

THE CENTRALITY OF ‘SOCIAL’ IN OUR DEVELOPMENT THRUST : Articulating Theory, Policy, Program and Practice Networks

Theoretically, methodologically and empirically, these are some of the factors that underpin contemporary social changes : the impact of globalization, post modernism’s unearthing of the fluidity of everyday lives, social networking and movements, shifting social identities, complexity that borders on chaos, rationality-emotionality imbalances and demographic changes. Emerging out of the corresponding reality of these scenarios is a range of injustices and inequalities and weakening of community bonds. For some, their cultural legacy may have provided some stability amidst the disturbing flux. Others have depended on structures and organizations at different levels for direction. (Abrams, Hogg and Marques 2005, 3-10). The latter have become more vulnerable to structurally generated injustices – procedural and distributive. As consequence there have been declines and halting of the building of social, cultural, emotional, moral and spiritual capital. (Bruhn 2005, 176). In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, like many other countries, many initiatives have been developed and many have borne fruit at the community level across the country. However, the wave of negativity, deviant activities, and incivilities far outweighs the positives and it seems as though, small-scale program benefits are therefore producing ripple and not wavelike effects. Given that in Trinidad and Tobago, we have the financial, rational, informational and structural resources, the emergent question is how we begin to make a ‘dent’ in order to reduce the spate of serious social problems. We can begin by focusing on community-level interventions and we can do so by

utilizing an Integrated Planning and Implementation Approach (IPIA) hitherto hinted by many. The challenge to operationalize this approach at the community level remains however. Advanced herein is a proposal for so doing. After reviewing some of the literature on community-level interventions. I would briefly describe the context and rationale, the existing policy framework and then outline the institutional and implementation framework for this new community social development initiative.

Community Level Interventions

Communities have been defined as comprising people ‘...who have something in common with one another that connects them in some way and that distinguishes them from others. (Homan 1999, 8). Communities have also been viewed as places, geographically-defined spaces where groups interact. In addition, they have been defined as organizations that help people achieve their goals. Others posit that their central concern is the sharing of identity. There is however convergence on the notion of a sense of place in which people and cultures relate. Agreement also exists on the view that location, social system and common identity characterize communities. (Flora and Flora 2004, 8). In traditional communities one could have found a set of institutions – churches, schools, businesses. As a result of improvements in transport and communication, people can feel a sense of community with others who live elsewhere or even in foreign lands. Individuals may therefore have ties in several communities. Some institutions that are not indigenous, may feel alienated from a community. Political boundaries have also defined communities. Impacted upon by similar social problems, people may begin to demonstrate a sense of community. (Flora and Flora 2004, 8). Every community has assets which can be mobilized to create various types of capital – cultural, human, social, financial, natural and

political. (Flora and Flora 2004, 9-10). However ‘...not all local relationships are communitarian.’ (Brent 2004, 217). Those communities that revolve around place are sometimes very nationalistic. Community has also been connected with power, voice, locality, nature, lifeworld, organic, resistance, identity and face-to-face. Some writers believe however that while the desire for community remains alive, it remains a challenge to achieve meaning and connectedness in social life. (Brent 2004, 222).

An important requirement for community development is community capacity building. Community capacity has been defined as:

‘...the interaction of human capital, organizational resources and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. it may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations and social that exist among them between the layer system of which the community is a part’ (Chaskin et al. 2001, 7).

Communities are generally characterized by affectivities, increased mobility of people, relationships that extend beyond its geographical boundaries and a range of resources, infrastructure, jobs, incomes and housing. As these change, community capacity usually changes and capacity-building initiatives usually seek to build on these assets. (Chaskin et al. 2001, 10;

Morse 2004, 83). Moreover, Robert J. Chaskin et al. (2001, 11-12) has advanced a capacity building framework that incorporates the following:

- a) characteristics of communities;
- b) levels of social agency;
- c) building strategies;
- d) conditioning influences;
- e) community-level outcomes

They argue that the indicators for community capacity are manifested through individuals, organizations and networks. In addition, the effects of capacity building interventions are also displayed at these levels and are simultaneously constrained and enables by micro and macro-level factors. To that end, strategies are usually implemented to build leadership, organizations and to promote collaborations, alliances and networks. (Chaskin 2001, 31; 65;125-126; Morse 2004, 51-52; Bruhn 2005, 191)

Community development studies have converged on the view that as people seek meaning in their lives, spirituality becomes embedded to various degrees, in their lifestyles informing their value systems and their sense of ethics. In this regard it has been argued that there is a spiritual connection between the well being of the individual and the community's well being. (Chile and Simpson 2004, 319). Spirituality has been defined as the inner self that influences who we are and expressed through religion and other avenues. Community development is the outcome of members' collaboration to promote their well being. People often link and interact with each

other. This means that community initiatives should be inclusive, non-discriminatory and empowering. (Chile and Simpson 2004, 329).

