Social Work Education
The Caribbean Experience

LETNIE ROCK

Social work education in the English-speaking Caribbean began about six and a half decades ago. Over this period there has been a gradual expansion of social work programmes throughout the region. These programmes which vary in their orientation to training are delivered in multidisciplinary departments of tertiary level institutions by a small number of highly trained faculty in every case. Although they operate with scarce resources, they seek to respond to the needs of the region and so they ably deliver undergraduate as well as graduate education in social work. There continues to be a push to remove a western orientation from the curricula of the various programmes and make them more indigenous in their approach to training while having them acknowledge the benefits that can be derived from the internationalisation of the curriculum. The University of the West Indies which was the first institution in the region to deliver social work education continues to be the leader in Social Work Education.

Letnie Rock is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.

INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean also referred to as the West Indies typically refers to all English, French, Dutch and Spanish-speaking countries which border the Caribbean Sea, and includes the countries of Guyana on the South American mainland and Belize, which is located in Central America. Caribbean countries comprise a mix of races, ethnic groupings (including indigenous groups) and also a mix of languages [Dutch, English, Spanish and French] “as a result of their history of colonisation” (Rock and Buchan, 2014: 129). These were colonies of European metropolitan countries and they were slave societies for approximately two centuries. Today,
most are independent countries with different levels of socioeconomic development, varying population size and availability of resources. The countries of the English-speaking Caribbean (with the exception of the US and British Virgin Islands) are usually referred to as developing states.

This chapter discusses social work education in the Caribbean. It will highlight the development of social work in the English-speaking Caribbean and make special reference to the social work programmes which are delivered by the four campuses of The University of the West Indies (UWI). Several scholars (Rock and Buchanan, 2014; Rock, 2013 and 2011; Taylor and Rock, 2011; Baker and Maxwell, 2012; Watkins and Holder-Dolly, 2012; Maxwell and others, 2003; Midgley, 1992; Nettleford, 2005; Maxwell, 2002; Ring, 1997; Blackman, 1990; and Dolly–Besson, Wint and Brown, 1983) have written about social work education in the English-speaking Caribbean. Unfortunately, not all of this work has been published.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The history of formal social work education in the Caribbean spans just about six and a half decades. Maxwell (2002) a Jamaican scholar and Blackman (1990) a pioneer in the development of social work in Barbados have given accounts of the very early history. They both note that following a period of socio-political unrest in the British West Indian colonies in the 1930s, social welfare services developed as a mandate of the British Colonial and Welfare Office. They (Blackman (1990) and Maxwell (2002)) inform that following the unrest, the British Government sent out a fact finding commission (the Moyne Commission) which comprised experts in several disciplines. Blackman records that the members of the Commission visited the various territories and then submitted their report (The Moyne Report) in 1937. The report concluded that the socio-political unrest was the result of harsh socioeconomic and political conditions in the colonies. As a response to the Report, the British Government fearing further unrest set up a branch of the British Colonial Office in the West Indies. Many of the recommendations of the Commission were for massive social improvements including expansion of the social services in the government and the voluntary sector (Edmonds, 1973). Blackman notes that in the Report the British staff advisors on social welfare advised that the British West Indian colonies needed modern ‘constructive’ welfare services and not ‘philanthropic and charitable’ relief. One of the recommendations of the Moyne Commission was that grants be considered
for various development programmes including the training of social workers (Blackman, 1990). To this end, Professor Simey, who was one of the British Government’s staff advisors on Social Welfare, held meetings with welfare officers and workers at Mona Jamaica in 1943 and 1944, and arranged for six months residential training courses for early welfare workers in the field (Blackman, 1990; and Maxwell and others, 2003). Maxwell and others (2003) state that in the decade 1943–1953 “training courses were held to train a cadre of persons who became the pioneer leaders of social welfare services in their respective countries” (p.13).

