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ABSTRACT

Servol (Service Volunteered for All) is a voluntary organization in Trinidad and Tobago with a staff of some 90 people engaged in a wide range of activities grouped in seven Life Centers and a periphery of 13 nursery schools, as well as family farm units in a rural area. From a modest start in late 1970, Servol has grown steadily during its first decade, engaging in a variety of projects throughout the country. An advisory mission from the Bernard van Leer Foundation visited Trinidad from October 11-18, 1981, to assess the progress and accomplishments of the Servol program, to appraise the long-term viability of the project, and to advise it on the ways in which the project might develop after the Foundation's involvement has ended. The advisory mission found that Servol is fostering self-reliance in the communities which it serves; that it is functioning as a change agent to a certain extent, and that its management, although good, has room for greater training for future leaders--all ideals set forth in Servol's mission. As a whole, the mission regards the Servol experience positively. Servol links community development and education into a coherent whole, not only in response to theoretical perception or humanitarian concern but as a translation into reality of the expressed needs and desires of the community. It has had a positive impact on Trinidadian society and beyond in the Caribbean. (KC)

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SERVOL: AN EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT IN TRINIDAD

ADVISORY MISSION

11 - 18 OCTOBER 1984

REPORT

31788

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The Foundation offers financial and professional support for the development of experimental models which, if they are successful, may be adopted by local or national bodies responsible for educational policy. It is of fundamental importance that experiments be carefully evaluated so that the lessons learnt may be applied as far as possible nationally. Thus the multiplication of project results is a crucial aspect of the Foundation's work. It therefore attaches considerable importance to the international exchange and comparison of experience resulting from projects and to the contribution which it can itself make to this.

Through its professional staff, its network of professional contacts, its international seminars, advisory missions and publications, and other resources, the Foundation provides specialized information, documentation and technical advice which may contribute towards the optimal realization of a given project.

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JANUARY 1982

BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 85905  
2508 CP The Hague  
Netherlands

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation sent an Advisory Mission to visit Trinidad from 11 - 18 October 1981 to study and report on the Servol\* enterprise. The aims were:

- a) to assess the progress and accomplishments of the present project, especially with a view to drawing out experiences which can be of use to other Foundation projects in the region and elsewhere;
- b) to appraise the long-term viability of the project, bearing in mind that the Foundation's assistance will terminate in 1983; and
- c) to advise Servol on the ways in which the project might develop after the Foundation's involvement has ended.

2. In assembling the Mission, the Foundation sought to bring to the task of assessing the project a variety of expertise and experience. The Mission was led by Mr. Leo Fernig, formerly Director of the International Bureau of Education in Geneva. The other members were: Mr. Yehuda Paz, Director, International Institute for Development, Cooperation and Labour Studies, Tel Aviv, and Consultant to the Foundation on Community Development; Mr. P.T.M. Sprockel, formerly Director of Education, Netherlands Antilles; and Mr. R.Z. Swaab, Senior Staff Associate, Bernard van Leer Foundation.

3. The four members of the Mission have combined their findings and views in the present report, and wish to record their appreciation to the many people who gave them this opportunity to get to know a most interesting educational innovation.

4. The visit amounted to an intensive learning experience. The Mission went around most of the centres where Servol activities or Servol-initiated activities take place, talking freely with the people concerned, watching them at work and trying to understand their purposes and relationships. Moreover, to give perspective to its observations, the Mission had also to form an impression of the social and cultural background, the realities of life in Trinidad and in the Caribbean generally. One of the questions borne in mind was: how would things be in the absence of Servol.

5. All of this adds up to a complex task. If they have succeeded, even partially, in learning, understanding and interpreting the situation, the authors feel the credit is due largely to those on the spot: the cheerful and helpful field workers whose slogan "No problem" conveys both determination and a spirit of service.

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\* "Servol" stands for Service Volunteered for All

## I BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. The economy of Trinidad and Tobago is in an up-surge caused by oil revenue that is being devoted in an ambitious plan of industrialization. But the long-standing pattern of poverty and deprivation still visibly remains. As in most areas of the Caribbean, the population is a remarkable mixture of peoples and cultures. The break-up of family life, migration internally and between the islands, the growth of slum conditions around urban centres: these are among the factors that have perpetuated a general sense of helplessness and dependence. In Trinidad and in the Caribbean at large, one of the most difficult problems lies in the number of young people who have been unable to complete a basic schooling. With school systems that are metropolitan-oriented and use unadapted curricula, a large percentage of boys and girls drop out, have little chance of finding employment and suffer the psychological effects of being regarded as failures. Always looking for their own identity, these adolescents through repeated disappointments tend to form a frustrated group which cannot fit into any progressive social order.

7. To turn next to the subject of the inquiry: Servol is a voluntary organization registered in Trinidad as a company under guarantee. A Board of Directors appoints the Executive Director who, with an Executive Committee of (at present) three, is responsible for running the programme. A staff of some ninety people are engaged in a wide range of activities grouped in seven *Life Centres* and a periphery of thirteen nursery schools, as well as family farm units in a rural area. This rather sketchy summary is enough to indicate that Servol is a body of considerable size and complexity, virtually a system, although the people working in it would shudder at the use of the term.

8. From a modest start in late 1970, Servol has grown steadily during its first decade, which is to say that an increasing number of activities, each of them a project, have been undertaken in different places. Some failed to develop as envisaged, whereupon the energies of Servol explored alternative paths. Some have succeeded to the extent of becoming small stable institutions independent of Servol while still benefiting from its services or guidance. In the mid-stream are the larger clusters of activities which are localized in the seven Servol Life Centres. This is the adaptive pattern of organic growth; it is not surprising that leaders in Servol more readily use biological analogies for their structures than the customary administrative terms.

9. The audited accounts for 1970, 1975 and 1980 reflect the history of Servol from another angle. The first year ended with assets of \$TT 25,000, income being derived mainly from the "Poor Man's Dinner", a charitable occasion organized annually in Port of Spain. By 1975 the balance sheet showed assets of \$TT 455,000 and a wide range of income and expenditure items; income from grants amounted to \$TT 275,000.



By 1980, assets had reached \$TT 2,360,000; the income and expenditure account showed an income of \$TT 1,747,000, of which \$TT 1,182,000 came from (Government and various foundation) grants and over \$TT 565,000 was generated by activities within Servol itself.

10. How Servol came into being and grew has been well documented. A book entitled *A Mole Cricket Called Servol*, was written by Father Gerard Pantin for the Bernard van Leer Foundation and published in 1979 by the Foundation and Pergamon Press. It describes the early stages of seeking out community needs in a depressed area of Port of Spain; and the starting of small projects, a series of ventures of which the nursery schools and vocational training courses proved most viable. The book brings the story up to 1977 when the consolidated Beetham Vocational Centre was built by instructors and students. In 1979 Father Pantin wrote *The Servol Life Centres*, a fifty-two page illustrated booklet printed and published by the new Servol Printing Services. Along with historical material, this book describes the emerging concept of a *Life Centre* as a "structure which purports to help a community to grow and develop out of a poverty situation (and therefore) must literally encompass and include every imaginable aspect of the community's life". The subsequent booklet, *Servol faces the Eighties*; written in 1980 by Sister Ruth Montrichard, gives a factual account of six Servol Life Centres, assesses gaps and problems and shows the factors that led to the establishment in late 1980 of the Caribbean Life Centre.

11. These three documents are referred to at some length as the Mission's own observations confirmed the accuracy of the record they present, so there is no need for any lengthy descriptions in the present report. Reading the background helped the team to seize more readily the significance of things which they saw and heard. Since, however, this report must stand alone, it does not make cross-references to the basic sources, but rather includes an extract from or a synthesis of these, wherever appropriate - the aim at this time being to present a comprehensive and critical review of Servol from an international viewpoint.

