals for children under five that articulate the idealistic aspirations for young children under the age of 5 with educators, parents/families and community members in positive relationships that value and support lifelong learning.

4. Philosophical, Psychological and Pedagogical Bases wherein various theories from the work of child development theorists and various researches on current research and contemporary curriculum have been taken into consideration. Theorists identified include Jean Piaget. John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Erik Erikson, Abraham Maslow, Urie Bronfenbrenner, Howard Gardner. Included in this group are also brain researchers like Caine and Caine, and R. Sylvester. Loris Malaguzzi's constructivist, socio-cultural ideals have also been included.

With the introduction of the ECCE Curriculum Guide, there was a change in the pedagogic practice of teachers in this field. The change was propelled by the Ministry of Education, where workshops were held with effect from 2006, to guide the pedagogical practices in alignment to the National Curriculum Guide. Trained supervisors of the Ministry of Education are responsible for monitoring this implementation.

No studies were identified on the level of change or on the actual implementation of specific programmes. However ECCE practitioners at government and government assisted ECCE Centres are mandated to use the guidelines set out in the National ECCE Curriculum Guide. Hence the adoption of an eclectic approach. In this context, the eclectic approach refers to the integration of the use of themes and projects and the use of learning centres within the teaching/learning environment. This is in an attempt to satisfy the Ministry's thrust for a more child-centred approach rather than the age-old practice of predominantly teacher-directed activities. Private practitioners who accept the Ministry of Education's proposal to provide additional ECCE places are also mandated to use the guidelines as set out in the National ECCE Curriculum Guide according to the eclectic practice above described.

Universal access to free Primary school education and free secondary education has been achieved in Trinidad and Tobago. This was achieved through the efforts of denominational (religious) bodies in the first instance and later, government and the private sector became involved in the provision of primary and secondary education. Given the role of the denominational bodies as the forerunner in the provision of education in the country, government forged partnership arrangements with denominational bodies. The Concordat (1960) is a document which was developed to give "assurances for the preservation and character of denominational schools" (Concordat, p. 1). The document explains the working partnership arrangement between the government and denominational boards for the provision of primary and secondary education. This partnership arrangement has been extended to the private primary and secondary schools by means of individual contracts.

The Concordat arrangement does not include ECCE, however, in 2006, when the new ECCE construction programme came into effect, denominational boards were invited to partner with the government by providing land to construct ECCE Centres. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed to forge a partnership arrangement between government and the

denominational board for the provision of ECCE. The MOU arrangement does not follow the same partnership agreement as that of the Concordat, but states at paragraph B of the MOU that "The Ministry of Education and the Religious Body are committed to respecting and promoting the longstanding partnership between the State and the Religious Denominations in providing public education in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Education Act, the relevant Civil Service and Public Service Regulations and the Concordat" (p.1). Hence there is the implication that the "spirit" of the said policies will be adopted.

Universal access to quality early childhood services came on the front burner of governmental policy, as Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory to EFA and subscribed to the Framework for Action. Hence, policies were developed and structures began to be put in place for traversing the path of Universal Access to quality ECCE services. It began with an Institutional framework.

1.3 Institutional Framework

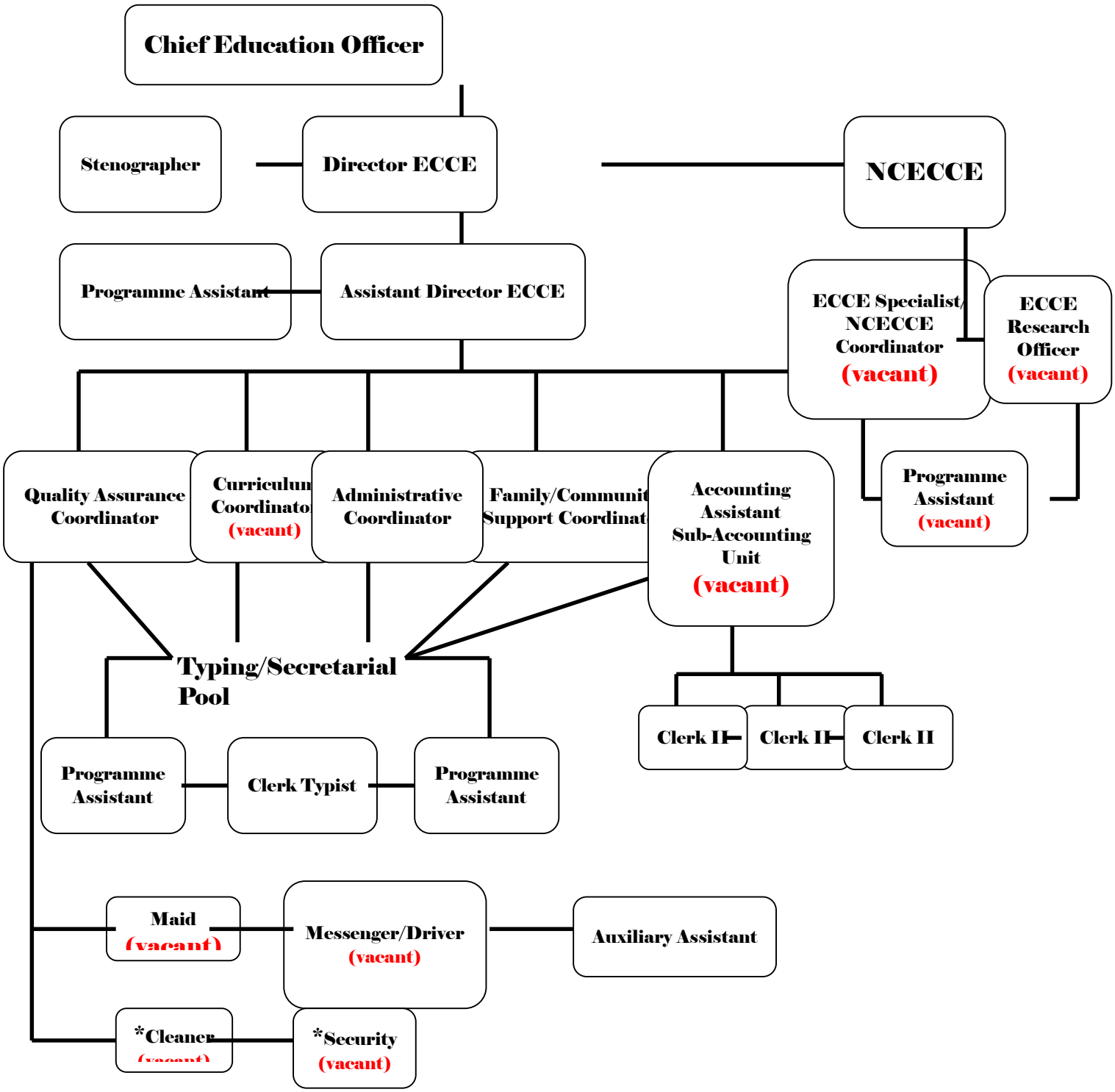
The education system is divided according to 8 Educational Districts – seven (7) in Trinidad and 1 in Tobago. Currently, Trinidad has an approximately 846 Centres, while Tobago has fifty-three (53) ECCE Centres in total, with 16 being government or government assisted Centres (in this case, mainly SERVOL**).** Appendixed document dated 31.05.11 details this data.[1] No additional data is currently available. The Data presented here is however acceptable for the purpose of this work as on an average there has been minimal additions to the government and government assisted Centres. The focus at this time is on forging partnership arrangements with the Private Sector. The government has not identified a specific figure in relation to its investment per child of ECCE age nationally, but the Ministry of Education is currently negotiating with Private Providers to accept an annual total of USD565.14 per school year – September to July. This to be paid termly (4 month period) in tranches of USD188.38, (TT$1200.00) per child worked at the current equivalency rate of TT$6.37 to USD 1.00). A Memorandum of Understanding with Terms and conditions for this partnership arrangement with individual private providers and the Ministry of Education for the provision of ECCE services has been developed for institution with effect from September 2014.