Urban growth has led to an increased demand for health care sanitation and basic services. Communities are characterized by social relations, intimacy, social cohesion and emotional depth. Collective actions are exercised through community in arrangement. (Doe and Khan 2004, 362). The quality of community management depends on population size, household size, household age – group structure and occupations household members. (Doe and Khan 2004, 366). Success depends on the level of local participation. Participation may involve contributions of labour, time and money; being appraised of decisions made; sharing informative and allowing the sampled group to do everything (Doe and Khan 2004, 367).

In a comparison of rural and urban community initiatives, Lori Messinger (2004, 537) found similarities in levels of approach, philosophy, local participation and management styles. There were differences in decision making styles and organizational participation. Both sets of programs use multipronged approach to tackle several social issues simultaneously. Several organizations collaborated in the effort which targeted the low-income categories. Some of the ongoing challenges have been:

- i. the major task of planning, implementing and evaluating;
- ii. the effects of political and economic actions;
- iii. interpersonal management – level conflicts’
- iv. impact evaluations of community initiatives (Messinger 2004, 541).

It is generally agreed that community – level participants have information about individuals, families and communities that professionals need. Such participants are not very visible, relate informally, carry out multiple roles, are usually immersed in community life and contribute to changes in the community. (Ungar et al. 2004, 557).

Many communities have problems with their economic viability given the absence of a national policy on this issue. It has been found that individual entrepreneurship has a stronger potential for success when implemented as a community self-development strategy with community inputs into the formation of locally owned enterprises'. (Korsching and Allen 2004, 387). This is expected to create jobs and promote problem-solving. The promotion of entrepreneurship is one of several capacity-building approaches. Generally capacity-building has been conceptualized in terms of (i) training the human resource and (ii) building social capital. (Warburton 1998, 25). However, we need to debunk the argument that capacity –building should target the weak and vulnerable because everybody despite their material circumstances, need to be empowered in some manner. (Warburton 1998, 26). Some of the emergent questions in this regard are whose capacities are to be strengthened, by whom, to what end and how will the exercise be managed. The answer to each of these questions is the people in the community in order to have sustained interest. In fact ‘...if ordinary people do not care about development...any amount of policy programmes will fail.’ (Warburton 1998, 28). Another strategy for community development is conscientisation which orients citizens to evaluate social, political and economic situations and also to take necessary action to reduce resultant disadvantages. This approach would stimulate greater collaboration with other institutions which also require more guidelines for accountability. When however, citizens believe that they cannot influence, they may be

unwilling to trust public institutions. Indeed, the lack of status accorded to community-level action also fuels participants' lack of trust in government agencies. Capacity-building must not be viewed as a precondition for participation but participation must be seen as a necessary part of capacity-building. (Warburton 1998, 33). Community is not about different groups of people but about a different kind of action, one that coordinates knowledge, technical skills, positive interpersonal relationships and collective action.

The paradigm has shifted from developing sustainable environments to the building of sustainable communities (Etzioni 1998, 41). Such a perspective accepts that individuals cannot progress outside of and therefore need to interact with civil society where we learn self-government and also learn how to manage our individual selves. Such communications promote democracy and value people's rights. It is believed that communities must be anchored by certain beliefs viz. we should provide younger generation with moral education and character training. (Etzioni 1998, 45) and they should not be allowed to persistently prioritize their self-interest. This new type of arrangement for getting work done requires a greater emphasis on accountability which is considered to be:

- a) professional when it is consequent upon professional education and experiences;
- b) financial-based on accounting standards and investigation of finances;
- c) legal – obligated to act in accordance with administrative procedures and
- d) managerial – as observed in the management of services, target setting and production of deliverables with respect to this issue of accountability

within the community, and within the structures that are set up to manage community development. (Stewart 1998, 63).

Materialism has not produced any more positive benefits beyond what is physically visible: nice houses, cars, clothes, well-being and quality of life than income: one's health, recreation, cultural practices, education, community spirit, manners, courtesies. (MacGillivray 1998, 83). Those who organize services and work with young people have a good opportunity to educate teenagers by example. Moreover, '...service can foster a sense of social responsibility.' (Youniss and Yates 1998, 150) thus reducing the focus on freedom and rights even though these are important. Service helps people to look beyond self as they become submerged in the concerns and problems being faced by others. Doing this becomes an admirable form of socialization. (Youniss and Yates 1998, 161). Under the 'umbrella' term community economic development, Margaret S. Sherraden and William A. Ninacs (1998) have argued that initiatives such as micro-enterprise development and job creation would generate funds that could be ploughed into other types of organizations. However, citizens are very much aware that a purely economic approach to development at any level often creates more problems than it has solved. Some communities have concentrated on mobilizing residents in pursuit of development goals. Such social movements encompass connected events, centralized and decentralized organization, interactions between people. (Diani 2003, 1) and the networking tend to be community-based resulting in collective action.