12. An international component has, in fact, existed in Servol almost since its inception: The Bernard van Leer Foundation was the first body outside Trinidad to show and interest in the young project and give it practical support; grants were made in 1971, 1974, 1977 and 1980, covering a long period of continuous association. On each occasion the grant took the form of assistance for a project or a set of specific activities. The earlier projects concerning pre-school and community education in Laventille, Port of Spain, continue today with Government and local support; the latest is the Caribbean Life Centre which is still in its first year of operation. Association with the Foundation has meant more to Servol than mere financial aid for specific experimental projects; conceivably, too, the Foundation is, or should be, deriving from the Servol experience some lessons of value for its world-wide programme. These complementary aspects of the relationship need to be examined in some detail.

13. In drafting this report, the Mission has moved from the specific to the general. The first question is: how well has Servol done, as judged by an external group. This leads to some reflection on the future development of Servol. Finally, what is there in the Servol experience which may be of use elsewhere in the Caribbean, or in other regions; and under what conditions. The Bernard van Leer Foundation is justified in seeking answers on these points. The Mission hopes this report will go some way towards providing them.

## II. HOW WELL HAS SERVOL DONE?

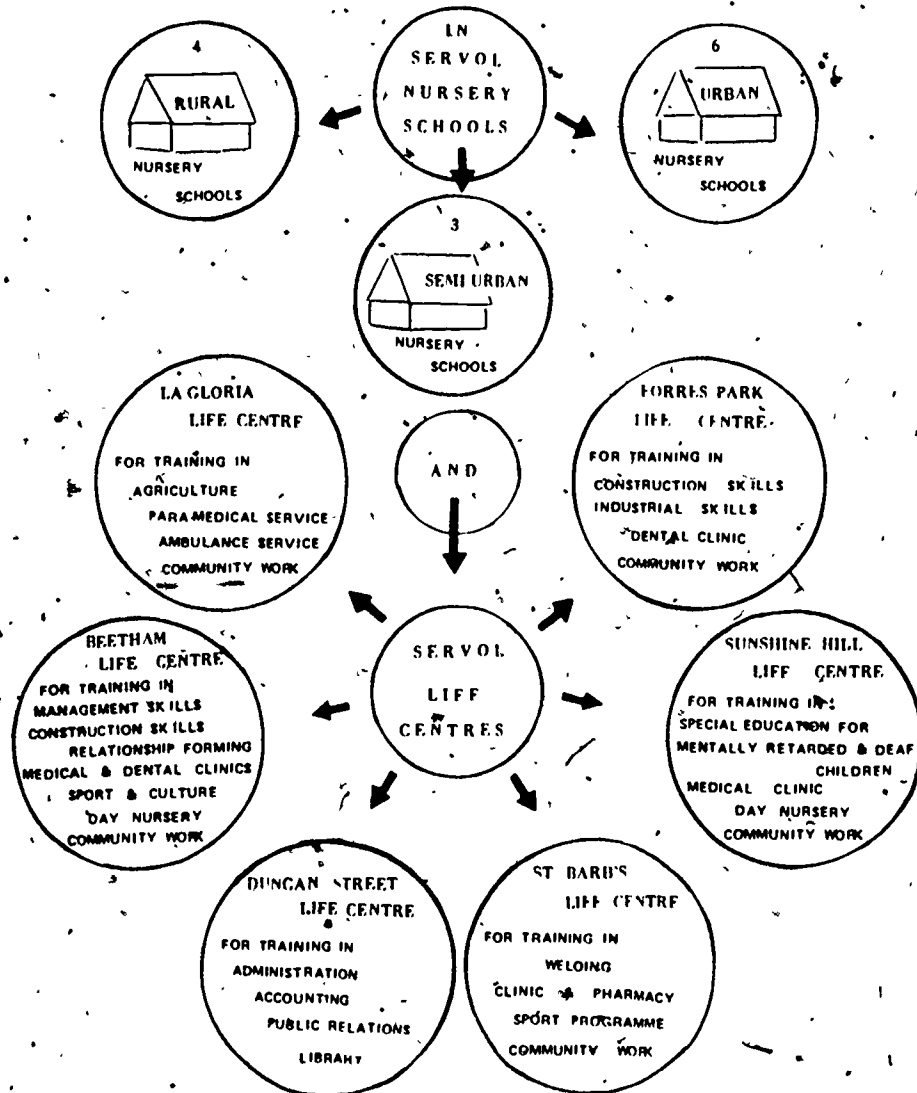
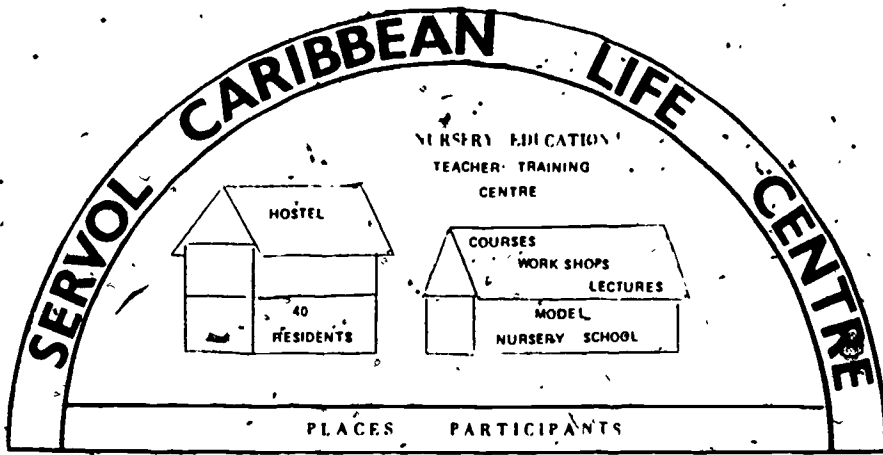
14. To assess the progress and accomplishments of Servol is to see how far its goals have been achieved. In policy terms, the Mission feels that Servol has remained remarkably consistent over the years in the goals it has set for itself: *to help poor people free themselves from dependence* (i.e., to bring about the self-development of disadvantaged people); and *to play a catalytic role in this process of change*. The activities undertaken have varied with time and place, not so much because of a theoretical trial-and-error approach as from the rule that the community must itself feel and express its needs. Across the range of projects there has also evolved a coherent set of principles for action. The Mission therefore places the assessment of Servol within the field defined by three questions:

- a) to what extent have people in the poor communities where Servol works become self-reliant?
- b) does Servol remain a catalyst? and
- c) how valid does the conceptual structure of Servol appear to be?

15. In seeking answers, the Mission surveyed the programme which existed in October 1981, then tried to see how it had reached this point, and along the way gathered the views of people inside and outside Servol. It may be useful to recapitulate this evidence in a very condensed way before turning to a discussion of the main issues.

### THE PRESENT PROGRAMME

16. The chart on page 6 gives the anatomy of Servol. *Beetham Life Centre*, the largest of the six basic Life Centres, is a complex institution with vocational training courses for 200 students (annual intake: 130) in ten different fields (woodwork, masonry, welding, plumbing, catering, child-care and nursing, electrical, auto-mechanics, needlework and industrial sewing). The students are between 15 and 19 years of age, generally secondary school drop-outs or primary school leavers with no prospect of further education or of employment. Preference is given to applicants from the vicinity, but quite a number of students come from some distance away. The training course starts with an orientation period of ten weeks, during which all students (irrespective of sex) sample every field before making their final choice. The one-year training period is essentially practical and is based, in fact, on the master-journeyman-apprentice pattern, since each group has an instructor with one or two assistant instructors. Students learn by doing, by watching the instructors working; and from the outset they are engaged in productive work, since each "shop" is an autonomous economic unit and has to earn revenue. Some of the jobs



Source: Ruth Montrichard "Servol Faces the Eighties".  
 (Trinidad, Servol Printing Services; 1980), p. 34.

are done in the Centre (e.g., the catering department prepares and sends out school meals daily), or else by contract on building sites. Theoretical instruction is limited; and literacy, numeracy and trade theory are conveyed in short periods which precede practical work. Students who do not pass the trade certificate examination at the end of one year, stay on for a second year and act as seniors, helping to monitor the new trainees. A new wing has just been added to the Beetham Life Centre, to accommodate short four-month courses for the preparation of semi-skilled workers.