All Early Childhood Services are managed from the ECCE Division, under the Direction of the Minister of Education. The organizational Chart of the ECCE Division, established by Cabinet via the authority of Cabinet Minute No.105 of 2007 is hereby presented

[1] All Data presented were gathered during the 2010-2011 period and conducted by ECCE Field Officers. These Officers were all contract employees and their term of office came to an end at around the period when the new Government came into existence in 2010.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) DIVISION



It is to be noted, that notwithstanding the positions identified as vacant at the time that this report was being prepared (August 2014), this structure is still officially in the records for the operations of the ECCE Division although a full complement of staff does not exist. The Division is currently operating with an Administrative Coordinator, a Family/Community Support Co-coordinator, along with four (4) Curriculum Field Officers and a Curriculum Coordinator, with support from 4 clerical members of staff. The Curriculum Officer also performs the responsibility of being 'in charge' since there is currently no Director nor Assistant Director. This researcher has been informed by current practitioners at the ECCE Division that a Quality Assurance Co-coordinator has been recruited to join the staff with effect from September 2014.

Population benefitting from the system, age 0 to 6: 0 to 3 and 4 to 6, by location (urban/rural), socioeconomic level and service provision modality.

Facilities for the 0 to 3 age group are 98% private and do not fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. This group was originally under the Ministry of Social Development. However a change in government with effect from May 2010 established a new Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. The Children's Act is to be proclaimed through the office of the Attorney General, under the legal framework of Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, and will then be the responsibility of the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. It is hoped that with this proclamation, the 0 to 3 age group will be better coordinated.

In relation to urban/rural location and socioeconomic level, it must be noted that Surveys on Living Conditions were conducted in 1992, 1997 and 2005. These were surveys done to determine the socio-economic levels in the country and to note whether the lower/higher income earners lived in rural areas or in urban areas. The surveys revealed that there have been communities of persons that fall within the lower socio-economic bracket in the same community or within close proximity to persons with higher income persons. Therefore, although there may be large catchments of persons who were categorised as high income earners that fell into the higher socio-economic bracket, in a rural or urban community, there may be a catchment of persons that fall into the lower income brackets in the same community. This therefore indicates that no particular community or area can be specifically categorised as one of low economic status or of high economic status. Pure urban/rural areas with clearly defined socioeconomic levels attributed to one area or the other cannot be fully ascertained .Therefore urban/rural and socioeconomic communities within any one particular settlement of affluent, higher income persons will not apply in the Trinidad and Tobago context.

Bridgal (2014), writing in a Trinidad Express Newspaper reported on a proposed Survey of Living Conditions to be conducted in Trinidad. She quoted the Director of the National Poverty Reduction and Eradication Research and Policy Unit, who explained that:

"The survey seeks to collect data on a number of indicators about how people are faring in 2014 … we collect data on demographics on households, genders, amenities, health, nutrition, injury and disability; how those factors affect households and how they deal with them, and to what extent they have access to remedial services…." (Tagaille as cited by Bridgal, 2014)

The article highlighted the explanation that the Survey "will also consider socio-demographic issues like fertility rates, infant mortality, health, access to health services, and education levels…" Data on "economic conditions, income and benefits, as well as an important section on expenditure: what do households use their incomes to purchase?" will reportedly also form part of the study.

Given therefore that this researcher is not aware of the existence of any documentation or stated categories of urban/rural location and socioeconomic levels that can be easily identified, there will be no input regarding these areas in this report. Input in this area of population benefiting from the system, is confined to 'population benefitting from the system within the age group categories of 3 and 4 at the ECCE Centre level and 5 to 6 at the level of the primary school.'

Hereunder is a table that highlights the beneficiaries of the ECCE programme in Trinidad and Tobago. This Data is presented within distinct categories of enrolment of 3 and 4 year old children at ECCE Centres and 5 and 6 year old children at Primary schools.

Enrolment Records at ECCE Centres reflecting the 3 and 4 year old enrolment

No.	Education District	Ministry of Education	Service Volunteered for All (SERVOL) enrolment by District as at February 2011	Private (approx.)	Total
1.	**Port-of-Spain & Environs**	360	378	4185	**4923**
2.	**St. George East**	679	206	5103	**5988**
3.	**North Eastern**	305	359	757	**1421**
4.	**Caroni**	474	310	2978	**3762**
5.	**Victoria**	702	278	3280	**4260**
6.	**South Eastern**	395	463	1450	**2308**
7.	**St. Patrick**	353	410	2036	**2799**

TOTAL	**3268**	**2404**	**19,789**	**25,461**

Source: Ministry of Education ECCE Division 2011

Enrolment Records at the Primary Schools reflect the 4 to 6 enrolment thus: Gov't, Gov't Asst. and private primary Schools Student enrolment by Age group, Gender and grade 09/10

Age Groups	Infant year 1 male	Infant Year 1 female	Infant year 2 Male	Infant Year 2 female	Standard 1 male	Standard 1 female	Total male	Total female	Both Sexes
04<05	1272	1255	26	31	0	0	1298	1286	2584
05<06	6851	6675	1189	1225	22	29	8062	7929	15991
06<07	1815	1222	6127	6151	1013 + 28(std. 2)	1185 +22 (std.2)	8983	8581	17564

Source: Primary Schools Annual Statistical Returns. Source: Primary Schools Annual Statistical Return

See Details at Appendices folder - chart entitled Table 2

1.4 Type of Programmes available in the country to serve the population – 0- 6 age group.

The Education Policy Paper (2008) describes the various levels of education. It must however be pointed out, that the 0 to 2 age group is not included here, as children under 3 are not serviced by the Ministry of Education. Services for this group fall under the above mentioned, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. Programmes for this group are generally organised by private providers and state supported philanthropic and service oriented providers.

The school system is informally being viewed by Ministry of Education officials, parents and ECCE practitioners as beginning from the ECCE Centre at age 3 (though not formalised); on to the primary and Secondary. Formalisation means inclusion in the Education Act as part of the formal education system of Trinidad and Tobago. ECCE non-formalisation does not mean that it is not recognised as an important aspect of education. In fact in 2006, with the advent of the new ECCE construction programme, the process of formalisation of the ECCE sector had begun via dialogue with key ECCE stakeholders with a view to include ECCE in the then proposed revised Education Act. It is within that context that the path towards universal access to quality ECCE had begun. The current thrust to achieve this universal ECCE, the introduction of the ECCE Curriculum and ECCE Standard Documents all attest to the regards for ECCE as the beginning of a child's formal education from age 3.

The Draft National Model for Education policy paper (2007) explains that the school system consists of:-

A. Early Childhood Care and Education Centres.

These centres are classified as public or private centres at which children ages three and four are expected to be -:

(a) Nurtured and among other things be trained in the basic skills of numeracy literacy and social interaction appropriate for their level

(b) Prepared for further learning.