Several explanations or theories have been developed to account for community-level mobilization efforts. One perspective is that those who are willing to participate politically have certain personality features. The Resource Mobilization Approach identifies resources in pursuit

of a specific objective. New Social Movements and Identity Theories have however focused on the manner in which issues are framed for the purpose of mobilizing self and others. (Rubin and Rubin 2001, 142). It is further claimed that community-level mobilization or action can be greatly enhanced through research, capacity building and participatory meetings. In the pursuit of community change, it is necessary:

- a) to act with purpose
- b) understand and define issues;
- c) become familiar with the actors in the situation;
- d) co-opt other people in the exercise;
- e) decide what is to be done;
- f) implement;
- g) let your actions generate ripple effects and
- h) seek and obtain feedback (Homan 1999, 14-23).

In addition to the above, planners and participants must be aware of the following fundamentals:

- a) change requires management of people's actions and reactions;
- b) change requires organized efforts;
- c) interest and expectations would also change;
- d) dealing with obstacles is also necessary;
- e) change-agents have to be optimistic, face uncertainty and show no fear for the unknown;
- f) people are allies and targets;
- g) action change people;

h) those who play the game make the rules. (Homan 1999, 36-37).

For the purpose of rebuilding communities, a range of initiatives has been found useful in different circumstances:

- a) the introduction of tourism venues, arts cooperatives and art-based small businesses and other community-level arts projects. (Phillips 2004, 115-117; Carey and Sutton 2004, 128).
- b) the development of partnerships through multi-agency collaboration which introduces new structures and accountability requirements for service delivery. (Diamond 2004, 177)
- c) having a voice and participating in community-level organizations (Howard 2004, 224)
- d) leadership development programmes in communities. (Kirk and Shutte 2004, 234)

Community development programs across time and place have highlighted:

- a) the risks demands and rewards of activism at this level (Brager 1999, 57; Perlman 1999, 75)
- b) problem-solving (Spergel 1999, 23) and
- c) negotiations between communities and bureaucracies for power-sharing purpose (Curtis 1995, 122-24).

In addressing much of what is negative in communities, It has been argued that a larger percentage of social work has been devoted to helping individuals to adjust to their disadvantaged neighbourhoods instead of helping them to rise out difficult communities. (Homan 1999, 6). When the needs of communities are not being met, community problems arise. In an effort to reduce or eliminate such problems, certain activities are undertaken which may or may not precipitate change. (Homans 1999, 6). Some of the typical community activities focus on neighbourhood empowerment, problem-solving, community support, community education and community organization. To improve service delivery to communities, it may be necessary to change program regulation, develop new programs and encourage cooperation between different agencies. (Homans 1996, 6). Healthy communities are characterized by:

- a) a valuing of resources;
- b) a feeling of inclusion;
- c) the presence of high levels of social capital (trust and interpersonal relations)
- d) a readiness for collective action

Research has found strong support for coalition building, interorganizational linkages, overlapping membership, advocacy promotion, policy building (Diani 2003, 2). Direct and indirect network ties have provided opportunities for participation, informing and developing competencies for community-building purposes.

There are several approaches to community development variously emphasizing locality development, social planning and social actions. Locality development encourages a wide range

of people to participate in goal setting, needs assessment and problem-solving. The social planning perspective posits that change is facilitated through rational bureaucratic action. Social Action approaches attempts to mobilize disadvantaged groups and make demands on the wider society. (Homan 1999, 34). It is highly recommended that people get to know their community before pursuing any initiative. One needs to be informed about the size, where people meet, key landmarks, national features, population, demographic mix, how long people live there, access to goods/services opportunity structure, untouched resources, livelihoods and the influences on community life. (Homan 1999, 117-18). The building of organizations to promote community changes requires an awareness of the following:

- a) that organizations are constructed to focus on issues
- b) that it is necessary to be specific about the issue, do some research, network with interested parties, hold group meetings publicize your plans;
- c) that several factors may hamper group development – inflexibility, poor conflict resolution skills, poor leadership, inadequate sharing of ideas and poor implementation.