During the 1950s and 1960s, as the need for social welfare services increased in the colonies, there was the concomitant need for trained personnel to deliver social work services and various colonial governments took the initiative to send persons who were appointed as social welfare officers to universities in Britain for social work training to prepare them for roles in the newly established social welfare departments (Dolly-Besson, Wint and Brown, 1983; Blackman, 1990). In 1961, to help meet the need for training of welfare workers, the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in Jamaica started a certificate programme in social work, modeled to a large extent after the existing programmes in social administration of British Universities (Watkins and Holder-Dolly, 2003; Maxwell and others, 2003; Dolly-Bessson and others, 1983). By 1970, this certificate programme evolved into a bachelor’s degree programme and by 1993 a master’s degree in social work was on offer by the Mona Campus (Maxwell and others, 2003). The Social Welfare Training Centre which was established in Jamaica in 1963 also began to offer short training programmes for welfare workers. This programme “developed into a four- month certificate course in social work for paraprofessionals. The programme [with some modifications] still exists today and brings together students from all over the Caribbean to train in Jamaica” (Rock and Buchanan, 2014: 131).

In 1963 the University of Guyana was established and in 1970 a social work unit was formed within the Department of Sociology. This unit offered and coordinated a diploma in Social Work from inception. The programme was developed with input from the social work faculty of the Mona Campus. With the establishment of the baccalaureate degree in social work at the Mona campus in 1970, graduates of this programme were able to complete the B.Sc. degree in Jamaica. In Guyana, in the 1970s, there was an emphasis on training students in community development due to a strong policy articulated by the new independent government of self help and the concept of people and communities helping themselves (Matthews, 1990).
However, by the 1988–1989 academic year, the University of Guyana began offering a four year bachelors degree in social work through an arrangement with Dalhousie University, Maritime School of Social Work, Nova Scotia, Canada. The programme was funded by a five year grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Training was aimed not only at the development of the BSW Social Work Programme, but at the training and professional development of the social work faculty, and the training and professionalisation of social work agency supervisors in Guyana (Danns, 1990). Graduates of the diploma programme could enroll in the BSW programme for an additional two years to obtain the degree. Scholarships were also provided by Dalhousie University for persons wishing to pursue the MSW at the Maritime School of Social Work. By 1992, the University of Guyana had upgraded its Diploma in Social Work to a BSW degree. This programme was partly modeled on the BSW delivered by Dalhousie University (Maxwell and others, 2003). In 1980 the College of the Bahamas also began to offer the Associate Degree in Social Work (Ibid).

Subsequently, the Cave Hill and St. Augustine campuses of the University of the West Indies located in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively, began to offer social work training programmes. The Cave Hill Campus introduced a two year certificate programme based on the Mona model in 1988. This was followed by a B.Sc. programme in 1998 and an MSW programme in 2006. The St. Augustine Campus started a two year certificate in Social Work in 1990 and this also followed Mona’s model closely. In 1992 the certificate programme was extended into a baccalaureate programme (first as a major) and in 2000 as a full B.Sc. Social Work. These programmes were developed with some assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat (Maxwell and others, 2003). In the academic year 2000/2003 the MSW programme was started at the St. Augustine Campus and in 2004/2005 the M.Phil. Social Work and the Ph.D.Social work, both research degrees, were introduced. A post-graduate Diploma in Mediation Studies was also introduced in 2004/2005 at the St. Augustine Campus and the M.Sc. Mediation Studies introduced in 2005/2006. Meanwhile The UWI School of Continuing Studies formerly ‘The Extra Mural Department’ of UWI, with sites in different locations around the English-speaking-Caribbean, began to offer a certificate in social work among its continuing education programmes at locations in Jamaica, Belize, Barbados and Antigua. The School of Continuing Studies has now evolved into the UWI Open Campus.
By the first decade of the 21st century social work programmes were being delivered in colleges and universities in several countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, namely, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, and St. Kitts and Nevis. “There are currently 18 tertiary institutions in over 19 countries in the Caribbean region which have taken on the mandate of offering social work training” (Rock and Buchanan, 2014: 131). They deliver programmes which are somewhat diverse in their approach to professional training and these are offered at the certificate, diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree and master degree levels. However, there is a greater emphasis on training at the baccalaureate level, since the bachelor level social work graduate is being sought to fill many roles in the social services sectors in the region (Rock and Buchanan, 2014). The newest social work programme to be launched in the Caribbean is that offered by the UWI Open Campus. This programme utilises a blended learning approach for the delivery of its courses.