The general objectives of this level of education are to-

(a) Provide children aged 3 and 4 with an opportunity for early peer socialization and learning activities before starting primary education; and

(b) Prepare each child for a smooth transition from ECCE to primary school for the purposes of learning language numeracy and related subjects at that level" (Ministry of (Education, 2007, p.43).

At present there are several terms used to describe Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres in the country. These are:

- Preschool
- Nursery / Day Care
- Early Childhood Centres
- Kindergarten

Kindergarten, Preschool and Early Childhood Centres – are terms used interchangeably. These programmes offer services for children 3 to under 5 years of age. The Nursery / Day Care Centres - Provide service for children birth to three years. Early Childhood Care and Education Centres – Provide nurturing and education services for children three (3) and four (4) years.

A further classification of the sector group ECCE facilities as follows -:

a) Public (New and Existing) – Ministry of Education , Government Assisted and SERVOL, and

b) Private

The adults that work at private centres are in the main staff with training up to certificate level. While no documented data was found on staffing details at private centres, this researcher is aware from her experience of involvement with ECCE from the 1980's and later at top management level within the Ministry of Education's ECCE policy development from 2006 to 2011 and therefore informs that 85- 90% of the teaching staff at private ECCE Centres have obtained professional

certification up to the professional ECCE certificate level. The remaining 10 - 15% are the owners of these centres, some of whom are either retired primary school teachers with Teachers' Diploma or Bachelor of Education Degrees that may not be specific to ECCE.

The adults that work at the centres categorised at (a) above, (that is the government and government assisted Centres), are predominantly teaching staff with certification that qualify them for teaching positions ranging from Teacher Assistant through to ECCE teacher and/or Administrator-Teacher. A minimal ancillary staff comprising of one 1 janitor and 1 security guard per Centre for 50 children are included in the staffing arrangement. The Nursery and Day Care facilities are staffed predominantly by trained Day Care Assistants, some from community groups within the catchment of the facility. Facilities for the 0 to 3 age group do not fall under the ambit of the Ministry of Education. They are placed under the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development.

c. Ministry of Education Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres – These centres are owned and managed by the Ministry of Education, some are new, (constructed under the new construction programme, which was effected in 2006) to cater for fifty (50) or seventy five (75) children. While some are from the previous informal system and are termed existing government centres.

Government Assisted Centres –

Centres that operate in partnership with a denominational or Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and the state. These centres receive funding from the government.

SERVOL Centres –

Centres which receive funding from the government but are supervised by SERVOL staff. These centres continue to operate under the previous informal system of existing centres.

Private –

Centres which are owned and / or managed by entrepreneurs or institutions which do not receive funding from the government. However, the Ministry is now engaging Private owners in dialogue to pay for spaces for children at private establishments in their drive to achieve universal access to ECCE. The total number of these centres have been stated in this paper by education district, but no documentation or reports were found in relation to the specific distribution of the centres across the districts.

B. Primary Level.

The primary sector comprises seven years of schooling. Two of these years/grades are at the Infant level and the other five years of five "Standard-Level" classes (Standards I-V).

Organisational Structure

Compulsory education begins at the primary school. According to the Education Act (1966), it begins at age six (6) but the practice has been enrolment of children ranging in age from five (5) to eleven plus (11+) children. Please note, that prior to the 1970's, children entering primary school at age 5 were exposed to programmes in a ' reception class' where foundation skills were laid as the concept of ECCE was not prevalent and schooling began at primary level. It can therefore be stated, that while children enter the primary school at age 5, it is not compulsory that they begin at 5. According to the Education Act (1966), compulsory education really begins at 6. Therefore, for the early childhood cohort, compulsory education does not begin until at age 6.

From a functional point of view, the discussion for the primary school will be divided into three (3) major parts, namely:-

(a) Infant department comprising pupils aged between five (5) or 6 and sometimes seven (7) – (Infants 1 & 2). Note that some approximately 10% of primary school entrants, mainly of the lower socio-economic level, do not enter primary school until the compulsory age 6. Therefore at 7 they may still be in the infant department.

(b) Middle school comprising pupils aged between seven (7) and nine (9) – (Standards 1-3);

(c) Upper school comprising pupils aged between nine (9) and thirteen (13) years of the Standards 4-5. Strictly looking at compulsory start of education, children by 10 should be at standard 4. However, 90% of the children begin at 5 therefore they reach standard 4 by age 9. The assumption here is that a small number of students may need to repeat one or two grades.

Time Allocations

The school year of thirty-nine (39) weeks, which begins in September and ends in July, consists of the following three (3) terms which are interspersed by vacation periods of varying lengths.

(a) Term I - September – December (3 week vacation in December)

(b) Term II - January – March/April (2 week vacation in April)

(c) Term III - April – July (6 week vacation in July-August)

The teaching week runs from Monday through Friday. Teaching periods last for about 20 minutes each for infants and 30 minutes for juniors. The school day comprises five (5) hours of instruction time. Generally, classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. for infants and begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. for the juniors and upper classes, with one hour for lunch, and a morning recess period of about 10 minutes duration, and an afternoon recess period of equivalent length.

1.5 Existence of an official curriculum

Curriculum – ECCE

The National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide (2006) is child-centred and is characterised by creative and constructive activities provided to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in identified areas. These areas include, but are not exclusive to - Personal, social and emotional development, Life skills, Language and literacy Mathematical concepts, Knowledge and understanding of the world, Creative development, Physical development and Spiritual and moral development . The underlying goal of the early childhood programme is to provide the young children with opportunities to succeed in all areas of development.

The implementation of the curriculum is directed by the National Curriculum Guide as developed by the Ministry of Education. Emphasis is placed on an integrated approach involving all the domains of children's development and organized under five curriculum strands with desired outcomes as –

Wellness: emotional/mental wellbeing and physical health,
Effective Communication: Oracy and Emergent Literacy

Citizenship: Belonging, democracy, valuing culture, national pride, moral/spiritual values and respect.

Intellectual Empowerment: Use of critical thinking problem solving, information gathering, processing and experimenting as children develop numeracy and explore and investigate their physical and social world.

Aesthetic Expression: Creativity, imagination and appreciation for cultural art forms.

Curriculum at primary is developed and prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The subjects taught at this level are: Language Arts, Mathematics, General Science, Information Technology, Conversational Spanish, Morals & Values Education, Agricultural Science, Creative Arts, Health & Family Life Education, History, Social Studies – (which will include a

special programme in Diversity), Physical Education and Religious Instruction. In cases where subject areas may be offensive to religious denominations, these offensive areas will be discussed with the Ministry of Education and alternative programmes acceptable to both the Ministry of Education and the denominational school body/bodies will be put in place. This is also done via the eclectic approach of an integrated curriculum model.

Arrangements for Religious Instruction will be made in accordance with the Education Act (1966) which states that:

(1) "No child shall be required as a condition of admission into, or of continuing in, a public school –
   (a) to attend or to abstain from attending any Sunday School or any place of religious worship;
   (b) to attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere form which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent; or
   (c) to attend the school on any day specially set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

(2) Religious instruction shall form part of the curriculum of every public school, and the facilities for religious observance in the school shall be provided in such manner as is prescribed, save, however, that any pupil may be withdrawn by his parent from the instruction or observance without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school.

(3) The time during which religious instruction may be given or during which any religious observance may be practised shall be inserted shall be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every schoolroom."

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which are desirable will be conducted in accordance with the policies of the Ministry of Education and the school.

