EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN JAMAICA: RETROSPECTIVE
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Seeing investment in children as a part of the overall process of development, we can have a fuller understanding of the extensive reach and critical importance of investing in early childhood.

Amartya Sen, (1999)
1963: UWI through IOE began periodic training sessions in Early Childhood Education led by Ms. Barbara Priestman.

Sir Hugh Springer, Registrar of the UWI, obtained funding in 1966 from the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF)

1966: Project for Early Childhood Education (PECE) established
Mr. Grant appointed PECE Project Director. He set out to design and implement a programme of early childhood education in Jamaica. Assisted by Dr Don Wilson and Dr Ruby King - IOE. Assembled a team of young, bright, creative teachers including ECD stalwarts: Mrs. Fay Corothers and Mrs. Joyce Jarrett.
1938 - Rev Henry Ward gave the name Basic School to the first institution of its type.

Goal of the early Basic Schools:

- to remove children from idle play in sometimes dangerous situations
- provide them with more meaningful learning activities in safe, structured settings.
Mid 1960s: claims from Head Start and High Scope programmes in the USA.

Questions raised:

- can good pre-school programmes enable success through intellectual development?
- can the cycle of poverty be successfully broken by providing effective pre-school intervention?
MODEL DEVELOPED
COMMUNITY BASED MODEL OF ECE
1968–1978

- PARENTS CAREGIVERS
- COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- SOCIALIZATION EDUCATION
- COMMUNITY LIVING LABORATORY
- FUNCTIONAL INTERACTIVITY
- EDUCARE
IMPLEMENTATION: TARGET GROUP
Classroom Competency Oriented Programme (CCOP) of the PECE:

Provided cognitive and professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals
1973: Early Childhood Education Unit: MOE - Education Officers appointed to monitor and oversee aspects of the PECE.

1978: the GOJ / BvLF / UWI scholarships given to practising Infant School teachers and Basic School teacher trainers to pursue a Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

MOE also provided a salary subsidy for teachers in “Recognized” Basic Schools.
MOBILISING RESOURCES

COMMUNITY BASED SPONSORING BODIES
Churches/private sector / NGOs / Service Clubs

ZONE ACTION COMMITTEES

PARISH BOARDS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PARISH BOARDS

PARENTS
- Meals
- Cleaning
- Maintenance
PROJECT FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (PACE), GOJ/BvLF.

Major thrust of PACE:

- Attract new partners.
- Deepen the teacher education process.
- 1982: First B.Ed. in Early Childhood Education offered UWI / BvLF/ MOE.
- Improvement of physical plants of Basic Schools.
1984 EVALUATION: Springer Report

- National Association of Parish Boards
- Nain Resource Training Centre: Alpart
- Summer BEd programme: BvLF/ UWI
- North Coast Project: BvLF/ GOJ
- Teenage Mothers Project & Roving Caregivers
Supervised day care for the children of teenage mothers,

Allowed the mothers to complete their education

Provided parenting education for the mothers and fathers

Roving Caregivers Programme: trained ‘Rovers’

Largely self-sustaining - Rural Family Support Organization (RuFamSo), NGO in Clarendon.
Implemented in St. Catherine and Manchester, and later in St Thomas (BvLF).

Caribbean Child Support Initiative: Implemented in Grenada, St Lucia, Dominica and St Vincent.

2000: UNICEF’s prestigious Maurice Pate Leadership for Children Award.
INVOLVEMENT OF PARTNERS

FAMILIES

COMMUNITIES

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD THRUST

BVLF

GOVERNMENT

PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTORS

UWI

OTHER PARTNERS
Formation of the Dudley Grant Memorial Trust

BvLF funded a large scale project to evaluate and revitalize the Early Childhood Development programme, resulted in
- heightened interest,
- mobilization of government funding
- support from private sector companies.

Public Education programme - Operation START (Start Teaching at the Right Time) – won the prestigious 1995 Gleaner Honour Award in Jamaica
1990s: EVALUATION & REVITALIZATION

- 1996: Basic Schools selected as the island’s Labour Day project
- 1999: Partnership for Poverty Reduction Programme presented its annual award to the Dudley Grant Memorial Trust.
- 1999: the Bernard Van Leer Foundation awarded the very prestigious Oscar Van Leer Award to THE BASIC SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN JAMAICA (BSM).
1990s: Active building programme:
27 schools constructed by the World Bank
20 schools built by JSIF
Public and private sector companies and community interests contributed significantly to individual schools and communities.
2000: strategic review of the national Early Childhood Programme commissioned by the Planning Institute of Jamaica - funded by UNICEF. Major recommendation: Service Delivery Model for early childhood to be developed and implemented for children from birth to eight years.
1999: Day Care responsibilities shifted from Ministry of Health to the Early Childhood Unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Increased the coverage of ECCD to the birth to 6 year old age range.

The Integration Pilot Project:
240 National Youth Service volunteers trained to work in institutions providing Early Childhood Care and Development
Incorporated the work of the Roving Caregivers’ Programme.
New Partner: The Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) - mandate includes promotion of Child Survival.

2003: EFJ partnered with the BvLF to fund the Resource Centre Upgrading Project which built capacity and promoted sustainability in the 15 Early Childhood Resource Centres island wide.
JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND (JSIF)

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

AFFORDABILITY

EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

QUALITY

TENSION
In 1998, Competency Standards for the Certification of Early Childhood workers at three levels were developed and published by NCTVET.

In 2003, 5000 practitioners were certified at Level 1. Several progressed to Level 2 and a number entered Teacher Training Colleges.
In 2000, approximately 200 college trained teachers paid by the then Ministry of Education Youth and Culture placed - one in each Basic School enrolment >100 children.

DGMT/ BvLF, research study identified a number of difficulties experienced by children transitioning from Basic to Primary School. In 2001, the Transitional Pilot Project implemented the recommendations of that study in Clarendon with great success.
In 2002, UNICEF and CHASE – funded revision of the National Early Childhood Curriculum to include the birth to three year olds and to emphasize the integrated approach to learning.

2003: “Tech de Bus” Women for PACE (Canada) partnered with the Rotary Club of North St Ann and the then MOEYC. Donated a second Tech de Bus and also provided funds for an annual scholarship to a student pursuing studies in ECD.

2003: The Jamaica Early Childhood Association (JECA) was launched.
2003 The Early Childhood Commission Act. Establishment of the Commission was one of the recommendations of the Strategic Review conducted in 2000.

Mandated to provide the legislative and regulatory framework to support the implementation of operational standards and regulations in the sector.
The Early Childhood Bill, which requires the compulsory registration of all early childhood institutions, is part of this legislative framework, as is the Policy and Standards Document, designed to govern the operations of early childhood institutions.

2010: The Early Childhood Education Unit of the Ministry of Education disbanded and the Commission is now responsible for the administration and delivery of ECD in Jamaica.
Early 2000s: BvLF reduced and then ceased its funding of projects in the Caribbean.
The project office on the UWI Mona Campus established by BvLF is now the responsibility of the UWI School of Education.
It is now Dudley Grant Early Childhood Resource Centre; a hub for the other Resource Centres.

The Dudley Grant Memorial Trust has continued working with its other partners to promote Early Childhood Development in Jamaica