17. Alongside the vocational courses, the Centre houses a day nursery, a clinic and a dispensary. The integrative principle running through-out Servol is illustrated by the fact that these facilities, too, serve as training units; and students from the masonry or electrical departments spend a week in the day-care centre during the orientation period. An interesting course in self-awareness (practical psychology) is given to all students once a week by Father Pantin. As part of the out-reach programme into the community, students visit old people, and the Centre is used in the evening for adult courses and some community functions.

18. Among the significant aspects of the Beetham Life Centre appear to be: the use of practical craftsmen as instructors in all fields (in educational terms, they may be described as *para-professionals* who progressively up-grade their teaching skills); training through production; the development of a positive attitude to work; and an acceptance of national certification, since students all take the trade certificate. At the corporate level, there is a strong sense of community within the institution. In the past year, the Centre's income balanced its expenditure, which is to say that earnings paid for materials, salaries and incentive pay for students. However, as some departments were less profitable than others, in May 1981 the staff voluntarily signed the "Life Centre Charter" which in effect pools the earnings of all departments to give financial support to any department, any member of staff and any boy or girl in need.

19. Three other Life Centres in Port of Spain can be briefly described. *Sunshine Hill* runs a day nursery, a clinic, a school for retarded children and a print-shop. Constructed with the help of a Government grant, the Centre appears to be very much a community affair with the premises being used for adult classes and local people taking charge of maintenance and the nursery. At present, they are also preparing a play area. The *St. Barb's Life Centre* has welding classes and a clinic. Work in progress will bring to this Centre a unit to train automotive mechanics; and the local community is negotiating for land to add a nursery school and a day nursery to the Centre. The *Duncan Street Life Centre* might appear, at first sight, to be simply Servol's administrative headquarters since financial affairs are handled there by accountant George McLean, and the periodic meetings of Centre coordinators take place there. However, it also houses a library for primary school children, a resource centre for Servol workers and a public relations office. From the various administrative functions carried out in Duncan Street have emerged training courses for office workers and secretaries.

20. The two Life Centres situated in the south are in an area very different ethnically and economically from Port of Spain: the *la Gloria Centre* is a loosely-knit organization, with a Servol family farm as its nucleus, surrounded by a growing number of individual "family farms", a nursery school supervisor who works with teachers in three village nursery schools, and an ambulance/first-aid service for the scattered communities. Nearer the coast and the main highway, abutting on a new industrial area, is the *Forres Park Life Centre*. Here, vocational courses, mainly in construction skills; were started along with a health centre, adult classes and support for village nursery schools - all in make-shift premises. At present, the hundred students and their instructors are busily engaged in erecting new buildings which should make Forres Park as large and polyvalent a centre as Beetham.

21. Thirteen nursery schools now exist in Port of Spain and in the south. They were started by local communities with Servol support, and are staffed mainly by local girls (para-professionals, again) who learn on the job. Control of the schools is exercised by village councils, entirely so in the south, and partially in the urban area; Servol's role is limited to providing for staff up-grading through the supervisors (who therefore come "from the field") and short courses. Those schools the Mission visited presented a clean, cheerful and lively picture. On average they have 35-40 children ranging from 3-5 years of age, cared for by three teachers. Equipment is simple and limited, with an emphasis on teacher-prepared materials. A certain air of formality is evident (for example, in the reading and writing instruction for older children) when these schools are compared with more open institutions abroad; but they seem to match parental expectations and staff capabilities. Most of the schools are linked to community centres; indeed the premises usually cater for both purposes - to the disadvantage of the nursery school staff. The Mission was told by community workers in at least two cases that the local people plan to construct a custom-built nursery school for their children, beside the community hall.

22. Finally, the *Caribbean Life Centre* in Port of Spain: besides being the latest Servol unit (started in January 1981), it has also a different function, serving in Sister Ruth's words as "an umbrella for all Servol projects". It is housed in a converted small secondary school in the heart of the city. At the time the Mission visited the Centre, it housed a model nursery school (with fifteen 3-year olds from the vicinity), a group of students training to become nursery school teachers, and an extension programme conducted by one staff member who regularly visits Servol nursery schools. The twenty-five girl students include seven from other Caribbean islands, all selected on the basis of their having passed two exams in the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level (in particular in English), a general knowledge entrance examination and an interview. Servol contacts in the islands conducted the screening for non-Trinidadians. The first batch of students who entered in April 1981 will have had an extra term of work; in future the course will last a year from September. Theoretical instruction (in child development, teaching methods and curriculum, health services,

sociology or study of the community, English and personal development) is combined with teaching practice. Students are expected also to spend some time in a community project and to take part in home-visiting. The staff of four, including the model-school teacher, are all well qualified; and the Mission gained the impression that theory and practice were well integrated in the training course. The Caribbean Life Centre represents the next tier of professionalization for nursery teaching, after the immediate start of schools with local girls as staff or assistants.

23. It was here that the Mission encountered, for the first time, the direct links between Trinidad and the rest of the Caribbean; and saw also the development of a systematic curriculum. Before the Centre opened, Mr. Dudley Grant (Consultant to the Bernard van Leer Foundation in the Caribbean) came from Jamaica to conduct a two-week seminar for the staff; Sister Mary Roberta, the co-ordinator, emphasised that his ideas and approach had strongly influenced the resulting programme. The fairly large contingent of girls from Eastern Caribbean islands presented a few problems, since some were below the expected standard; but here it is regarded as a Servol function to assist and promote nursery education - and ultimately community development - throughout the region. One of the staff members acts as a counsellor for the girls.

24. The curricular materials being developed in this first year take the form of sets of documents covering goals and objectives, activities and methods sheets, and educational content. The Centre is thus creating its own text materials for students as the course advances. The students are also making their own teaching aids, the aim being to ensure that each student will take home with her a full collection to serve as a model.

25. In keeping with Servol's practice of providing recognized credentials, the Caribbean Life Centre will award a certificate to students on successful completion of the course, which includes the one-year full-time study and two subsequent years of internship. Since nothing of this kind existed previously in Trinidad or in the Eastern Caribbean islands, Servol will seek support from and recognition for the certificate by the Ministry of Education. The climate for this is favourable, as shown by the recommendations of the Gocking Commission on Nursery Education, a Government body (very much influenced by Servol initiative and staff members) which has recently advised a much greater public involvement in nursery education. Although accepted by the Government, the report will not be implemented until after the November 1981 elections.

#### THE PAST

26. Behind the above described geography of Servol lies a history of eleven years of effort. The basic publications tracing the growth of the organization have a tendency to show the evolution of ideas and principles, so that they may be said to represent policy documents (another phrase that Servol workers would probably eschew). The facts and events as they occurred are contained in the organization's files

Once a month the co-ordinators of centres and projects meet with the Executive Committee for a reporting session - an occasion for exchanging information rather than for decision or policy making. A summary record of this is made, roneoed and circulated to all units. More detailed records are to be found in the correspondence and financial files in the Duncan Street Life Centre, the latter being checked through the annual audit by Price, Waterhouse. In essence, the operation of Servol is efficiently documented, but at no point does the job of record-keeping and reporting become more than a means to an end. The real end is composed of human relationships and actions; paperwork is a contribution to wider or more permanent communication but no substitute for personal contact.