The core of the curriculum implementation and delivery process is the recognition of the concept of multiple intelligences, the use of technology in teaching/learning activities, and the need for students to be literate and strong in numeracy skills so as to benefit from a secondary level education.

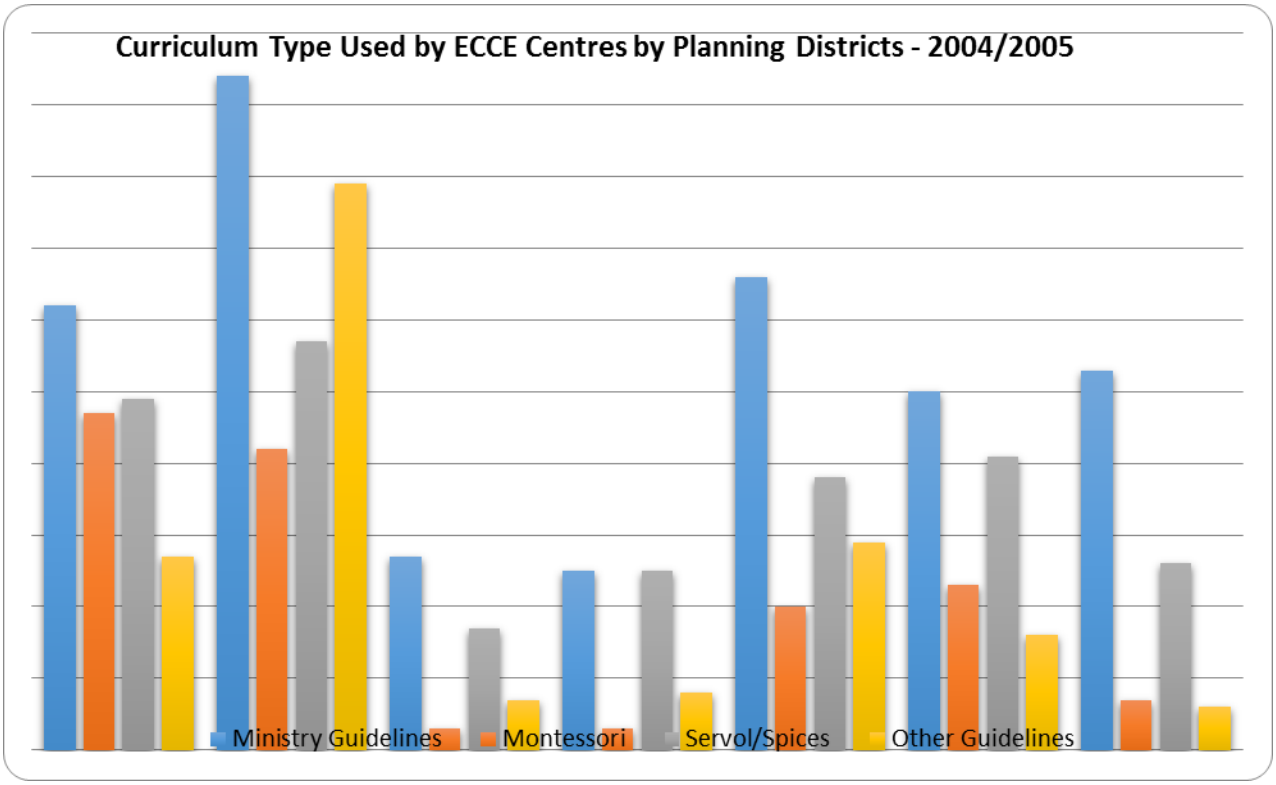
1.6 Curriculum Guidelines and contents of training Programmes

In April 2005, The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, introduced a National Early Childhood Care and Education Guide, in draft. This

document was presented throughout Trinidad and Tobago to the entire Early Childhood Care and Education population: public, private, denominational, inter-sectorial population of teaching staff, parents, administrators, other key stakeholders. Television and radio programmes were aired and programmes mounted to explain the intent and purpose of the document. It is used exclusively at government and government assisted ECCE Centres and interchangeably at some private and philanthropic organisations. However, there are other Programmes in use as hereunder presented in graphical format.

A. CURRICULUM TYPE USED BY ECCE CENTRES – TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Table Showing Curriculum Type used at ECCE Centres					
	Type of Curriculum used				Total Number of Centres
Education Planning District	Ministry Guideline	Montessori	Servol/Spices	Other Guidelines	
Trinidad and Tobago	401	147	270	180	998
St. George West	62	47	49	27	185
St. George East	94	42	57	79	272
St Andrew/St. David	27	3	17	7	54
Nariva/Mayaro	25	3	25	8	61
Caroni	66	20	38	29	153
Victoria	50	23	41	16	130
St. Patrick	53	7	26	6	92
Sub-Total	**377**	**145**	**253**	**172**	**947**
Tobago	24	2	17	8	51



Financing

On Monday 9th September 2013 the Minister of Finance and Economy, the Honourable Larry Howai presented the country's budget for the fiscal year 2013-2014. Perusal of Budget document snippet entitled 'Highlights of the Budget Statement' identified key Budget allocations. Of great significance is that the education sector is given high priority in Trinidad and Tobago as each year the sector receives the highest budgetary allocation. This fiscal year - October 2013 to October 2014, among the funding identified as "The Big Items - % of Budget TT$61,398 Billion, (USD$ 96,386,185 Million) education received the largest quantum. Education was allotted 24% - 9.820 Billion, way ahead of the other "Big Items" of National Security, Health, Housing and Works, that received 16%, 13%, 7% and 6% respectively. The same pattern has existed in previous budgets since Independence in 1962.

This importance of education in Trinidad and Tobago was also linked to the ECCE sector by a former Minister of Education when she delivered a speech at La Romaine, Trinidad in a community forum at the first ECCE Centre constructed under the new construction programme. In Trinidad and Tobago, "education is seen as the vehicle for developing the human capital, via the provision of opportunities for training and development of all its citizens to become productive citizens…" Manning (2006)

General Characteristics of Teachers

Age Group Served	Number of teachers (in early childhood, by sex)	Level of certification (Type of pre-service teacher training)	Average age of teachers (broken down by the level at which they teach	Working time for teachers (broken down by the level at which they teach)	Geographic area where they work (urban/rural)	Administrative dependence (Public/private, state, municipal, etc.)
0 to 3	No data available for 0 to 2 Data for age 3 is tied into the ECCE Centre data for the 3 to 4 age group	Child-Care Certificate ECE Certificate & Diploma	No Available data	Fluctuating day-time shifts, but no data available	As indicated earlier, urban/rural generally mixed across education Districts.	Combination of Gov't (Public), private individuals, agencies or philanthropic organisations. Majority private

The unavailability of comprehensive statistical data on the characteristics of teachers makes this aspect of the work incomplete. While there is an on-going thrust for training and development of the teaching staff for ECCE and practitioners have been seeking such training, detailed data on their respective characteristics have not been systematically compiled. This has regrettably left a gap in this section of the paper

2- Pre-Service Teacher Training

2.1 Characteristics of training systems

Training Institution	Type	Programme offerings, duration and certificate obtained	Selection Mechanisms
The University of the West Indies (UWI) Faculty of Humanities and Education And	A University with education faculties that offer face-to face and blended courses. Blended courses are modules/courses where some of the content are delivered on line and some face to face.	Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Development Programme- 2yrs. Bachelor of Education –Major in Early Childhood Education- 3 years M.Ed - Early Childhood – Curriculum 2 – 3 years Ph.D – Early Childhood Education. 5-7 years UWI also offers 2 and 3 year Primary Education Certificate and Degree Courses in the teaching of specialised subject areas like, Mathematics, Special Needs education, language Arts and the like	First Level Priority: Tertiary Certification requires possession of a tertiary level certificate in Early Childhood Education approved by the Board of Undergraduate Studies Entry Level – students successfully completing the School of Education tertiary Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Development. Second Level Priority: requires UWI Open Campus Certificate in Early Childhood Education; or SERVOL Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education