The various programmes have led to greater opportunities for training social work students and practitioners in the Caribbean region. Many are small programmes which are still in transition as they face the challenges of defining and developing social work education in the dynamic interplay of their changing socioeconomic and political environments and international social work influences (Ring, 1997). Rock (2011) opines that “this steady growth in social work educational programmes was not by chance. The impact of socioeconomic conditions existing in the region and elsewhere over the years demanded attention to the plight of the people, particularly the poor and other disadvantaged groups in the region” (p. 741).

Social work programmes are also delivered in the US Virgin Islands, the French-speaking Caribbean territories of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Marie Galante and St. Martin, Dutch-speaking territories of Aruba, Bon Aire, Curacao, St. Marteen and St. Eustatius, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries of Cuba, Suriname, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico and the French-speaking country of Haiti. It must be noted that the curriculum of the programmes that are delivered in the countries which are still territories of European metropolitan countries continues to be influenced by western ideology and philosophy and are therefore not congruent with local needs (Rock and Buchanan, 2014; Baker and Maxwell, 2012). The Association of Social Work Educators has been reaching out to the faculty of these programmes through biennial social work conferences and social work meetings to expose them to the developments taking place in social work education regionally and internationally. In the Dutch territory of
Curacao some social work faculty have expressed a need for curriculum renewal to make their programmes more indigenous and less Eurocentric (Rock and Buchanan, 2014; Baker and Maxwell, 2012).

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES FOR THE DELIVERY OF CARIBBEAN SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is considered the foremost tertiary educational institution in the English-speaking Caribbean (Maxwell and others, 2003). It has four campuses. The Mona Campus situated in Jamaica, the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados, and the Open Campus which delivers continuing education programmes throughout the entire region via a distance education medium. The UWI serves the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands (Rock and Buchanan, 2014). Maxwell and others (2003) noted that the programmes delivered on the UWI campuses: “while varying in certain specifics do have a common approach in presenting the essential knowledge and skills for a generic programme of social work education - designated the B.Sc. Social Work (Special)” (p.15). This is still the same today. However, three of the UWI campuses deliver the MSW.

The social work programmes delivered at the other tertiary level institutions tend to vary in orientation. Most of the programmes are offered at the basic certificate, associate degree or the baccalaureate level. Some programmes are delivered in institutions which are state run and others are delivered by institutions under private auspices. There are four such programmes delivered by religious denominations. These are the programmes delivered by the Jamaica Theological College, the Caribbean Nazarene College (Jamaica) and the programmes delivered by Seventh-day Adventist Universities, namely, the University of the Southern Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago) and Northern Caribbean University (Jamaica).

The social work programmes at the UWI and other non-UWI institutions are not delivered in Schools or Faculties of Social Work as may be found in several universities around the world, but in units and multidisciplinary departments. This type of institutional configuration has been the general model for the programmes. In reference to the UWI, Maxwell and others (2003) note that the various subjects taught in the curricula of the social
work programmes are “taught in an educational structure which has social work units [Mona and St. Augustine Campuses] as sections of Departments which also teach Sociology, Psychology and, in the instance of the Trinidad and Barbados Campuses, sub-disciplines associated with the field of Government (Political Science, Public Administration and International Relations)” (p.16). They further note that since “social work education is delivered within multidisciplinary departments there is no separate budgetary allocation therefore the social work programmes have to compete for scarce financial and human resources. However, this arrangement presents opportunities for sharing—such as the sharing of computers, teaching aids/equipment—which are made available to the larger department collective” (Maxwell, 2003: 18). At the UWI, course delivery is also shared by faculty in other disciplines. Thus, in addition to social work courses, students also gain knowledge in psychology, sociology, basic statistics, social research, economics and political science by participating in classes offered to the wider body of students in the Social Sciences. However, this mixed disciplines institutional arrangement lends to the lack of autonomy for planning and implementing a more integrated social work oriented curriculum (Maxwell and others, 2003) and over the years has posed a significant constraint to programme visibility and development.