27. Without repeating the historical material that is available, the Mission attempts here to sum up its perception of the processes that brought the organization to its present position. At first sight, the evolution of Servol seems to be a confusing affair. A series of activities or projects arose as a result of some expressed community needs. By applying an heuristic approach, Servol leaders limited their role to that of facilitators, bringing to the community one sole additional resource: a capacity to organize.

28. One set of activities, or projects or work-units (any of these terms will do), arose from a concern for very young children. This feeling was prevalent in the slum areas where Servol started. The organizing ingredient produced nursery schools and child-care centres. In due course, early childhood education was recognized by Servol to be one of the mainsprings of community improvement. In addition to its inherent value of aiding the growth of a number of children and their young teachers, it was instrumental in bringing the adult members of the community together, and in giving them a sense of shared interest and common achievement. Each project for a nursery school or a day-care centre realized by Servol has had this dual quality.

29. The needs of disadvantaged youth presented an additional opportunity for action. The boys and girls that drop out of the school system (the "push-outs" as Father Pantin calls them) have tended to drop out of the social and economic systems as well. Yet they are a relatively large, if inarticulate, part of the community. Their first expressed needs, for recreational and sports facilities, were met by Servol's improvisation. The deeper need, for jobs and thus for occupational preparation, led to the creation of training projects, which in turn have been brought together in vocational training units of some size at Beetham and Forres Park.

30. It was around 1979 that the organizing, integrative principles developed by Servol crystalized into the concept of Life Centres. Despite the variations and disparities that existed between the several Servol units, they appeared to share an underlying purpose and method which, it was felt, stemmed from the fact that Servol related to communities. Life in these communities produced the centres. Hence the title.



31. Two effects of the still developing Life Centre concept are already visible: the first is *a trend to many-sided activities in each Centre*: to involve babies, children, adolescents, adults and the aged (both the normal and the handicapped) in ways that lead to better living conditions and social relations for all. Perhaps this is no more than a re-stating of "a programme for community development"; the novelty consists in giving it an appropriate institutional form, with a stress on inter-generational contacts.

32. It is interesting to see how each of the Life Centres, with a great deal of autonomy, is planning its own growth. As the large Forres Park unit takes shape, with vocational training as its most visible component, the possibility of including a section for educating handicapped (in this case, autistic) children is being studied. In Sunshine Hill, the one Life Centre that caters for the handicapped, the children are integrated whenever possible with normal groups: and several of the slow-learning or slightly mentally retarded students there are now taking vocational courses at the Beetham Life Centre. Meanwhile, the next extension planned for Sunshine Hill is a playground for the children of the area. Thus the Life Centres are involved in an interactive process with each other, while remaining in close contact with their respective community.

33. The second outcome of the Life Centre idea is a *reinforcement of the need for more professional training for the various trainers, teachers and organizers working in existing projects*. This has been met by the establishment of the Caribbean Life Centre. As with the grass-roots Centres, *the starting point here is pre-school education*. In due course, no doubt, provision will be made for a wider range of community workers.

34. During its visit, the Mission was struck by the skilful and expressive use of inscriptions on the plaques placed on new buildings. In a very real sense these plaques reflect the history of Servol and its evolving policies. It is worthwhile quoting them chronologically. The first Beetham building plaque (February 1978) reads:

To those youth of Trinidad and Tobago  
who have been referred to us as untrainable and unemployable  
and who in constructing this building  
have comprehensively demonstrated  
the absurdity of those epithets,  
Servol respectfully dedicates this plaque.

A year later, on the Sunshine Hill Centre, the dedication reads:

To those very special children  
Sent to us by God as messengers of love  
To soften our hard hearts  
To turn us away from selfishness  
To bring out all that is tender in us  
To reach us in a way that we seldom reach each other.

The new villa added to Beetham was opened during the Mission's visit. It bears a plaque with the following words:

To the staff of the Beetham Life Centre  
who are so much more than managers,  
administrators, instructors and drivers  
and who give of themselves so unsparingly  
in the love and service of their students,  
Servol admiringly dedicates this Life Villa.

Finally, on the Caribbean Life Centre, which epitomizes the support of the Foundation, the plaque unveiled by a member of the Mission reads:

To the Bernard van Leer Foundation,  
whose support and guidance enabled us  
to champion the needs and rights  
of the pre-school child,  
Servol gratefully dedicates this Centre.

## THE OUTSIDE VIEW

35. The Mission was, to a limited extent, able to interview people and visit institutions that had no direct association with Servol. Their remarks, from different vantage points, were uniformly favourable. Without attaching too much importance to this aspect of the inquiry, a summing up of the responses may be useful.

36. Among local community leaders, what came across clearly was their great amount of faith in Servol: "before Servol we had nothing", "without Servol we wouldn't be able to do anything", "the Government isn't interested in us". While such remarks express perhaps a different sort of dependence, against a background of despair, there were also more active statements such as two or three cases of local negotiations to obtain some land, with the intention of building nursery schools or a sports-recreational facility.

37. Senior civil servants dwelt on the importance of the humanizing role of non-governmental bodies and viewed Servol as an essential agent in Trinidadian society because voluntary action was at a low ebb. The prospect of failure or disappearance of Servol was viewed as a calamity, since fairly large groups of the population would lose faith in the possibility of effecting change through positive community action. This sense of a certain internal dynamic in the Servol process, which the Government is bound to support for fear of the consequences of failure, is one of the political facets of innovative action in education and community development. There has, in fact, been increasing Government financial support for Servol, in particular, for nursery school teachers' salaries and for reconstruction of the Sunshine Hill Life Centre. The work of the Gocking Commission has brought early childhood education very much into the public eye; and this is, at least partly, the result of Servol initiatives!

38. From the employers' side, the Mission obtained some evidence of the quality of training and the sense of responsibility imparted by Servol courses. In bidding for contracts the Beetham Life Centre has had to compete on equal terms with other enterprises and its work has been judged technically sound. The General Manager of the local Van Leer Company (for geographical reasons not itself an employer of Servol graduates) proved to be a strong supporter of the vocational training programmes - himself an industrial engineer, his views are worthy of considerable attention. Other, less sophisticated people in the community also commented favourably on the quality (and price) of the work performed.

39. Brief visits to regular schools gave the Mission the impression that the formal education system was efficient, if traditional. A large primary school drawing pupils from the Beetham Estate/Laventille area found that children from the Servol nursery schools did well; but faced with large classes and a variety of pressures this school was obliged to focus on cognitive learning, with little scope for innovation. In a comprehensive secondary school the Mission saw technical equipment of a high standard; yet a lack of qualified teachers, combined with devaluation of technical as against academic studies, made this a static and uninspiring institution.

40. As there is no systematic follow-up of graduates from the Servol vocational courses, the Mission had no means of assessing its views of the training they had received. It is true that some, after a short period of working with enterprises, have returned to work as instructors in Beetham for what must be lower salaries. In general, the graduates have no trouble finding employment; the Beetham Life Centre retains contacts with firms that have used the apprentices on a sub-contractual basis and that subsequently ask them to take full-time jobs. In some instances, firms make available training equipment so that they would be in a position to obtain trained employees somewhat later (e.g., the equipping of the new Industrial Sewing Department). This growing network permits the Centre to fulfil a substantial job placement role. It would seem, too,

that Servol keeps in touch with changes in the job market, particularly necessary because of the island's growing industrialization: current emphasis in Beetham and Forres Park is on automotive mechanics, panel-beating and car-painting. Finally, the large growing demand for places at both Centres is probably the best evidence of the training's job-worthiness.

#### TO WHAT EXTENT HAS SERVOL GENERATED SELF-RELIANCE?

41. "To what extent has Servol generated self-reliance in those involved?" is the central, and also the most difficult, question to be answered in any assessment of the programme.