University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus (Previously, School of Continuing Studies)	Open Campus, with its Head Office at the Main campus of the University, also includes outreach centres, some of which are at other locations outside of the main campus. Full on-line courses are also offered via Open Campus.	. 1 Year certificate – specific to the 0-3 age group referred to as the one year child-care course. Here, the focus is on early stimulation training. No formal teaching is done by holders of this certificate. It is to be noted however, that this one-year certificate is necessary for persons supporting the work of children. Such personnel do not teach but perform supportive roles within the early childhood stimulation programmes for the 0 to 3 age group. The certificate is also used along with academic credentials as matriculation for entry to higher level certification and diplomas in the field as practitioners make the upward journey for the position of 'teacher' Persons with ECCE certificates and diplomas are not classified as 'teachers', however because of the scarcity of qualified early childhood personnel and given that the certificate was originally the entry requirement for teaching at ECCE level, those persons that were already in the system with the certificates and diplomas do continue to teach, with the understanding that they need to upgrade their qualifications to a Degree to be considered for employment in the current contract position of ECCE 'teacher'. According to the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan (2006), of the then People's National Movement government the year 2020 was identified, as the time span by which all teaching personnel should eventually qualify and the goal of universal access to quality ECCE services was due to be achieved. Those without the necessary	or any other accredited Early Childhood certification. Other Qualifications: Possession of at least 5 academic subjects which must be English Language. Candidate must also show evidence of strong practicum experience.

		entry requirements were to be phased out with a compensation package. The Current Government of the People's Partnership is also seeking to achieve the goal of universal ECCE access. Notwithstanding those who currently work with their original certificate qualification or are employed as teacher assistants, entry requirement for the position of 'ECCE teacher' remains the B.ED Degree.	
The University of Trinidad and Tobago	A University with an education faculty	Early Childhood Care and Education 4-year programmes full time and part time in the following areas relevant to this paper: Early childhood care and education, primary education, Special needs education. Year 1 courses – All students required to follow common year one courses after which they choose their area of specialization. These courses are: Foundation of Education, Psychology of human development, History of education in Trinidad and Tobago, Educational technology, Psychology of learning, Survey of exceptionalities, Visual Arts education, Music education and physical education. Students also begin their Practicum experiences by visiting schools for observation, during year 1. In years 2, 3 an4 students are exposed to 3 or 4 specialization courses in their chosen specializations but all continue to have general education and pedagogy courses each semester as well as in practicum preparation and school experience.	This University replaces the former Teachers' College Programme where practicing teachers were given 2 year scholarships by government to train as primary school teachers. At that time Assistant teachers were recruited with the academic qualifications of 5 subjects – English, Mathematics and a Science subject compulsory. This entry from the primary school to Teachers' College on scholarship from the government has been phased out and now all aspiring teachers (ECCE and primary) must firstly possess a B.Ed Degree. .
Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI)	CREDI is an institute established in 2008 by the Catholic Archdiocese of Port of Spain and offers degree, diploma, certificate and workshop courses	Certificate courses are also offered at this Institution and serve the same purpose as identified in the column above identified in the discussion for UWI.	For certificate level: Persons working in the field of ECCE as aides or apprentices For Bachelor Degrees – persons who are holders of first entry

	Has 3 departments: Education, Theology and Music	Education Courses offered are: Early Childhood Care, Special Education and Educational Leadership. Specific to Early Childhood are the Certificate, courses that lead to reading for the Bed Degree and Master's Degree in Education Leadership wherein one can specialise in the field of early Childhood.	early childhood certificates or Teachers' Diploma. For the Master Degree – holders of a Bachelor Degree or equivalent.
University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)	A University with Education Faculties Offer Programmes in Primary and Secondary Education. Proposal for introduction of an Early Childhood Degree programme has been instituted and accreditation obtained but pure Early Childhood Degrees have not as yet been instituted.	Bachelor of Science in Education Masters of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction Master of Arts in Educational psychology Master of Arts in Educational Administration & Leadership USC and Andrews University in Michigan (USA) also collaborate to offer Dual Degrees	Entry requirements re the national requirements for University entrance - that is Advanced Level academic training of a minimum of five subjects, inclusive of Mathematics and English along with a subject aligned to the specific area of study chosen or Trinidad and Tobago Teachers' Diploma for the Undergraduate Courses. For graduate Courses, an undergraduate or Associate Degree is required.
Service Volunteered For All (SERVOL)	Non – University – higher Institute of teaching Training Institution for community work with young Children Entrants to SERVOL programmes are trained within a raining school setting and via practicum experiences at SERVOL managed Centres, to work within communities with persons classified as belonging to the lower income bracket. However, because of the success of their programme to date, approximately 40% of their	Courses specific to early Childhood offered by SERVOL are: One year Certificate in Early Childhood Education. This certification is not a teaching component, but one which exposes the student to rudiments of child development for understanding of custodial care and early stimulation methodologies. Certificate in the parent Outreach Programme (POP). This programme train practitioners on how to support parents at home to institute child rearing practices geared towards child development	SERVOL caters for what is referred to as the 'grassroots' population. That is the vulnerable, 'at risk 'populations and persons who may not have the required 5 subjects. They work with them via introductory literacy courses and much practical experiences under strict supervision by field officers and supervisors.

	intake come from middle income homes.		
Nazarene College	Non-University- Normal higher Institute of teaching	Certificate in Early Childhood Education for Assistants, who provide support to teaching staff. Practitioners are aware that classification as ECCE teacher requires a Bachelor in Education Degree. Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood and/or in Primary Education.	For certificate level programme - Entry requirement -5 Academic subjects and where possible one year child care course. Certificate required as matriculation for Degree courses. -

This table has presented generalised information on the main training institutions that offer Early Childhood Programmes as taken from their respective handbooks and clarified via interviews with the 90% of the co-ordinators of the various universities/institutions identified in the table

2.2 Regulations affecting training programmes.

There is in existence, an Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago assented to on 14th June, 2004 – by an Act of parliament: Act No 16 of 2004. The document states:

"In this Act unless the context otherwise requires—"accredit" means to evaluate and determine whether a registered institution, its programmes or awards meet established standards and "accreditation"

All Accredited Training Institutions that offer Early Childhood Programmes are hereunder listed.

- ✓ University of the West Indies, School of Education, St. Augustine Campus
- ✓ University of the West Indies, Open Campus
- ✓ University of Trinidad and Tobago
- ✓ University of the Southern Caribbean

Also accredited are:
CREDI, SERVOL and the Nazarene College

3. Continuing Training or professional Development

Legislation that establishes teachers' rights to continuing training?

No regulation exists that establishes teachers' right to continuing training. However, once a national individual possesses the entry level requirement for any programme offered, it is an

offence to deny entry, once there is available space.