People often assess development on the basis of their own experiences. As such capacity building and participatory approaches ought to be vigorously promoted in order to liberate the marginalized and disadvantaged. Participation can be facilitated through decentralization, civil society institutions, other existing institutions or introducing new organizations. (SinghaRoy 2001, 25). Participatory development communication is a means by which people use dialogue to engage themselves as they pursue self-reliance. Communication can be used to stimulate or catalyze thinking; motivation; action, interactions and reflection. A prerequisite for this process

is a collective understanding of goals, needs, aspirations and outcomes (White and Nair 2001, 38). It should be noted that a facilitator helps people to develop an agenda while an advocate has a predetermined external agenda (Kiiti and Nielsen 2001, 52).

Social capital inheres itself in poor communities where people's attitude to life is usually simple and healthy where their strength of personality reflected in their relationships with others. For purposes of combating poverty and discussion of social capital has to be shifted from individual to community level. In fact, it has been argued that community's social capital can enhance revitalization strategies (Sampson 2001, 89) can enhance political participation, education level, health, reduce crime and economic situation of residents and the formation of association (Warren, Thompson and Saegert 2001, 1). Moreover it can safely be argued that the strength of rural life is based on its social capital (Warren, Thompson and Saegert 2004, 92; Duncan 2001, 1). However, insofar as modernization and development have been destabilizing social and community living, social capital is being affected as reflected in poor quality of interpersonal relationship in many communities, weakened social norms, reduced work ethic quality, questionable moralities. In addition some form of social capital can be used to exclude others and direct group activity along non-informing paths e.g. gangs and ethnic associations (Warren, Thompson and Saegert 2001, 7). Community networking enhances trust, strengthen the social fabric, resources and opportunities accessible to all. 'Bridges' can be built between low-income communities between the poor and affluent. The working together of the State economic and political organizations and community groups creates a synergy (Warner, Thompson and Saegert 2001, 15). Efforts to mobilize and use social capital should operate at three levels – individual, organizational and societal. Some of the major features of social capital are its flow and rhythm,

multidimensionality, intra and extra institutional nature and history. Social capital resonates in informal control, collective efficacy, institutional support and intergenerational ties and those have to be balanced by a respect for individual rights (Sampson 2001, 109). Beyond this, it has been posited that the negative effects mediate and technology are viable in the widening interpersonal gaps that exist across communities by distancing our conscience, consciousness and core relationships. (Bugeja 2005, xiii). This therefore underlines the fact that despite the usefulness of technology we must continue to monitor the status of the human condition. Globalization ‘...has given us more poor people than the world has ever known and increased threats to the environmental conditions...led many to fear the loss of ...meaningful self-government.’ (Brechtner, Costello and Smith 2002, ix). We therefore need a ‘bottom-up’ globalization in which grassroots mobilize to pursue their needs and interests. Community services often have a positive effect not only on the moral and political development of young people but also in their sense of identity (Youniss and Yates 1997, 1). Moral development is greatly facilitated insofar as young people become more action-oriented as they confront situations of personal need and inequalities in the society. Views abound that youths today are irresponsible, have not been prepared for adult roles and are personal pleasure-seekers. Community services also provide a form of social support which would reduce the negative effects of caregiving. The nature of the relationship depended on the types of services and the client-customer relationship. Caregiving strain is reflected in the physical and emotional strain that caregivers experience when assisting clients. (Li, Chadita and Morrow-Horrell 2005, 56-57). In addition, caregiving strain is also dependent on the caregivers, personality, contextual factors and cognitive factors. Indeed, insufficient and/or inadequate services were found to contribute to caregiving strain.

The predominant forms of collaboration have been interprofessional and interorganizational which have been expanded to include clients. This has led to the emergence of family-centred youth-centered and elder-centred collaboration. These have often subsumed structures, services and practices. Community-level collaboration has involved all stakeholders contributing to improve the well-being residents by providing services and resources to the community. It involves participation, organization and advocacy. Some of the emergent issues are those of trust, diversity concerns and conflict resolution. (Claireborne and Lawson 2005, 95).

The approach that is developed later for Trinidad and Tobago expands on N. Claireborne and H. A. Lawson's (2000, 97) framework which is characterized by:

- a) an interlocking of processes of communicating; connecting, cooperating, coordinating, consulting and co-locating;
- b) negotiations for conflict resolution and power sharing;
- c) the use of benchmarks to monitor progress – involvement of diverse organizations, shared goals, sharing of data; unity of purpose; involvement of residents of all ages; and
- d) the identification of outcomes such as capacity building, creativity, risk-sharing, role definition, servant leadership.

Community programs must also provide long-term support for youth development from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. They should serve to '...refine life skills and support young people in the acquisition and growth of ...assets' (Eccles and Gootman 2002, 7),

physical, emotional, intellectual and social. As such there is a need for an array of program opportunities to meet these diverse needs of young people and mechanisms should be put in place for monitoring availability, accessibility and program quality. Such programs have traditionally taken the form of special clubs, sports leagues, youth groups and community service. (Bruhn 2005, 187-188).