42. The people directly drawn into Servol activities certainly appear to have become more sure of themselves, "masters of their own fate", while concerned with the well-being of the community around them. The whole tenor of the vocational courses is much more than skill training and job preparation: the apprentices should become better workers, parents and citizens as a result of their Servol experiences. The phrase "should become" is used advisedly, as this is a subjective judgement, not the result of an empirical survey. Indeed, it is probably too early for such a survey to cover a significant number of cases.

43. In the smaller group of para-professionals that constitutes the staff - instructors and their assistants, nursery school teachers and their supervisors - there can be no doubt of the answer. These people are indeed self-reliant and have learned to organize their own work and that of others. There is a strong "in-house" spirit of loyalty to the organization, which is recognized to be indigenous. It is of interest to note the rarity of expatriates: Ron Kukler, a Dutch architect, is the sole exception, and in his work and life he has blended in completely with his environment. At a still more local level, the Servol staff in projects in the south come now almost entirely from that area, the original "intervention agents" from Port of Spain having withdrawn to make place for teachers and assistants from the locality.

44. Nevertheless, Servol students and staff can be numbered by the hundreds, while the surrounding communities number many thousands. The people of these areas that the Mission met were obviously in contact with Servol, since the meetings were arranged by Servol. They showed a strong appreciation of what Servol was doing; and in some cases, notably around the nursery schools in the south, they were determined to get certain things done by their own efforts. This spirit was less evident in the urban area, where the village council of Beetham Estate is nominally in charge of the nursery schools but still displayed dependence on the organization. It is significant that the Government, having accepted to pay the salaries of nursery school teachers, makes the grant to Servol rather than to local bodies. Judging from the Mission's few contacts, it seems correct to say that Servol has brought

hope to the depressed communities, a feeling that something can be done; and has demonstrated through the nursery schools and the example of the young apprentices, that mobilizing joint action to cope with local problems is possible. However, this is not yet the fullest expression of self-reliance.

45. To judge the effect of Servol on the surrounding communities, the Mission would need to know, not simply conjecture about, the original situation: the conditions of poverty, dependence and despair that prevailed in Laventille in 1971. It did meet a qualified person in this respect, Owen Clarke, an active community leader in no way attached to the Servol staff. He firmly declared that a change had come about because of Servol. The Mission obtained similar, if less direct, evidence through its meeting with representatives of various Government departments (who strongly supported the work of non-governmental organizations such as Servol); and from Charlie Waldron, one of Servol's earliest contacts in Laventille. Mr. Clarke also referred to the slowness of the process. For something as fundamental as community development, in the true sense, a decade is a short period, when one considers the heritage of centuries that causes the deprivation.

#### DOES SERVOL REMAIN A CATALYST?

46. To some extent, Servol has grown from an organization into an institution or, rather, a network of institutions: the Life Centres. It thus takes the form of a new "community" in which members strongly identify with what they perceive Servol to be. There is room to examine the present structure and consider how far this is compatible with a catalytic role.

47. Seen as a whole, Servol is a very well managed enterprise. The next section will go into the details of principle and theory, but in practical terms, the organization is run as an efficient business should be. The management structure is clear and appears to be both recognized and accepted. Considerable attention is given to information flow within Servol. Indeed, in meeting people separately at very different levels of responsibility, the Mission was struck by the extent to which everyone knew what was going on elsewhere and were able to express the basic premises of their jobs. The style of management is a "combination of charisma and decentralization" as a member of the Mission phrased it. Financial matters are centralized, with funds held in a series of separate accounts in the most beneficial way; yet financial decision making is at the same time decentralized. Each Centre (and in the bigger ones, each department or trade training course) has its own account and is held accountable. The 1980/81 income and expenditure account for Beetham traces this very clearly: each department prepares its own bid for an external contract, organizes the job, and takes decisions about the use of revenue for salaries, stipends and purchase of equipment. This procedure has shown the need for training in management skills (estimating, accounting and so on) among instructors.

48. At the same time, Servol is a unity, not a conglomerate of projects. While some level of decision making is decentralized, the Executive Committee in fact fixes policy and approves plans. The Committee should be composed of the Executive Director with the head, or co-ordinator, of each Centre; for various reasons, including staff changes, it presently has only four members (of the potential eight). The Committee functions democratically, at times over-ruling the Executive Director, and appears to leave each co-ordinator enough latitude for planning and administration. Time did not permit the Mission to ascertain how far a similar approach is adopted within each Centre, but it gained the impression that a supple form of management existed within certain prescribed limits. For the basic principles, as worked out by the Executive Committee (and as expressed in the publications) appear to be self-evident, not open for debate: they are shared, well-communicated and explained, but they stand. The same disciplined approach is to be found in the rules, regulations and procedures adopted in a Centre; or lower down, in the time-tabling and clocking in procedures of departments.

49. Here one comes to a difficult point: it is a long way from self-awareness and an *esprit de corps*, to democratic management; yet this latter must be reached before a community can be self-reliant. It may be that the Mission gathered insufficient information, but there was no evidence of student councils or of training for participation in management. Similarly, in staff interaction with co-ordinators and the Executive Committee, the amount of participation in decision making seemed restricted. It may be, however, that at the present stage of development of the communities concerned, more open policies would be premature. Insistence on participation in management is usually associated with situations where social class differences produce tensions. The Servol communities are socially more homogeneous, but even here procedures for consultation, negotiation and decision taking (in short, all aspects of democratic management) need to be recognized and deliberately fostered, since the goal is to help entire communities to take charge of their own affairs.

50. To touch upon a quite different point: the organization appears to have solved the problem of succession. Most innovatory projects are due to the leadership of one change agent or, at best, to that of a small group. It is usually at the stage of transference of leadership, which must inevitably occur, that innovations often fail. In Servol the progressive transfer of authority and functions is already taking place. The use of local people in projects in the south has been referred to earlier. Within the Port of Spain Centres, again, each co-ordinator has a deputy, and in the Executive Committee the sharing of tasks is such that the Executive Director can be replaced. He appeared to the Mission to have succeeded in that most difficult of jobs: rendering himself dispensable while remaining fully engaged.

51. These remarks about Servol's structure and organization do not directly relate to the question of its catalytic role. To the extent that the Centres and the organization as a whole may serve as models

for fresh initiatives elsewhere in Trinidad and Tobago, the way Servol manages itself is clearly important. The full answer must, however, be sought in the area of Servol contacts and interventions outside the existing programme. Here, it is useful to examine in greater detail the "external relations" and the state of the most recent "projects", notably the Child-to-Community project (CTC) which is the project currently being funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

52. The Mission learnt of several approaches from the outside, requests to Servol to take over an institution which was not doing well (e.g., a technical-vocational school) or to launch a new project (e.g., a nursery school). Each of these appeals came from somebody in authority because Servol had proved its competence in the particular field. The answer has consistently been "No, Servol is not in the business of creating an alternative educational system. By all means study what we are doing and then apply what you wish to your own situation". The same answer was given to an organization on another Caribbean island which wanted senior Servol staff to stay for an extended period and instruct them in their own context. Such an attitude needs, of course, to be compared with the process of disengagement from activities initiated by Servol - a point taken up below.