Most of the social work programmes in the Caribbean benefit from institutional accreditation. Few enjoy programme accreditation and this has become a major issue for programmes particularly as it relates to graduates wanting to access universities abroad for postgraduate education or when they seek employment internationally. The Association of Caribbean Social Work Educators (ACSWE) has been discussing the issue of programme accreditation, but there are difficulties around the lack of a regional body to accredit programmes and the problems that can arise if Caribbean programmes are accredited by an external accreditation body.

**The Undergraduate Social Work Curriculum**

At present the undergraduate B.Sc. social curriculum of each UWI campus is generic in orientation because students are being prepared to practice from a generalist perspective. Courses are usually 3 credit hours each and students are eligible for graduation on completion of 90 credit hours. The faculty is urged to make what they teach relevant to the local (national) and regional (wider Caribbean) contexts. The curriculum is geared towards students having a background in social and behavioral
sciences; social research methodology; theory and practice of social work interventions with individuals, groups and communities; social policy; and administration and management of the social services (Maxwell, 2003). On every campus of UWI some of the social work courses meet the interest of other undergraduate students in the Social Sciences and Humanities (Maxwell, 2003) and they are permitted to register for select courses in the social work programme. At Cave Hill, undergraduate law students are allowed to register for social work electives.

The small number of full time and part time social work faculty members on each UWI campus is responsible for concentrating primarily on the teaching of the core social work courses and the social work electives. The core courses generally include introduction to social work, a human skill laboratory, social policy, social planning, human behaviour in the social environment, social work theory and practice with individuals, groups and communities. Some programmes also include a course on social work and law/or law and human services as a required course. Required courses in psychology and sociology are taught by faculty in those disciplines. Many social work electives are offered across programmes. These include crisis intervention, child welfare, residential social work and courses in areas relevant to practice with special population groups—areas such as child abuse and neglect, gerontology, disabilities, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Students may enroll in electives in the related fields of psychology, anthropology, criminology, criminal justice, gender and development, human resource management, project management, disaster management, health, education and law. Social work faculty is also responsible for “the organisation and monitoring of 800 to 900 hours of practica in a wide variety of field agencies—with the support of agency personnel in the role of supervisors/field instructors (Maxwell and others, 2003: 16). The IASSW/IFSW Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession and their Ethics Document, and the IASSW/IFSW/ICSW Global Agenda on Social Work and Social Development are increasingly being used by programmes as reference points for the development or renewal of their curricula.

Social Work faculty have also been infusing content on domestic violence, disaster management and climate change, human rights and diversity, social and economic justice, ethics and governance in the curricula of their programmes. The Mona campus has recently revised its undergraduate /B.SC. Social work curriculum to include concentrations on “Generalist Practice in Health or Educational Settings” and “Generalist
Practice with a focus on Community and/or Project Development”. The reality is that the social work student must be trained to combat the existing and emerging social problems of the region.

Many of the non-UWI programmes have developed their programmes in consultation with UWI social work faculty and so generally the curricula of the non-UWI social work programmes include a practicum and some of the courses mentioned above, although the content may vary somewhat from programme to programme. As stated in Standard 4 (4.1 and 4.2) of the Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession “schools should aspire toward an identification of and selection for inclusion in the programme curricula, as determined by local, national and/or regional/international needs and priorities … there are certain core curricula that may be seen to be universally applicable” (p.19).

Across programmes the course of study for the certificate and diploma programmes is usually one year on a full time basis; the associate degree is delivered on a two year full time basis. With the exception of a few programmes, the baccalaureate degree is usually structured to be completed in three years on a full-time basis. Increasingly, students are opting to register to complete the programmes part time, but the completion time is longer.