Nonexperimental program research have provided a better understanding of ‘...program operations, components and relationships in order to inform the design of future experimental evaluations’ (Eccles and Gootman 2002, 122). Meta-analysis of prevention and development programs have found that the former, of well-designed and implemented may yield positive psychological outcomes across a two-year period. It was also found that environment-centered program (compared with person-centered programs) were more effective in reducing social problems than in building individual competencies (Eccles and Gootman 2002, 166).

A review of over four hundred delinquency and violence prevention programs, for example, found that following criteria were met by the more impactful programs : a strong quasi-experimental or experimental design, evidence of statistically significant deterrent effects that were sustainable for at least one year, and site replication with demonstrated effects. Most of these programs featured one or combination of the following foci: a ‘big brother’ or ‘big sister’ approach, an emphasis on lifeskills and/or therapeutic interventions. (Eccles and Gootman 2002, 173). Essentially, program evaluation are of two type: process and outcome evaluations both of which complement each other. These rely on the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Some of the fundamental concerns of program evaluations are:

- a) the explicitness and relevance of the program evaluations;
- b) the manner of application of the theory;
- c) whether the program is impacting on groups within the population in terms of scale, duration;
- d) the value of the program; and
- e) recommendations for future action. (Eccles and Gootman 2002, 206).

Indeed comprehensive community-level interventions should be restructured to impact on children, teenagers and families. They should be multipronged incorporating various types of training/exposures and therapy in order to mitigate on the multiple risk factors that on the lives of children and families (Ferrer-Wreder 2004, 62-77, 189). What follows is a proposal for building communities of practices that are structured to last, widely distributed while facilitating different forms of participation (Wenger, McDermott, Snyder 2002, 25-26).

The scale, intensity and escalation of social problems requires a collective effort to recreate the situation. Hereunder is an initiative for that purpose. The objectives are as follows:

- a) to contribute to a reduction in key social problems which would indeed have ripple effects on other social issues;
- b) to revitalize community living through community development projects;
- c) to engender the participation of children, teenagers and adults in community redevelopment programmes thus restoring in these participants, a sense of pride in self, others and their respective communities;

- d) to mobilize industries, non-governmental organizations, creative arts community groups and others to network with each other and make more tangible contributions to community restoration which must be at the heart of any development exercise;
- e) to stimulate and integrate various policies on children, youths and families.

On its way towards articulating an implementable framework, this article:

- a) outlines the context and significance which have led to the spawning of this initiative;
- b) briefly revisits what is known about social planning and programming;
- c) identifies policies, research and programs that have focused on the reduction of social problems;
- d) outlines and presents a rationale for a new institutional and implementational plan for the nation; and
- e) identifies the essentials of the program.

Context and Significance

Over the last two decades, several major developments have occurred to cause countries globally to prioritize or up the 'ante' on the social aspects of life:

- a) the recognition by international bodies such as the United Nations that economic approaches to development via reducing poverty, crime and unemployment were not working as these issues continued to escalate;

- b) the outcomes of the Beijing Conference (1989), the World Summit on Social Development (2002) to which many countries were signatories and the World Social Forum (2001) in Brazil through which strong anti-globalization discourses were raised;
- c) the commitment of nations to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals;
- d) the articulation of development goals through Vision 2020 in the case of Trinidad and Tobago;
- e) the resurgence of literature voicing the imperatives of developing and mobilizing social, emotional and cultural capital over economic capital as catalysts for development; and
- f) problems faced by 21st century youth substance abuse, violence, teenage pregnancies, school failures (Delgado 2000, 31-41).

The significance of the social has been further highlighted by the impact of incivilities, hostilities, aggression on the social fabric and the spiraling social costs of these all of which are further aggravated by population by deteriorating social norms and unwieldy and slow judicial process in addition to job creation challenges. Moreover, while many social programmes/interventions have been developed and implemented, such programmes have been short-lived and small-scale. The strategy herein, therefore, is one that seeks to provide sustenance through a longitudinal multi-pronged approach by catering for individual interests and community development concerns simultaneously. This approach is informed by several principles:

- a) development risks, challenges and opportunities surface constantly for children, teenagers and adults,
- b) in a context such as ours, which has spawned a youth underworld networking approaches are more effective than individual approaches;
- c) this country has the requisite structure /organizations to manage the present volatile situation; and
- d) any approach, at this stage, which is not multipronged and not building on existing and potential strengths, is not going to be effective.