3.1 Incentives:

- Funding:

  All nationals pursuing tertiary level education programmes, inclusive of teacher education and other professional training for any field of study are afforded governmental support for their tuition via the Government Assistance Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme, once they meet the criteria. This GATE assistance is not offered exclusively to nationals pursuing education programmes, but for all citizens, for whatever area of tertiary study. The Criteria for assessing the funding are that you must be:

  - ❖ a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago
  - ❖ accepted to a local or regional public tertiary level institution (TLI) or an approved private TLI.
  - ❖ Enrolled in a programme of study that leads to a recognised tertiary level qualification.

GATE funds cover 100% of tuition expenses for undergraduate students and up to 50% of tuition expenses, to a maximum of TT$10,000 (USD$1569.86), for postgraduate students.

All students who accept GATE funds, including postgraduate students, will be bound by a period of national service that will be linked to the value of the funds received. National service is defined as employment within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in either the public or private sector. The period of national service is determined as follows:

- One year for recipients of up to TT$50,000. (USD$7,849.29)
- Two years for recipients of TT$50,000 (USD$7,849.29) to TT$100,000.(USD$15,698.59)
- Three years for recipients of TT$100,000(USD$15,698.59)
- to TT$150,000.(USD$23,547.90)
- Four years for recipients of TT$150,000 (USD$23,547.90)
- to TT$200,000.(USD$31,397.170)
- Five years for recipients of over TT$200,000. .(USD$31,397.170

Part-time students accessing GATE may apply their current employment experience as part of their period of national service. Recipients must repay the total amount of the GATE funds received to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago if they do not complete the required period of national service. This programme is made available through the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (TEST). There are no fees associated with applying to the GATE programme.

3.2 Types of Institutions that offer the Service

There is a mixture of public and private institutions. The public institutions are government or government assisted and the private institutions are those run by private individuals, but mostly organisations that offer training. Institutions are all required to register and gain accredited status from the Accreditation Council. If the institution and the courses they offer are not accredited, then their certification will not be accepted by government ministries or established businesses for employment, neither will they be accepted as matriculation for higher level courses/training.

The main universities are centralised in their education faculties. For example:
University of the West Indies main campus is located in St. Augustine, Trinidad and all teachers are expected to traverse there for training as the courses at the Faculty are part-time face to face. While some sessions may be forwarded on-line for odd sessions, the majority of sessions are face-to face. Recently (about 5 years ago), an education faculty was set up in Tobago, for the Undergraduate early childhood course, but students must keep up with their semester courses there. If a particular course is missed, the student will be expected to pursue that course in Trinidad as only one cohort is served per cycle of 3 years.

Masters programmes delivered face to face for Early Childhood are not offered in Tobago as there are insufficient students interested in enrolling for the Master's Degree. Those who wish to pursue Masters in Early Childhood arrange to travel to Trinidad to attend classes there. The majority of institutions are decentralised as there are branches of the organisation spread across Trinidad and in Tobago.

The University of the West Indies Open Campus has various locations across the country. ECCE courses were all face to face, however over the past 3 years, only the Child Care Courses were delivered face to face and all other ECCE courses were totally on-line. There is however a move to re-institute the face-to face programme.

The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) has 2 teacher-training sites. One North east of Trinidad (Valsayn) and one in the south (Corinth). These sites were formerly Teachers' Colleges for teacher training, where teachers attended on scholarship from the government to pursue training for the Teachers' Diploma. This bar was raised as entry level teachers are required to be holders of degrees. The buildings that formerly housed the teacher training institutions have now been turned into UTT campuses.

Other training institutions like University of the West Indies Open Campus, CREDI and Nazarene College all also have off-site locations.

Types of Institutions	Types of programme offered and duration	Content of Programmes	Prevailing Methodological Strategies	Incentives for continuous training or capacity building
Universities	Certificates 1 year and 2 year duration Diplomas- 2 years. Bachelor in Education Degree - 3 years. Doctoral Degree 4-7 years	Academic Courses Practicum ICT Internships	Face to face (tutoring and lectures) On Line e-learning Coaching via Supervisors for research studies and the like.	The GATE programme is seen as an incentive for nationals to pursue courses Promotion to positions for which they will now qualify on completion of their programmes.
Institutions of Higher learning	Degrees in association with foreign universities and/or accredited bodies – e.g. City and Guild. Associate Degrees Diplomas Certificate	Academic Courses ICT components	Face-to face On- line	-do -

4. Teaching Career

The career of the ECCE teacher evolved from the village/community teacher/caregiver, on a non-contracted, but continuous job, to a career where the necessary entry requirement was raised from what occurred prior to the 1970's where the entry requirement was one academic subject, then in the 1970's to 3 academic subjects and some working experience with children along with a certificate in early childhood and from approximately 2005, the entry requirement became a B.Ed. degree to teach at any level. Since ECCE was not included in the Education Act as an established, formalised sector, the positions were offered on contract, with plans to include ECCE within the formal education system. This formalisation has not yet been effected.

Staffing arrangements within the ECCE sector are at two (2) levels

(a) Non - Contract staff

(b) Contract staff.

Originally EXXE teaching staff was hired via Community Boards of Education/Management or by SERVOL on a non-contractual basis to fill the approved positions as categorised and detailed in Cabinet minute No 2459 of September 22, 2005 (Teaching Assistant 11, Teaching Aide and Teaching Apprentice).

Table showing Categories, Qualifications and Rates of Pay for teaching staff under the Old/Traditional System

Position	Qualifications	Rates of Pay (monthly)
ECCE Teaching Assistant II	ECCE 2 or 3 year certificate with practicum/internship by SERVOL or School of Continuing Studies (Now Open Campus), University of the West Indies (U.W.I) or any equivalent certification from a recognised institution.	(USD$408.16)
ECCE Teaching Assistant I	Teachers who have completed training as above but not practical internship and therefore not yet fully certified.	(USD$313.97)
ECCE Teaching Aide	Completed part-time training programmes only, at SERVOL or U.W.I. School of Continuing Studies (Now Open Campus).	(USD$266.87)
ECCE Apprentice	No formal training	(USD$219.78)

Please note that assessment was based purely on ECCE professional qualifications and not academic qualifications e.g. Caribbean Examination Certificate (CXC), or General Certificate of Education (GCE) because entry requirements were only 1 - 3 subjects inclusive of English. Professional qualifications are the certificates obtained that are exclusive to ECCE teacher training or preparation for higher levels of qualifications like the degree in early childhood. Academic certificates are the certificates obtained on completion of schooling at Secondary level that indicates one's educational attainment as qualifier to enter tertiary programmes or further training in any professional field. The CXC is the examination body, located in Barbados that is responsible for certification of school leavers in the Caribbean. It is the Caribbean equivalent to the General Certificate of Education (GCE), which is the examination body of Cambridge, England. Trinidad and Tobago was formerly under English rule prior to Independence in 1962. Therefore the education system was fashioned according to the English system, where academic performance was determined from examination out of the University of Cambridge, the official language for Trinidad and Tobago being English. Both CXC and GCE examine academic proficiency in curriculum areas of for example, English language, English Literature, Science subjects – like Biology, Physics, Chemistry; also History – usually West Indian History and later at advanced level American and/or English History; Mathematics (Pure and Advanced) and other academic subjects too numerous to be mentioned within the confines of this paper.

With the advent of the ECCE construction programme, and the review of qualifications for

ECCE teaching staff, new ECCE contract teaching positions were created by Cabinet for ECCE Centres. The positions are: ECCE Teacher, ECCE Teacher Assistants and ECCE Auxiliary. Cabinet Minute No 105 (2007).