**The Graduate Social Work Curriculum**

There are few MSW programmes on offer within the tertiary institutions of the Caribbean. Where they exist the enrollment is also small (10–15 students). The UWI Mona, Cave Hill and St. Augustine Campuses, and the University of the Southern Caribbean offer post graduate social work education. The Mona campus can be credited with having the largest MSW programme. The core curricula and the number of credit hours required for completion and the structure of the graduate programmes (MSW) vary from programme to programme. Graduate education is offered in social welfare policy and administration, social work management and administration, community organisation, HIV/AIDS, and clinical social work. Although the curriculum varies according to each programme’s emphasis, the post graduate social work student is usually required to complete courses in research, a research project and a practicum.

Programmes are offered on both a full-time and part time basis and the length of time for completion of the MSW on a full time basis can vary from 18 months to two years. At the Cave Hill Campus the programme is designed for delivery at the weekend to allow students the option of
remaining in full-time employment and to enable colleagues from other UWI campuses to teach in the programme. Most programmes currently require that students have some experience in the field of social work for admission. The Master of Philosophy in Social Work and the Ph.D. in Social Work (both research-based degrees) are delivered at the Cave Hill and St. Augustine Campuses.

The Social Work Practicum

The practicum or field internship is central to all the social work programmes, both graduate and undergraduate. At the UWI Mona and St. Augustine Campuses it is offered concurrently with the taught courses in all programmes at the B.Sc. degree level. At the Cave Hill Campus it is offered as a block placement for one academic year in the final year of study (Rock and Ring, 2010). The practicum hours may vary from campus to campus and programme to programme, but at the baccalaureate level they range between 800–900 hours total (Maxwell and others, 2000). The practicum “takes place in field agencies [in a variety of settings] with the collaboration of agency supervisors” (Maxwell and others, 2003: 18) and is conducted concurrently with a field internship integrative seminar as it aims at helping students integrate theory with practice (Ibid). Students may also undertake their internship in various countries in the region or internationally. The Caribbean Internship Programme (CIP) facilitates the placement of both undergraduate and graduate students in internships in countries within the English-speaking Caribbean. For international field placements, students generally prefer to go to the USA, UK or Canada. However, students from the St. Augustine Campus have gone to South Africa on internship. Every year since 2010, two undergraduate students from the Cave Hill Campus have been going for one semester as exchange students to the University of Calgary in Canada for their practicum training. With this reciprocal arrangement, annually, two students from the University of Calgary also complete a practicum at Cave Hill.

Students of the UWI will generally opt to go to those universities overseas which have MOUs/agreements with their own university as a way of ensuring that suitable arrangements are made for their studies. At the Masters level students in social policy, management and administration may undertake the practicum with The Caribbean Internship Programme (CIP) or an international organisation such as UNDP, UNICEF or PAHO/WHO, UNFPA, USAID. The practica for the social work certificate and associate degree programmes comprise fewer credit hours and these are
usually coordinated over the summer period. However, with the growth in social work training programmes around the Caribbean region, there is a need for each programme to develop more regional and international internship opportunities for students as there are limited placement opportunities available in most countries. Inadequately staffed social service agencies in some countries and a lack of trained social work professionals in traditional as well as non-traditional agencies present a challenge for student supervision. The practicum is usually coordinated by a designated field placement coordinator, a faculty member, who is required to have the MSW (clinical) qualification.

Both the undergraduate and graduate programmes undergo a quality assurance review process every five years. Programmes prepare a self-assessment report and a review team reviews the report and consults with select personnel from the university’s administration, faculty, students, and a cross section of stakeholders after which it prepares a report. The faculty in response indicates how the recommendations will be implemented.

THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM: INDIGENISATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION

Globally social work faculty are becoming more interested in having international collaborations, faculty and student exchanges and international content infused in their social work curricula as they seek to give their students local as well as international exposure. The Caribbean programmes are no different and with the world being considered “a global village”, balancing the indigenous or home-grown and the foreign or international element in the curriculum is very desirable. In terms of the curriculum, Healy (2002) refers to internationalisation of the social work curriculum as a “long neglected aspect of social work” (p.1).