Social and Economic Policy Framework

The policy agenda for (2003-2005) take cognizance of the challenges of globalization, a review of domestic conditions in which there is a widening rich – poor gap, the need to foreground knowledge infrastructural development and service delivery (Social and Economic Policy Framework, 2004). This policy agenda, like others in several developing countries promises to promote, improvements in human capital development through the promotion in healthy lifestyles, better living conditions, small and micro-enterprise advances, safety and security, economic diversification and environmental protection. Efforts are made to identify major strategies, performance indicators, responsible agencies and target dates. While the above is laudable, progress towards goal attainment continue to be stymied by bureaucratic problems, a macro-level focus, political concerns, escalating social problems and the ongoing implementation dilemma. Moreover, the scale of the forty-four programs (Social Sector Investment Programme, 2004, 10-11) though imbued with much potential is still too limited to exert any significant effect at the community level despite their focus on promoting sustainable

livelihoods, poverty alleviation, human development, social integration, personal safety and other new programmes . (Social Sector Investment Programme, 2004). Compared to the rest of the population that really need these services, too few people have been benefitting thus far.

Proposed Framework : The Streams of Development Approach

This proposed implementation framework is based on a development philosophy:

- a) that have confidence in people's ability to manage programs;
- b) that sees it as an imperative to promote linkages between state, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders in the development of social policies, programs and their implementation;
- c) that promotes the emergence and linkages between social , emotional, cultural, financial and intellectual capitals;
- d) that views the restoration of a sense of community as critical to the development of human capital and development generally; and
- e) that promotes procedural, distributive and restorative justice.

Given the shortcomings in the roles of agents of socialization, the proposed strategy identifies and encourages the adoption and implementation of a 'streams of development' approach as a means of restoring the social fabric. This approach is informed by an appreciation of the fact that individuals have different strengths and capabilities and these must be catered for. In addition, those who are multi-skilled must also be allowed to pursue their multiple interests. It is believed that a linear approach to this task, to life, is self-defeating and counter-productive and as such, several initiatives must be promoted simultaneously within communities. This multi-

pronged implementation identifies the following as necessary 'streams' for social development (Figure I). Individuals can enter these streams individually or as family units and are encouraged to remain in one or more streams throughout adolescence into adulthood in the case of children. In these streams, individuals would acquire knowledge and functional skills. Research and feedback mechanisms would be used to develop indicators of progress at the childhood, teenage and adult phases. Figure 1 shows how our development efforts can be multifocussed, providing opportunities for children, teenagers and adults to participate across time. Indicators can be developed to monitor progress at all levels: Child Indicators Monitoring System (CIMS, already in existence), Teenagers Indicators Monitoring System (TIMS) and Community Indicators System (CIS).