Table showing Category of Staff, Staffing Structure, Qualifications And Rates of Pay under the New System

Position	Qualifications	Rates of Pay (monthly)
ECCE Administrator/Teacher	Bachelor of Education Degree, (ECCE specialisation) At least eight (8) years of experience as an ECCE teacher Recognized certificate in Administration and Management of ECCE Centres Considerable experience in curriculum development and implementation Any equivalent combination of experience certification and training	(USD$1883.83)
ECCE Teacher	Bachelor of Education Degree in ECCE Trinidad and Tobago Teacher's Diploma (an asset) Minimum of five years of experience in the field of ECCE Equivalent experience and certification Experience in ECCE curriculum development and implementation at ECCE Centre level Any equivalent combination of experience in the field of ECCE	(USD$1412.87)
ECCE Teacher Assistant	Five (5) Ordinary Level/General Proficiency GCE/CXC Academic subjects (Mathematics and English must be compulsory and any other three (3) subjects). Professional certification inclusive of internship/Practicum, as obtained from School of Education UWI, SERVOL, UWI Open Campus (formerly, School of Continuing Studies), or equivalent Minimum of three years of experience in the field of ECCE	(USD$784.93)
ECCE Auxiliary	Three (3) CXC/GCE Academic subjects – English compulsory. Minimum of three years' experience/ working in an ECCE Centre setting Minimum of 1 year recognised certificate training in ECCE or current enrolment in recognised ECCE certificate programme.	(USD$549.45)

Dichotomy regarding differences in salaries for teachers holding different positions with similar responsibilities at ECCE Centres now exist. Persons classified under the old /traditional system are paid less than those classified under the new system in that the latter is a contract position, while the former serves under a more permanent status having been inherited from the old/traditional arrangement. Given that some of our newly constructed centres are replacement centres, (as detailed at Document 5, Appendix IV), members of staff categorised under the old/traditional system work alongside newly contracted staff, under different terms and conditions, although they perform similar duties as those of the higher paid contract staff. Some possess similar qualifications while others do not and some of them have reported that they have been working in the ECCE system for over ten years and about 5% of them for over 20 years. (There is no documented evidence regarding years of experience for each member of staff, prior to 2005)

Nonetheless, this dichotomy was addressed via the development of an equivalency rating Table, where consideration was given for the experience of teaching staff under the old system. This was matched with the roles they performed and the minimum academic qualifications (required for the old positions) along with their ECCE certification to strike an even balance between persons working under the old system and those under the new system. Teaching staff that satisfied the equivalency rating hereunder outlined were offered contract positions to facilitate their receipt of the same monthly salary as their counterparts who were working under different terms and conditions under contract arrangement. Persons who do not fall into any of the above categories may remain in the system and have a period for upgrade into any position in the new system and can be upgraded at any time that new Qualifications are obtained.

<table>
<tr><th>Old System</th><th colspan="2">New System</th></tr>
<tr><td>Teacher/Administrator
$12000.00 per month
Teacher/Administrator
$12000.00 per month
• B.Ed.
• 8yrs experience</td><td colspan="2">NIL (no comparison. Position never existed in old system)</td></tr>
<tr><td>ECCE Teacher
$9000.00 per month
• B.Ed.
• 3-5 yrs experience</td><td colspan="2">NIL (no comparison. Position never existed in od system)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Teacher Assistant
$5,000 per month
• 5 Subjects, Eng, Math
• ECCE Certificate with Practicum</td><td colspan="2">Teaching Assistant II - $2600.00 per month
Teaching Assistant I - $2000.00 per month
Teaching Aide - $ 1700.00 per month</td></tr>
<tr><td>• 5 O’Levels with English
• ECCE cert with practicum
• min of 5yrs experience</td><td>• Min 3 O’Levels with English
• 5yrs experience
• ECCE cert with practicum and served as head teacher</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Auxiliary
$3,500.00 per month
• 3 Subjects (English)
• 3 years of experience in ECCE</td><td colspan="2">Teaching Aide - $ 1700.00 per month
• ECCE Certificate (at least in childcare)
• 3 years of experience in ECCE
• 2 O’levels with English</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching Apprentice - $1400.00 per month
• 3 Subjects with English
• 1 year ECCE training as evidenced by enrolment in certified programme or in service training.
• 2 years of experience in ECCE</td></tr>
</table>

NOTE: This equivalency applies only where the new curriculum is in effect.

Having established that early childhood education spans the primary school's Infant department, teachers at primary level are included in this dialogue.Bearing in mind that teachers of children of early childhood age – specifically the 0 to 6 age cohort teach at different facilities. The careers of teachers at the ECCE level and Teachers at the primary level are distinctly different in many areas. A critical area of difference is their terms and conditions of employment as it relates to permanent or temporary employment and as such salaries and their career path. The comparisons are hereunder identified.

Categories relevant to the Teaching Career	*ECCE Teachers 0 to 5* (Specific to 3 and 4 year old children as data and teachers of 0 to 2 year old children are not available for this cohort).	**Primary teachers (5 and 6 year old children)**
Type of teaching Career	The position of Auxiliary identified above, is non-existent. Positions available: ECCE Teacher Assistant, ECCE Teacher or Administrator/Teacher All new positions are contract positions where the respective staff members work for a Fixed salary, usually for a period of three (3) consecutive years at the end of which a lump sum gratuity payment is made – 20% of total salary for the period worked.	Former Positions of Assistant teacher with qualification of 5 academic subjects (English Language, mathematics and a Science subject compulsory, along with 2 other subjects, is no longer the entry Requirement for primary school teaching. Positions available: Teacher 1, thereafter can be promoted to: Head of Department, Senior Teacher, Vice Principal or Principal Primary
Working Conditions	Ratio 1:15 (1 teacher to 15 children for ECCE Teacher Assistant as well as for ECCE Teacher), There are no support personnel like auxiliary, except in some case where On The Job trainees are assigned to Centres on internship. Practicum Administrator /Teacher position has changed from one per Centre to a cluster of 3 or 4 Centres per Administrator/Teacher with a promise of a traveling allowance, but this has not been effected. Reported lack of supply of material and equipment for teaching and learning at centres.	Ratio for the infant department is 1:20 (one teacher to 20 children). No support or auxiliary, except at times when student teachers are on teaching practice or an On the Job Trainee (OJT) is assigned to the school.

	Approximately 60% of the buildings that were not constructed under the new construction programme are in some cases dilapidated and in need of repair	
Salaries	Admin/Teacher – TT $14,000.00,(USD$2197.80) monthly ECCE Teacher: TT $9000.00(USD$1412.87) - monthly ECCE Teacher Assistant TT$5000.00 (USD$784.93) monthly A gratuity payment is made on completion of the 3 years via a calculation of 20% of the total salary for the 3-year contract period.	Salaries for primary teachers are negotiated by Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA). The TTUTA Salary Settlement 2008-2011 is the last negotiation that is in effect now. All salaries are in TT$ Grade 1: Assistant Teacher : $5711.00(USD$896.55) - $7039.00(USD$1105.02) Grade 3 – Teacher Primary $8627.00(USD$1354.32) - $10, 783.00(USD$1692.78) – $12,323.00(USD$1934.54) Grade 4: Head of Department or a Senior Teacher Primary: $10,765.00(USD$1689.95) - $13,021.00(USD$2044.11) - $14,632.00.(USD$2297.02) Grade 5: Vice Principal Primary: $12,567.00 (USD$1972.84) - $15,135.00 (USD$2375.98) Grade 7: Principal Primary $14,733.00 (USD$2312.87) - $17,597.00 (USD$2762.48) Benefits: At compulsory retirement at age 60 or retirement having completed a minimum of 33 and one third years, the primary teacher is entitled to a gratuity payment calculated at a specific rate and formula along with a monthly pension of a set percentage of their last salary. The teacher also has the option to retire at age 50, and in this case, their benefit payment will be reserved until their due date of retirement (age 60)
Incentives	Vertical promotion with relevant/added qualifications from lowest to the highest level. Persons can apply to move to some of the field positions identified on	Personal gratification at success of their children and local accolades from parents and school population. Incentives are not based on any of