However, some social work programmes in the English-speaking Caribbean have been considered as being too western in orientation. For example, scholars, (Maxwell and others, 2003; Matthews, 1990; Midgley, 1992) have written about the existence of a European and/or North American influence in the curriculum of the UWI social work programmes and that of the University of Guyana. They attributed this situation in part to the paucity of social work literature indigenous to the Caribbean, which led programmes to become dependent on teaching materials from Britain and North America; and to the work of those early welfare officers who received their training in Britain (Matthews, 1990). Admittedly, this approach has not changed significantly. To date, most of the social
work textbooks and other social work literature used by the social work students in tertiary institutions in the Caribbean are of western origin, thus maintaining a western influence in the social work programmes by way of theory and research insights. It is a situation which faculty is mindful of, but the difficulty is that there are still few resources both human and otherwise in the various programmes to support faculty members who want to engage in prolific research with a Caribbean orientation (Rock and Valtonen, 2003). The social work faculty in the various institutions is so bogged down with programme administrative duties, teaching and related responsibilities that they are challenged to find enough quality time to engage in research and professional writing (Rock and Buchanan, 2014). There are also too few established publishing houses in the Caribbean for publishing the work of academics.

In addressing the roots of a western orientation, Maxwell and others (2003) state that Midgley (1992) notes that social work “has been exported to the rest of the world through colonial or neo-colonial and cultural relations” (p.24), what he calls “professional imperialism”. A glance at the history of the Caribbean will reveal that this would have been the experience of all the Caribbean countries which were colonies of the metropolitan countries of Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. Thus, it is quite understandable how from inception the social work programmes would have been based on European models and strongly influenced by western ideology and philosophy (Rock and Buchanan, 2014).

The strong western influence has been retained in the curriculum of social work programmes delivered in the non-English-speaking countries which are still territories of the Metropolitan countries, but to a lesser extent in the programmes of the English-speaking countries. Although as noted earlier the latter have been tardy in adopting an indigenous orientation to theory and practice. Maxwell and others (2003: 25) note that Thompson (1997: 9) points out that “the long period of colonialism and the short period since independence have not allowed us [Caribbean people] to transform our political, economic and social systems to our advantage”. Maxwell and others (2003) conclude that “from this perspective social work theory is no different from other aspects of the social structure that have not experienced indigenous development” (p.25)... [and that after 50 years] of an established social work programme [in the region at the UWI], “complaints are still being made about the lack of indigenous theories, and textbooks, or the paucity of articles and intervention strategies that are appropriate for social work in the Caribbean” (p.25). Maxwell and others (2003) query whether
“perhaps social work educators have succumbed too easily in the past to the British and now the North American paradigms of social work and to the availability of texts which support these paradigms” (p.25), and note that “a glance at a reading list for any of the social work courses offered [by the tertiary institutions in the English-speaking Caribbean region] will testify to this” (Maxwell and others, 2003: 93). However, these authors note that Midgley (1992) is of the view that “social work educators in the developing world should not blame themselves for being caught up in the American hegemonic approach to social work theory and practice” (p.24) since through a number of subtle processes such as the availability of funds for American social workers to travel internationally, the provision of scholarships for students from abroad and the export of American textbooks and other publications, principally due to inequality of wealth, Americans have been able to gradually spread their ideas and practice methods. In addition, in the early years of the development of the programmes, the core of the social work programmes was developed and introduced by foreign or foreign-trained social work educators (Matthews, 1990).

One and a half decades ago, Ring (1997) stated “it is apparent that some of the ‘imported’ social work information is not working in the Caribbean, while some is. Developing ideas, theories, and models that address the client systems of the region are becoming more and more of a necessity, if social work education is going to be viable, and if social work as a profession [in the region] is going to survive in a globalised, diverse, and complex world” (p. 4).