53. In examining the CTC project, the Mission has had the benefit of the recently completed evaluation report prepared for Servol by a Trinidadian firm, Personnel Management Services. The report covers work between 1978 and 1981 in the Gram Couva/La Gloria area, which has been referred to in the present report as "the projects in the south". The evaluators were able to use their expert knowledge of other areas in Trinidad of comparable development to assess the progress that had been made in these rural projects. After reviewing nursery school, health service and agricultural activities, they concluded that: "in comparison with other rural villages in Trinidad, the community co-operation and initiative for self-help in the area under examination are significantly high" (p.13). The report is explicit on the question of Servol's catalytic role: "The assumption by community personnel of management and leadership roles in the project has achieved Servol objectives in this regard" (p.17). But it sounds a warning note about the time-scale for effecting profound social change: "It is felt that continual and sustained efforts must be made if this initiative is not to be lost. In the cultural context of Trinidad and Tobago, the level of co-operation that this project has achieved in agricultural projects of persons of the two different ethnic groups, is exceptional. It would, however, be unrealistic to expect that such co-operation will be extrapolated to embrace the community generally without an organized framework of activities to sustain it ... Without the continuation and, indeed, the strengthening of the existing projects, it is doubtful that the progress achieved thus far will be maintained" (pp. 17 and 18). In other words, Servol has played and does play a catalytic role, but it is extremely difficult to disengage from the community development process.

54. The more recent manifestation of the CTC project is the Caribbean Life Centre in Port of Spain. This has been entirely a Servol initiative;

and in its first year of operation, it seems premature to look for signs of transference of control. Even if one were to speculate, the nature of the Centre is such that only a national body (e.g., the Ministry of Education) or even a regional one (for part or all of the Caribbean) could replace Servol.

### HOW CONSISTENT IS THE SERVÔL THEORY?

55. The principles underlying action have been arrived at through experience; and although the "Servol theory" as such is nowhere set out in the sources, a sketchy outline, *post facto*, can be offered in the following terms. Deductively from certain simple principles Servol has developed approaches which, on being tried out, led to inductive reasoning about principles. The totality of the findings forms a body of theory.

56. "People first" appears to be the first principle. This led to the "listening-and-helping" approaches most evident in the early days of the enterprise, but still applied today in the importance given to caring for people and the attention to inter-personal relationships.

57. The next principle is recognition of the inner potential of people - a small advance on the previous one, but necessary in order to pass to practical action, since it opens varied approaches through the question: potential for what? Through activities, people demonstrate to themselves and others their capacities. The economic process of selecting priority areas for action led Servol to two main centres of interest: the disadvantaged young child and the drop-out adolescent. The former is embodied in early childhood education through day-care centres and nursery schools, where the approaches followed were the use of local para-professionals, linkage with health services (initiated by professionals), and reaching through the mothers to the community as a whole, so as to weld community centres and pre-school centres together. With the adolescent drop-outs, the approach of an alternative training system (apprenticeship) made it possible again to use para-professionals and to develop education through production.

58. From these steps, Servol has come to recognize what the Mission would call an integrative principle. The varied activities merge into a Life Centre which will tend to be as many-sided as the surrounding community itself. In Gerry Pantin's words, "Any structure which purports to help a community to grow and develop out of a poverty situation must literally encompass and include every imaginable aspect of the community's life. Nothing should be excluded in principle, though the realities of the situation will inevitably demand that a modest and rather limited start be made ... such a project must remain open-ended, prepared to or rather eager to, incorporate any component of the community's life into its mainstream, if and when the community shows signs of wanting to include it". This principle is embodied in the present Life Centre approach, with a subtle mix of response to local needs and impulses received from elsewhere in the Servol system.



59. Finally, there appears to the Mission to be a principle of patience, an acceptance of time. This is implicit in the preceding approaches: of responding to people, starting activities and building structures. It also, in turn, gives rise to an experimental approach, the readiness to try something out, take risks and admit failure without losing sight of the end in view.

60. While the Mission has probably not analysed this aspect of Servol with sufficient clarity, it certainly comes to the conclusion that the theoretical basis is coherent, that there is a consistent link between theory and practice. What characterizes Servol - next to its integrative principle - is integrity.

61. Reflection on the enterprise shows that it has a great deal of similarity to the ideas set out by Schumacher in *Small is Beautiful*;<sup>\*</sup> however, Father Gerry Pantin discovered this work only in the past couple of years. Schumacher made the point: "Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped, potential" (p. 140 of 1974 edition). Servol has explored ways of bringing about community development by educational means and it provides a practical vindication of Schumacher's more abstract economic thinking. Alternatively, Schumacher offers a wider framework within which to situate Servol.

62. This section of the present report is headed "How well has Servol done?" Maybe the authors have made a long journey to reach an obvious conclusion: Servol seems to have done pretty well, when its present situation and growth are examined against its goals. This is a judgement, not an evaluation, resting on the description and analysis given above. When one takes some distance from the enterprise, two final questions pose themselves: what about evaluation in Servol? What has been the role of the Bernard van Leer Foundation in Servol's development? Related questions, since an outside body like the Foundation is apt to look for objective measures of success in projects that it supports.

#### WHAT ABOUT EVALUATION IN SERVOL?

63. What is involved here is the evaluation of social change, not simply the effort to measure the results of an educational process. In our view, goals as wide as those of Servol - to produce self-reliance, to promote community development, and to overcome fatalism and cynicism - can scarcely be handled by traditional methods of evaluation. The same caveat applies to the specifically educational aspects of the Servol programme. The integration of child care and vocational education, of training in self-awareness and work with handicapped children, and the utilization of para-professionals as a major part of project staff, all preclude familiar, formal patterns of evaluation. Small wonder then that the Servol team, attuned to the special nature of their project and its setting has strongly resisted the introduction of such

<sup>\*</sup> Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful; a study of economics as if people mattered*. London, Blond & Briggs. P.288.

evaluation. The record of efforts to instal formal evaluation in Servol with a qualified specialist has not been good; one has the impression of a graft which has been rejected by the organism.

64. There must be reasons for this, besides the incompatibility of marriages between academics and field workers. One relates to methodology: the lists of social and educational indicators proposed by the UN Research Institute for Social Development, Unesco's Institute for Educational Planning and similar bodies to measure social change, prove on inspection to be at so general a level as to have scarcely any operational application. Another likely factor is cost: in an action oriented programme such as Servol, the results of data gathering and analysis will contrast unfavourably with the benefit of using the resources on some practical activity.

65. Does this imply that no evaluation of a project like Servol is possible? Certainly not. The Servol team itself demonstrates a visible evaluatory attitude arising from awareness of goals and the experimental approach. This can be seen in what is an almost pedantic recording process (whose detailed coverage of events provides the base for an ongoing critical examination of the level of goal achievement), in readiness to try out some activity, admit failure and move in another direction. It is found also in the fairly tight scheduling of activities, with targets and time-limits, in the vocational courses, where Servol has to compete in the market-place for jobs; similar management practices are followed throughout the organization. Again, the Mission has remarked on the adoption of standards used by the existing authorities: the national trade certificate for apprentices and a projected certificate for nursery school teachers. For Servol such devices are regarded as part of the surrounding reality and ensure that people inside the organization are not isolated from life outside. However, they represent also a readiness to judge results in the light of independent or external assessment. At least the members of the Executive Committee seem to use process-oriented evaluation as a regular working method, even though they avoid the term. They are constantly checking on responses of the outside world to Servol activities - the local communities, the job market, officials and contracting firms that form a considerable network providing feedback to willing listeners. For the normal conduct of Servol affairs it is doubtful whether more systematic procedures would yield useful results at present.

66. At the same time, Servol and projects like it present the Foundation with a challenge in regard to the nature and process of evaluation. The need to develop new techniques, appropriate to the social and cultural setting and useful in an action-research situation, is evident. These techniques cannot be standard, since they must reflect the specific qualities of the project's setting and structure. If they provide a continuous balance between actual achievement and objectives; they will often lead to significant revisions of the latter in the light of experience, as has been the case with Servol.

67. Moreover, factors of time and space have to be considered well beyond the limits of such a project. Even the decade of Servol's life

is hardly time enough for gauging social change. Such aspects as the project's potential for dissemination, acceptance by society at all levels, capacity for promotion of self-confidence in the most depressed sectors of the population, and the creation of strong teams (all of which are salient aspects of Servol and similar projects) are not amenable to measurement by "normal" evaluatory techniques.