	the organisation chart Incentives are not based on any of the identified categories of teachers' knowledge, skills and performance; results attained by the children taught, time in service, continuing teacher training, and assignment to areas classed as difficult on the grounds of their location or the beneficiary population. Continuing teacher training in the form of workshops and sometimes scholarships is on-going according to needs for fulfilment of the Ministry of Education's agenda for implementation at schools. It is to be noted that the GATE programme is seen as an incentive for professionals to personally enrol at tertiary level programmes	the identified categories of teachers' knowledge, skills and performance; results attained by the children taught, time in service, continuing teacher training, and assignment to areas classed as difficult on the grounds of their location or the beneficiary population. Continuing teacher training in the form of workshops and sometimes scholarships is on-going according to needs for fulfilment of the Ministry of Education's agenda for implementation at schools. It is to be noted that the GATE programme is seen as an incentive for professionals to personally enrol at tertiary level programmes
Reasons for leaving the profession	Opportunities for movement from contract to permanent job opportunity (especially if it is movement to teach at the primary school level) Change of career Migration	Ill – Health Migration out of the country Personal reasons that are not readily available for the collection of research data
Performance assessment	This is done yearly via an established performance appraisal instrument. The first two years were intended for formative evaluation. The final year - summative evaluation. The formative stages are the identical instruments used for the summative evaluation, however it was intended that at the formative stage, weaknesses and strengths are supposed to be identified. Where weaknesses are identified strategies for improvement to be developed and strengths identified to be complimented and further built upon. No evidence was found to suggest that assessment was	Annual Performance appraisals. Formative evaluation at the level of the school to be conducted by Heads of Department, Senior Teachers, Vice Principals and Principals.

	conducted in this way and teaching staff questioned indicated that the instrument has not really been used in this way. The process is conducted as the completion of a task to be done at the end of the contract period, sometimes three (3) years being done at the end of contract period, rather than one year incrementally	
Union organizations to which teachers belong	There is one teachers' union in Trinidad and Tobago – The Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA). The Union does not have bargaining authority on behalf of ECCE teachers because: i. ECCE is not part of the formal education system governed by The Education Act ii. Contract Officers accept employment under fixed salaries and Terms and Conditions that are not negotiable. However the 2010 Human Rights Report: Trinidad and Tobago states that: "the law protects workers who file complaints with the Labour Ministry regarding illegal or hazardous working conditions. If complainants refuse to comply with an order that would place them in danger, and if it is determined upon inspection that hazardous conditions exist in the workplace, the complainants are absolved from blame." As such, some members of the ECCE teaching fraternity are members of TTUTA and while they do not have the powers of negotiation for salary bargaining, the union does address issues related to conditions of work and industrial relations on behalf of their membership.	TTUTA is the recognised union for teachers of the formal education system. They conduct professional workshops during specific periods, for example: October- designated Month of October annually.

5. Conclusion

This work has been hampered because of various challenges and lack of current data (2014) on ECCE. No documented data were available after 2011. Additionally, the cohort under study are served at three different locations as above identified, therefore there has been overlapping of information at some areas at the 4 year old and 5 year old data.

The 0 to under 3 age group could not have been addressed because there were no identifiable data within the country and the facilities are known to be predominantly private with only minimal governmental input. At this point of summary, one facility – The Child Development Centre in Couva, caters for children from 3 months to 4+/5 years. This facility is totally funded by the government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Ministry of Health, for the Nursery section and the Ministry of Education guides the programme for the pre-schooler. The Nursery section (0 to under 3) caters for a total of 15 children, and is staffed by nursing assistants of the Ministry of Health. The pre-school section caters for a total enrolment of 45 children and is staffed by teaching staff of the Ministry of Education. The ratio of one to twenty is at primary school level, but at the ECCE Centre that caters for pre-schoolers, the ratio is 15:1. The Interdisciplinary Child Development Centre is the only facility that can at this time, be identified for this interdisciplinary work between two Ministries. The facility has now been placed under the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development but continue to be staffed by the original Ministries of Health (for the Nursery) and Education (for the teachers). While reports from the Survey of Living Conditions conducted in 2005 indicated a calculated poverty rate of 22% for the population of Trinidad and Tobago, the geographic distribution of poverty was highly unequal. Reports indicated that the spread could not be conceived in terms of a band of extension. As such, there was no yardstick to measure the distribution of early childhood services from a socio economic standpoint.

From my perspective, there is definitely a need for more extensive research to inform this study. It is an exercise that is being undertaken by this researcher / consultant with effect from September, 2014 and will form part of a larger study within the domains of Policy to: 'Position ECCE within the formal education system of Trinidad and Tobago."

Early Childhood practitioners have struggled through the years for recognition as an integral part of the education system of Trinidad and Tobago. It is the opinion of this consultant that much work has been done in recognising the sub-sector as important to national development, however ECCE is not yet included in the Education Act to become part of the formal system and the ECCE teachers remain in contract employment as opposed to their counterparts at primary and secondary school who are in established teaching positions.

Focus seems now to be on 'quantity' at the expense of quality as systems of control have not been upheld. In 2006, with the start of the construction programme, and 2007, with the expansion of the ECCE sub-sector under previous governance, much emphasis was placed on achieving universal 'quality' Early Childhood. With effect from 2010, with a new government

under a coalition political partnership, the word 'quality' has been consistently left out and the thrust is now publicly acclaimed as Universal access to ECCE – quantity rather than 'quality' seems to be the focus. Additionally, structures that were developed to ensure quality have now been re-structured at the expense of 'quality'. Much is in the nature of changes in staff allocation and quantum on the grounds of economy. Current changes effected at the time of detailing this report in October 2014 are:

- a change from one administrator per ECCE Centre with an enrolment of 50 children to one 'cluster' administrator with responsibility for 3 or 4 ECCE Centres.
- A change from the allocation of 2 ECCE Teachers and 2 ECCE Teacher Assistants with 1 Auxiliary per Centre to 1 ECCE Teacher and 2 Teacher Assistants per centre for 50 children.
- Centres constructed to accommodate 50 children, according to Ministry of Education Planning Division's Architect Brief (2009) are now being mandated to accept 60- 75 children. If effected, this compromises the recommended space per child of 5 square metres per child, inclusive of the Learning Centres identified in the Architect Brief (MOE Planning Division, 2009)

Overall therefore, there is need to address the quality components of the early childhood programme. The training programmes for early childhood teachers are steeped in contemporary early childhood theory that have evolved over time by educational theorists. The Curriculum Guide content has been developed according to the identified philosophical underpinnings of these theorists and scholars, so too has been the 'Standards' Document that was developed to guide operations of ECCE facilities. It is therefore incumbent on educational planners to effect quality as they move forward on the pathway to universal ECCE. Training can only be effective if those trained are encouraged and allowed to put into practice what they have been trained to do.

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