Healy (2002) opines that struggles for indigenisation can shift attention from global issues and this could become the case in the Caribbean where social work programmes are trying to institute the balance of the indigenous and the international in the curriculum. From an indigenous point of view there is the imperative for the social work students to learn about and investigate the history/beginnings of social work in the Caribbean, the diversity that exists among Caribbean people, the impact of the various socioeconomic, political and cultural systems on the people, the common social issues that confront Caribbean people, and the policies and practice methods that are appropriate to address social ills and the needs of vulnerable groups. Such knowledge and the findings of their investigations will expand their view not only of the local and regional, but also the international and, cause them to look at their own socioeconomic, political and cultural issues differently.

To date many Caribbean social work programmes have already put in place strategies to make their curricula a mix of the regional and
international. The world is “smaller” and given the socioeconomic, cultural, political and larger environmental issues which are common to us all and the technologies which ensure that wherever we are in the world we are always connected, Caribbean social work educators must acknowledge that their students need international exposure and that they must deliberately and purposefully expose the social work students to things globally which impact their lives. There are other reasons for this—“our graduates are increasingly migrating, and being recruited by other agencies abroad and need to make the transition” (Rock and Buchanan, 2014: 136). Also while working at home practitioners need to know how global issues impact their several clients and the agency and others around them and how to deal with others who come to their countries. They also come into contact periodically with situations that require knowledge beyond the borders of their own country (Healy, 2002).

Healy (2002) believes therefore, that “social work programmes should prepare students to understand and address the local manifestations of global problems” (p. 4) and Sewpaul (2003) notes that “social workers need to be trained to work not only within national boundaries; they need to understand how the forces of globalisation impact on different nation states and the lives of ordinary people” (p.128). Caribbean social work programmes exist within institutions and communities that are trying to survive in the current turbulent, global environment and this in itself creates a tremendous impact on what faculty does, what they can or cannot do, and how they do what they do. The times demand that students receive greater and greater exposure to the international arena and insights into how global politics, economic policies, international treaties and multi-lateral agreements are transforming the Caribbean, its communities, its families and their own individual lives (Rock and Buchanan, 2014). Fortuitously, for programmes, internationalisation can be viewed through various lenses, as it means different things to different people and there are a variety of models and possible programmes that one can work with when internationalising the social work curriculum (Dominelli, 2012; Healey, 2012; Hokenstad, 2012).

There are several benefits to internationalisation of the social work curriculum by Caribbean programmes. These include the fact that students will learn to think critically about the world they live in and therefore are able to engage their constituents in dialogue about the changes that are taking place. There is also the benefit to students who may gain cross-cultural competencies [communication skills] and knowledge of social work in other countries and develop the capacity to identify and adapt innovations
from abroad to address Caribbean social work problems. Quality is also built into the local social work programme which may benefit from increased resources and recognition through international collaborations. Enrollment will also grow as students prefer to enroll in programmes that are attractive in structure and content and offer international exposure. In other words, internationalisation of the curriculum can increase the marketability of the programmes.

The following are examples of some specific activities that denote the internationalisation of programmes in the Caribbean:

- Although to date none of the programmes have put in place a full course on “International Social Work”, the social work courses are infused wherever possible with international content.

- Programmes, particularly those offered by UWI, have the goal of regionalism and internationalisation of the curriculum. Within the UWI, social work programmes are being forced to internationalise their curricula under the UWI Strategic Plans 2007–2012 and 2012–2017. The aim is to prepare the social work student for tomorrow’s world.

- Student and faculty engage in exchanges/attachments with social work programmes in other parts of the world—students go on exchanges within the region, North American universities and elsewhere. For example, students from St. Augustine have gone to the USA and to South Africa [Uni. of Kwa Zulu Natal] and South African students have come to St. Augustine for internships. Students from the Mona campus have gone to the USA and students from the Cave Hill Campus to Canada. UWI has several MOUs with Universities around the world to facilitate faculty and staff exchanges.

- Faculty has been adopting the use of materials and examples from non-western countries, for example, faculty from the Mona programme have been making increasing use of materials from non-western countries—The Mona Campus has adopted a community development text from South Africa for Level 3 community organisation students.

- The UWI ensures that there is an international scholar on every Quality Assurance Review team for the social work programme.