#### THE ROLE OF THE BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION

68. The Foundation appears to the Mission to have contributed significantly to Servol's progress. This aspect is worth analysing for its potential, worthwhile lessons. Financial support has been considerable (just under Dfl. 2 million) and has continued over a long period of time (twelve years). This has served the essential purpose of giving Servol cash resources to bolster voluntary effort, to plan and execute with confidence and to face the risk-taking that innovation involves. The regular income from Foundation grants and the relative freedom from complex checks and controls have been further factors in promoting the dynamism of Servol.

69. No less important has been the benefit to Servol of its association with the Bernard van Leer Foundation. This was the first major contact with a body outside Trinidad - and it happened to be one which provided stimulating opportunities to the Servol leadership: both to meet people and ideas within the Foundation network, and to branch out to make a host of other contacts. The priority given by the Foundation to early childhood education and to integrated education for development is clearly reflected in the evolution of Servol. The relationship between the two bodies has been more subtle and complex than is usual between a donor agency which fixes fields and forms of action and a recipient body which modifies its goals and methods to comply. The various occasions when Servol leadership interacted with staff of the Foundation and of the other supported projects provided fresh ideas, or highlighted Servol's need to formulate more clearly its principles and methods, or simply reinforced thinking already implicit in its action. What the precise mix of these three types of influence has been is not important; together, their contribution to the wisdom of Servol has been at least as important as the financial support.

70. The existence of an outside world, beyond the limits of Trinidad and Tobago, that displays an interest in Servol, is too frequently referred to by Servol's leadership to be dismissed as a polite formula. This interest has given the staff, and perhaps also the public at large (including the public authorities) a heightened appreciation of what this organization is doing. In this respect the association with the Foundation, especially in the early days, has also been important.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

71. The Mission can conclude then along these lines: Servol has been a remarkable indigenous innovation in applying education and educational methods to the development of depressed communities. As it has progressed, Servol has been able to evolve an interesting and coherent theory for community development; and an efficient structure and management for the programme of action. In this process, the association with the Bernard van Leer Foundation has been an essential ingredient.

### III WHAT OF SERVOL'S FUTURE

72. There are several strands to the answer. The main one is the view taken within the organization. To this the Mission adds, with great caution, some long-range forecasting of its own. At a more practical level, the Mission can offer suggestions for future action which emerged while it was looking at the present situation.

#### SERVOL'S CURRENT VIEWS ON GROWTH

73. The Servol Executive is quite clear that it does not want the programme to grow in a linear fashion. Given the success of the Life Centres and the network of nursery schools, it might naturally happen that Servol would start (or accept invitations to start) similar projects all over the country. This would be tantamount to creating a parallel education system - nonformal but close enough to the formal system to represent a political issue. A number of convincing innovations like the *barrio* high schools have been generalized only to disappear as innovations.

74. How then does Servol see its future? The Executive Committee stands firm on the experimental, or pilot, demonstration qualities of Servol. The existing six basic Centres and the nursery schools should continue breaking new ground and progressively come under local community control. If any new projects are added, these should differ sufficiently from those existing to produce fresh insights into the application of education to community development. In this view, the Caribbean Life Centre will become the central part of Servol, since from here will be organized the courses and on-site training for people wishing to study the Servol experience in a systematic way before launching their own endeavours. Moreover, as the title of the Centre presages, the Servol leaders intend to play a regional role: offering a pattern of development which community promoters from Caribbean countries may use for guidance. This will depend on the construction of the proposed hostel, for which Servol will have to find external development funds. Once this has been achieved, the catalytic function of Servol will again come to the fore. The main effect, if not purpose, of the future Servol will be to bring about educational change.

#### THE SERVOL STRUCTURE IN BROADER CONTEXT

75. The Mission's view is that this projection is a sound one, but by no means easy - or certain - of achievement. Within Trinidad itself, a number of questions arise: it will be difficult to resist pressures from the surrounding community (unofficial and official) to increase Life Centres under Servol management and to create many more nursery schools that Servol should supervise. In some cases, as with the La Gloria work in rural communities, there is every reason for Servol

to continue providing the infra-structure for community development. In other cases, such as the two large vocational training Centres, Beetham and Forres Park, there is little possibility for a local village council to take over the control. Apart from continued Servol governance, only two options are open: that each Centre becomes an autonomous, self-governing institution, a "work-community", or that the Government adopts the idea and incorporates the Centres into a new institutional pattern where formal and nonformal education are merged.

76. This brings us to reflect on relationships between the State and Servol. So far the organization has worked successfully in the interstices of official programmes - the pre-school children, adolescent drop-outs, community promoters - but in future Servol may appear more as a challenge to the central authorities. The present climate in Trinidad appears to favour (or at least, does not oppose) action by voluntary, non-governmental bodies. The Government makes, for example, recurrent and capital grants to Servol for salaries and buildings. The key political issue for the future is whether this attitude will persist, and still more important, whether the Government will foster and strengthen local authorities, decentralizing its own powers. Without political action to strengthen local government, and to support the work of non-governmental, voluntary organizations, the demonstration value of Servol will be lost. The Mission cannot make predictions here.

77. In the same framework lie the links between Servol and the formal education system. With the avowed purpose of bringing about educational change, Servol is obliged to consider how the present incidental contacts can be strengthened so as to produce a sense of co-operation and complementarity rather than of potential rivalry. Following the initiative of training nursery school teachers at the Caribbean Life Centre, maybe Servol could develop ties with national teacher training institutions, through which all permanent change of schooling must pass.

78. The economic viability of the present Servol structure - to look at the question from another angle - seems fairly certain. The Beetham Centre is a going concern, as Forres Park shortly will be. In the spirit of the Life Centre Charter (see para. 18, page 7), it is possible that the total Servol "community", earning as it learns, sharing resources and showing much entrepreneurial initiative, will keep going for many years to come. The Caribbean Life Centre is a case apart, as training nursery school teachers and community workers is hardly a profitable enterprise. The size of the Centre (twenty-five students at present, double that when a boarding unit is added) is so small that it will be difficult to break even on fee income alone. In any event, a growing demand for places in the Centre will depend to a large extent on official policies: if the Trinidad Government decides to generalize pre-school education and if education authorities in the other islands come to recognize the value of training by Servol, there should be no problem about expanding the Centre to an economically viable size.

## SUGGESTIONS AT A PRACTICAL LEVEL

79. The Mission's suggestions for improving the work of Servol (already raised in discussions in Port of Spain) can be briefly summarized. For the most part they bear on techniques, and many are simply extensions of present tendencies:

- a) more written instructional materials are needed, for example, job sheets, curriculum guides and the like, which accumulate experience; with a growing demonstration function, Servol will be obliged to focus on this question, and perhaps professionally prepared films supported by manuals will be the most economical way of doing the job;
- b) in the vocational units, it may be possible to use plastics alongside wood and metal, and to develop a new industry locally for educational materials; the promotion to this effect of economic enterprises, small-scale businesses and co-operatives, certainly needs attention;
- c) among educational methods, too little use is made of indigenous culture (music, song and dance);
- d) cognitive development takes third place after character formation and skill training; the courses for adolescents could contain more social studies, language for communication, technical theory, more elements that make for learning to learn; reading is not yet a popular Servol pursuit;
- e) more deliberate efforts might be made throughout Servol to ensure participation in decision making and familiarity with democratic procedures; the impatience with committee and other negotiating mechanisms sometimes displayed within Servol may be understandable, but in the long run, is risky; and
- f) at the administrative level, the documentation is available but needs to be organized through systematic reports, both to preserve the Servol record and to aid communication with observers.