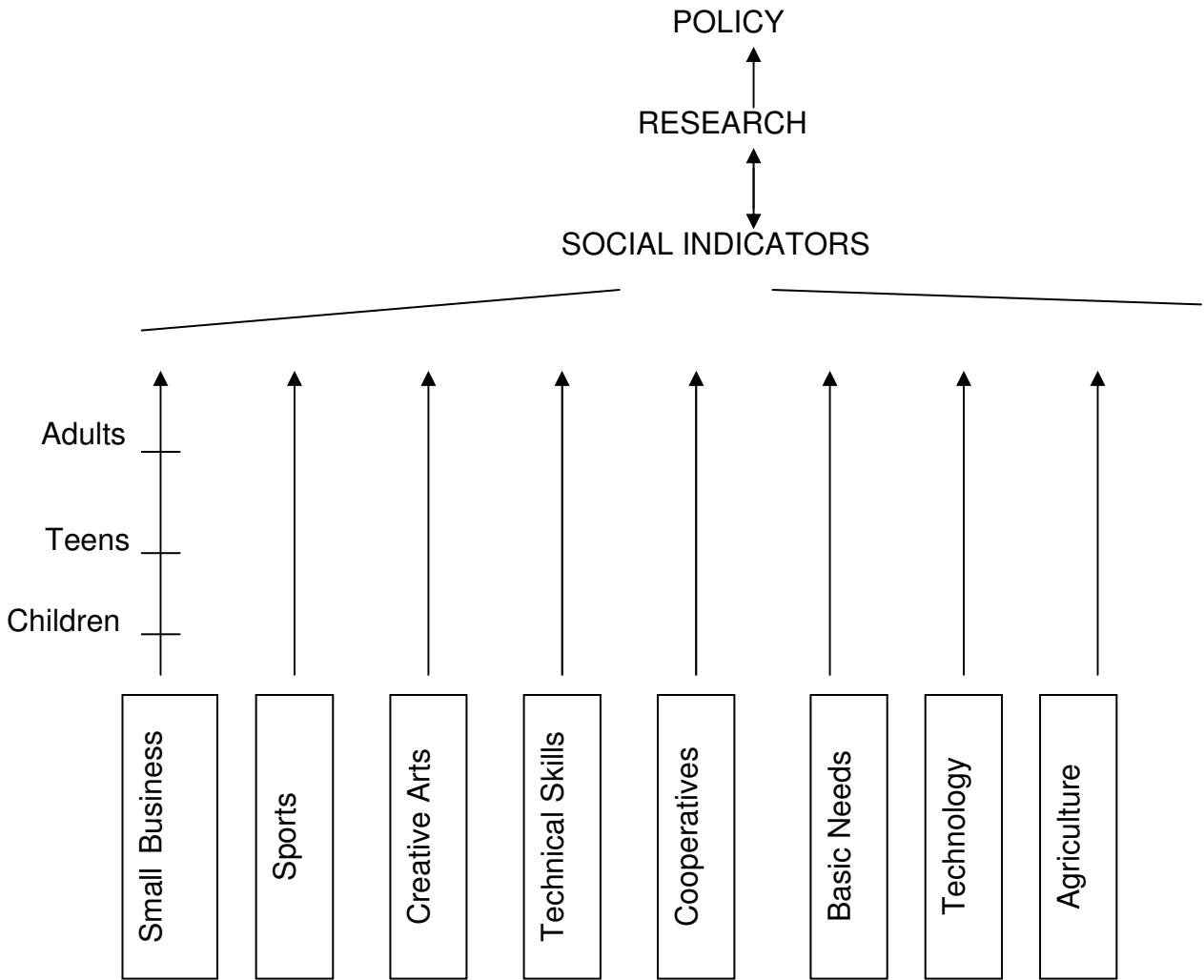
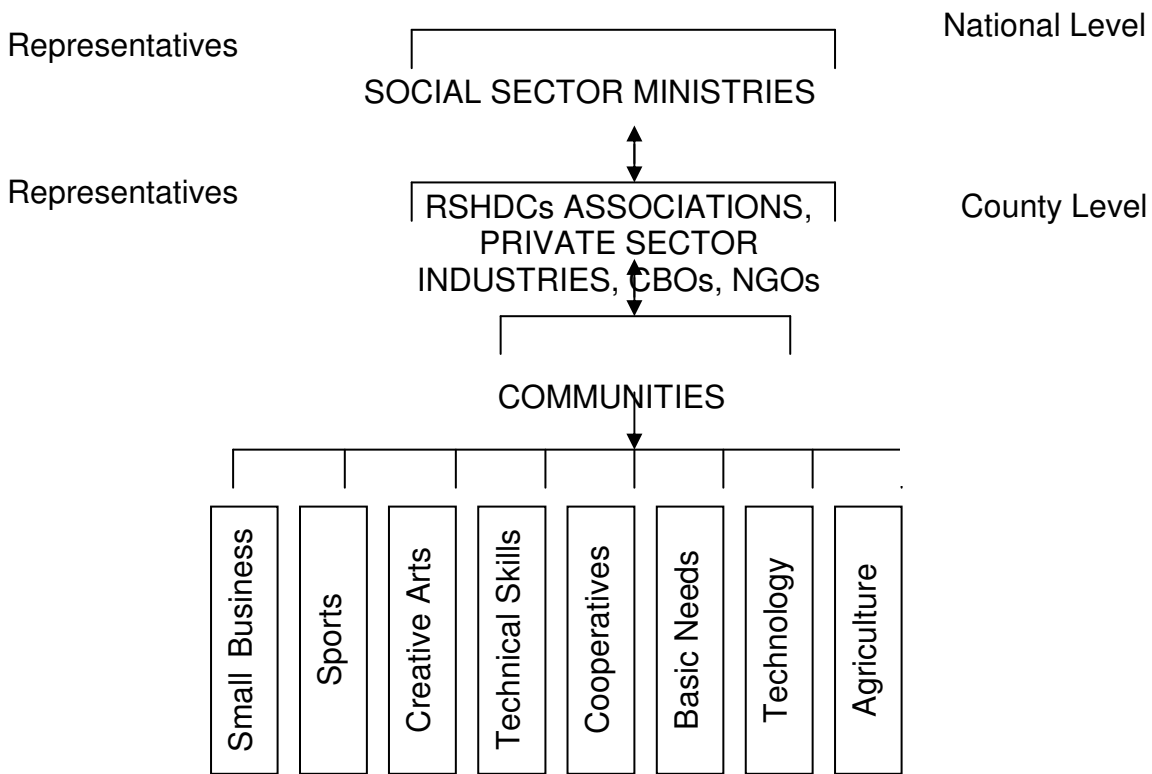


Figure 83: Diagrammatic Representation of A 'Streams of Development' Policy Framework for Trinidad and Tobago (Community-Focused).