- Many of the programmes/courses highlight the work of the UN, its agencies, treaties and multilateral agreements with a focus on human rights and issues such as child protection, gender equality, disaster intervention, HIV/AIDS, disabilities.

There is the annual participation by Caribbean students and faculty in Social Work Day at the UN (Mona Campus) and many social work programmes engage their students in activities to observe World Social Work Day.

Caribbean students and faculty utilise the most modern and up to date technology for engagement in distance/online education and discussions with faculty and students in other countries.

Students and faculty engage in international collaborative research that focuses on local, regional and international issues and problems.

There is rapid growth in international partnerships. Increasingly, MOUs are being signed with overseas universities and these lend to international partnerships and linkages.

The student exchanges and study abroad opportunities for students tantamount to cross-border mobility and these help to provide increased educational enrichment opportunities for students through internships and so on.

Faculty participate in or host international social work conferences and events. In 2007 Barbados hosted the IASSW and CSWE (Katherine A. Kendall Memorial Institute) International Conference on Disaster Management. They also hold membership in the various international bodies, namely IASSW, IFSW, ICSW, and ICSD.

Partnerships with American Universities—Institutions/programmes in the South are always interested in building partnerships with programmes/institutions in the north, perhaps because they can access more resources through these special arrangements.

**Faculty and Students**

In the early days the students recruited to the programmes were categorised as mature both in terms of age (over 21 years) and work experience. Thus the programmes catered mainly to persons who were already working in the field of social welfare. Today, the programmes continue to recruit the mature student but high school and college graduates (under age 21) who are interested in pursuing a career in social work and have satisfied the Institutions’ matriculation requirements are
also admitted. However, the social work applicant is generally carefully selected for admission to the course of study—whether undergraduate or graduate—via critical assessment based on personal data. At the Cave Hill Campus these include a biographical statement, and personal references which must accompany the application, and a subsequent assessment interview.

More females than males usually apply to the programmes which, therefore, have a higher intake of females than males. An estimated 1000 students or more are currently enrolled in both graduate and undergraduate social work programmes across the English-speaking Caribbean and although the programmes collectively have graduated hundreds of personnel trained in the area of social work, there is still a scarcity of entry-level trained social work personnel to deliver the much needed social work services in the region. Countries such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Lucia and Grenada have few professionally trained social workers to deliver social work services.

The impact of and access to the electronic and social media means that students enrolled in the programmes today are generally more acquainted with the issues impacting vulnerable groups in their societies. With this knowledge and the training obtained in the academy, they are increasingly feeling empowered to advocate for social and economic justice and political changes and to make a difference in their communities upon graduation.

A measly number of well trained social work faculty with responsibility for the delivery of social work training is a feature of every social work educational programme in the English-speaking Caribbean. Most faculty members were either fully or partly trained in Social Work in North America (USA and Canada) or in the UK. That is, they might have pursued either their undergraduate or graduate social work training or both at an institution abroad. Thus, they are generally qualified at the Ph.D. and/or and Masters’ degrees level. Most of the faculty is under the age of fifty and there is a high female to male ratio. In most institutions there is compulsory retirement on attaining the age of 65 years.

In-service training programmes are usually offered by the various institutions. These faculty development initiatives are not geared specifically to social work faculty, but they can participate in the in-service training or enroll in faculty development institutes and workshops when attending international conferences.
CONCLUSION

The development of social work education in the Caribbean is tied to the social, economic, political and cultural experiences of the region, the social problems which need to be addressed and the impact of international forces. Social workers who have been trained at various professional levels are making a difference as educators, researchers, practitioners, administrators, and policy makers. However, the social service needs in many countries of the region are still acute and faculty is constantly renewing the curricula of programmes to ensure that the education delivered to students prepares them adequately for both the regional and global marketplace. Meantime as the profession in the Caribbean struggles for professional recognition, global forces are pushing the programmes in the direction of licensing and accreditation. This is an exciting era for the social work education in the Caribbean and it is hoped that the programmes will rise to the challenges they currently face.

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