## IV TRANSFERABILITY AND BROADER IMPACT

The question of transferability and broader impact may best be considered at two levels: within the Caribbean region and internationally.

### THE CARIBBEAN

80. Servol is an attempt to deal with poverty and dependence in Trinidadian society. Its relevance will be greatest in situations which socially and economically resemble the conditions found in Trinidad, i.e., the English-speaking countries and islands of the Caribbean. No doubt the same degree of relevance occurs in French, Spanish and Dutch-speaking areas, but a certain communication problem will have to be overcome.

81. For the dissemination of the innovatory ideas and practices of Servol, publications and documents alone are unlikely to be sufficient. They have a place, and indeed the Mission suggested above that more attention be given to documenting in detail the operating processes of Servol; but the essential lesson of Servol can probably be learnt only by observation and participation. The Mission believes that it is the totality of the Servol approach, its principles and methods, which should be significant on the Caribbean scene. Most of the component activities, such as starting nursery schools, providing health services, offering trade training courses and creating community centres, are already well known; and perhaps superficially better examples could be found than those developed by Servol. The real value of the experience in Trinidad lies in the initial premise: to achieve self-reliance, the people themselves must decide and express their needs and must play an active part in meeting the needs - the "change agent" bringing simply a capacity to organize and a sense of discipline. This is easy to understand theoretically - it has been stated often enough - but difficult to absorb and apply.

82. Accordingly, the Mission believes that dissemination of Servol experience must necessarily proceed through personal involvement. The setting up of the Caribbean Life Centre shows that the leadership of Servol has already seized this point. The first course for nursery school teachers lasts a year and combines theoretical instruction with practical work both in the classroom and in community projects. By extension, courses for community promoters or "Servol observers" could be provided, maybe less than a year in duration, but long enough to permit learning by doing. Short observation visits will not do, since it is likely that only the superficial aspect of techniques will be communicated. The real purpose would be for outsiders to experience the Servol programme in diverse situations, draw conclusions and then return home to develop something of their own, adapted to the needs of their own community.

83. If the Caribbean Life Centre is to serve as a trainer of change agents, two conditions will have to be fulfilled: the first is the



unearthing of potential leaders in the other Caribbean countries. Formal methods of selection do not suffice; rather, a network of correspondents will be needed - more senior people who understand enough of Servol to be sympathetic to its aims and eager to see something similar applied in their countries. The second condition is economic. Servol will have to develop training materials and offer the services of professional advisers, which are rather costly; and it will, therefore, have to pass part of the cost on to the client communities or countries. Considering present-day aid programmes, the Mission feels that few better opportunities could be found for promoting development than support of this kind to Servol.

84. There is a risk inherent in publicity for an innovation: that so many people crowd in for a look, that the leaders of the innovation are so much solicited from abroad, as to drain the internal resources. It would be wise for Servol to set its own pace for the dissemination process, applying abroad, as it has done nationally and locally, the principle of patience. So far it seems to have done so.

85. Apart from this conclusion that Caribbean communities have much to learn from the totality of Servol experience, the two major points of entry in Trinidadian society (pre-school education and trade training for adolescent drop-outs) would no doubt be effective elsewhere as well. The subsequent building up of Life Centres would result from the characteristics of each particular community (ethnic background, family structure and economic potential) and would probably not end up resembling those now found in Servol. Progress in this direction will depend on the extent to which Caribbean Governments provide moral and financial support - as has progressively been the case in Trinidad in recent years.

#### INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION

86. When one moves to other developing regions, it is not so much the potential significance of Servol that is evident (this is surely high) but the difficulty of making a jump to a very different society. The idea of Servol's providing intensive in-service training for field workers from other regions than the Caribbean is premature. Perhaps once the innovation has made some progress in the Caribbean, to embrace also the Latin American littoral and non-English-speaking islands, a large enough base will exist for demonstration purposes. It remains, then, to consider useful forms of dissemination other than through direct experience. Three avenues occur to the Mission: (a) an audio-visual record; (b) the Foundation network; and (c) the political dimension.

87. *An audio-visual record:* Reference has already been made to the need for a professional film to be prepared on Servol (e.g., to Canadian National Film Board standards). This would satisfy internal needs for training material, if backed by documentation. Conceivably, the same programme could serve as inspiration or guidance in training

centres abroad. The Mission's preference for the film medium is based on the view that among documentary techniques this comes closest to capturing the reality of human relationships. To develop such an instrument is beyond Servol's present capacities, and would amount to a sizeable project. The product, used in universities and training courses in Africa, Asia or Latin America, would surely justify the outlay.

88. *The Foundation network:* The Mission has repeatedly claimed that the Bernard van Leer Foundation has been a genuine partner in the progress of Servol. This fact may appear as confirmation of the wisdom of past support; it also argues for the Foundation to include in its panorama of projects nascent activities like those of Servol in 1971-74, and to conclude that the discreet combination of limited control with considerable contacts (funds, visits abroad by project leadership, seminars, visits to the project by leaders and staff of other projects) offers the best possibility for success in any undertaking. Servol's history reinforces the view that the Foundation network is a sound way to achieve innovation.

89. When the present support by the Foundation to the CTC project ends, the association could and should continue. For one thing, the Foundation might consider the possibility of further supporting the work of the Caribbean Life Centre, broadly conceived, as a focus for dissemination for the work of Servol. It might also make use of the demonstration value of Servol by bringing here small groups of project staff from other regions for a sustained "immersion" of two to three weeks, or by ensuring that the emerging Servol leaders attend seminars or visit projects elsewhere. Exchanges of this type would be mutually beneficial to the network and to Servol.

90. *The political dimension:* At the risk of sounding pretentious, the Mission feels that Servol has visibly demonstrated something of great importance: successful leadership in a Third World situation. It has built up an indigenous perception of what developmental attitudes have to be, if the Third World is to emerge from dependence. There is no application here of an imported model (be it the Western free market approach or the Marxist class struggle) but a genuine act of creativity.

91. If the Mission's perception is correct, it would be well for some of the leaders in development aid to ponder the lessons Servol has to offer: those in charge of policies in the World Bank, UNDP, EEC, OECD and some of the bilateral agencies, besides foundations. Such an event might take the level of a high-level Seminar (which was the intention, for example, of the original Bellagio Group\* in dealing with development). It would need very skilful preparation, with sound, pithy documentation and, assuming the venue was Port of Spain, an agenda combining two days of discussion with two of field visits. An organization like the Bernard van Leer Foundation would be particularly well placed to take such an initiative..

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\* an informal forum for discussion of development issues in relation to education, originally organized by The Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation in 1972.

## V GENERAL CONCLUSION

92. It should be apparent from the foregoing that the Mission regards the Servol experience positively. As such, it is relevant to the developmental processes of the Foundation itself. Servol links community development and education (both broadly conceived) into a coherent if unusual whole. It does so not only in response to theoretical perception or humanitarian concern (though both are amply in evidence) but as a translation into reality of the expressed needs and desires of the community. There has thus evolved an integrated structure with a major community involvement in the educational process (organizationally and pedagogically) and a parallel participation of students and staff in a variety of community activities and services. The educational and training aspects of the Servol programme themselves constitute a major force for community development.

93. Two further elements serve to buttress this view of the Servol experience. The link between education and production derives, in major part, from the belief that education should be vitally involved in "real life", and should enable young people to move toward maturity by their sharing directly in community concerns. Similarly, the Life Centre concept rests on the assumption that the only valid limit to the community-education link is the breadth of the community's perception of its needs. Further, Servol deliberately sets out to break down accepted divisions within the educational structure itself, such as those of age group or of categories such as "normal" and "handicapped". All of these integrative constructs have proved to be central to the achievement of the project, to the cohesiveness of its team, to its impact on Trinidadian society (and beyond), and to its success in promoting the growth of community self-reliance.