The Institutional Framework

Operationalizing this initiative would require the introduction of ‘networking’ of agencies such as ministries, private sector, industries and communities as reflected in Figure II. The diagram shows these entities and their reporting relationships. Associations and others to a limited extent have been networking with each other at the community level in an effort to locate and mobilize resources for the various activity streams (viz: sports, small business etc.). Feedback is to be informally and formally provided to a committee of ministry representatives who shall liaise with the Committee for the Coordination of the Social Sector (CCSS) which is already in existence.



RSHDCs: Regional Social and Human Development Councils

Figure II: Institutional Framework for Social Sector Development in Trinidad and Tobago

The Implementation Framework

For implementation purposes, it is possible to utilize existing institutions by establishing more branches nationwide. It is also possible to utilize and remunerate nationals across the country who are skilled in various fields indicated (Figure 1) to provide tuition and workshops.

The various activities in this 'stream of development' approach can be implemented by various organizations that already exist. For example, small business development can be taken care of by the Small Enterprising Business Association, Small Business Development Company and the Vendors Association. Creative Arts can be implemented through primary and secondary schools drama associations, art societies, handicraft groups, carnival arts and Better Village Competitions at the community level and coordinated by country-level coordinating committees. An Implementation Framework is diagrammatically represented in Figure II.

This multidimensional approach at the community level involves a focus on the provision of basic needs (water, electricity, and road), the production of agriculture cooperatives, technology (computer use), skills and creative arts development, sports, small business development and research on social problems. Each of these would be facilitated by relevant associations, organizations and schools as necessary.

This framework provides a strategy for ministries, for example to operationalize comprehensive programs (through RSHDCs) that are already in place. These entities would monitor at community level the implementation of sports, creative arts, small business development, agriculture, technical-vocation skills development, In instances where ministries do not yet have

a comprehensive plan vis-à-vis their portfolio, one should be developed within a defined timeframe. County-level Coordinating Committees, which can be present RSHDCs can be mandated to liaise with associations industries, non-governmental and other organizations to articulate the concerns emerging from the community level. Project ideas should emerge from residents in the various communities.

Essentials of the Program:

- a) This approach should be internally piloted in three communities, one in the North, Central and South Trinidad and Tobago.
- b) It would be necessary for government to facilitate the establishment of additional centres (SERVOL, YTEPP, ALTA) for the following in communities throughout the country to facilitate greater access to the skills development stream. Actual locations should depend on the geographical distribution of population:
- c) Ultimately, there would be organizations throughout the country facilitating the development of small businesses, sports, creative arts, technical-vocational skills, cooperatives, technology use and food and vegetable production.
- d) The focus of this initiative should be teenagers and adults who are unemployed or temporarily employed.
- e) Prospective applicants do not need any previous qualifications or experiences.

- f) Ongoing funding for community projects should be provided by banks and industries.
- g) Banks and industries (particularly in the energy sector) should try to adopt a community for a minimum of three to five years after which the community should become self-supportive.
- h) The media (newspapers, radio, television) should be mandated to 'run' one hour programmes highlighting efforts (Figure III) at the community level.
- i) Agricultural and other cooperatives should be revived.
- j) One of the established banks should be encouraged to sponsor a Nationwide Primary School Young Leaders Program to be run along similar lines as the RBTT Young Leaders Program.
- k) Nationwide competitions should be organized, for example, in domestic gardening at intervals, and major awards (trophies, shield, financial incentives) and media coverage should be provided.
- l) Providing that domestic needs are met, any surplus production (food and vegetables) may provide the basis for meals in the School Feeding Programme and families/individuals should be adequately remunerated.

Discussion

This integrated social planning constitutive of policy, program and practice integration would spawn/encourage better management practices through multi-level networking and mobilizing and the strengthening of social, cultural and organizational capital. It places participatory development initiatives into a frame that is multi-pronged. Such approaches would therefore be

no longer implemented as a reaction to a public outcry as it would effectively place the responsibility for development in the hands of communities.

The resulting micro-macro-linkages bring various actors from all levels of the society in contact with each other in a more meaningful action-oriented approach that empowers at all levels..

Without any group/organization attempting to control each other, a sense of identity emerges.

This approach allows citizens to communicate, motivate each other and make decisions for themselves with respect to their own projects. However, bureaucrats, politicians and managers who are not accustomed to this approach should not feel peripheralized. The traditionally articulated objective of management is always to allow participants to manage themselves, which is, in itself a form of empowerment while it foregrounds servant leadership. For too long however, this continues to be stated and managers continue to be challenged to find ways and means to make it happen.

Such social innovation allows major stakeholders at all levels of the society to network, mobilize and work with communities. In the short and long-term, there are large social, economic, political and cultural benefits to be derived and shared by all who are involved.

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