

REPORT ON SEMINAR “ USING EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION” – SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2004

This seminar was one of the post-conference activities and the organizers were Seta Kartick-Lewis and Ramona Baxter. It was held at the IDCE Lecture Hall, Flat 5, Queen’s College Compound, Camp Road, Georgetown from 9:00 – 12:00 hours.

Invitations had been sent to the Ministry of Education, Heads of Secondary Schools in Georgetown, the IDCE Students’ Council, IDCE Staff (both full time and part-time), Critchlow Labour College, GTI, CPCE and CAFRA. Only fifteen persons responded though it had been hoped that at least twenty-five persons would have been present (See attachment for details).

Several presenters at the Conference on Governance Conflict Analysis and Conflict Resolution were contacted and asked to be part of a panel. These included Dr Michael Scott, Mrs Paulette Henry, Mrs Barbara Thomas, Dr Sandra Foster and Mr Clinton Hutton. However, for varying reasons, they were unable to accept the invitation. Mr John Palmer and Dr Brian O’Toole had also been contacted but only Mr Palmer was available.

Funding for the seminar was provided by UNDP (see attached Budget)

Participants were welcomed by Mrs S. Kartick-Lewis who outlined the objectives of the seminar. She shared summaries of the presentations on the Peace Education panel. These were well received and a lively discussion followed, especially on Mr Clinton Hutton’s “Coming in from the Cold” as many of the participants felt that the approach used in Craig Town could be applied to our local situation.

One participant also expressed an interest in mediation training and asked whether this was available locally.

The participants then decided that they needed to have a working definition of conflict.

Some suggestions were that conflict was:-

- **the result of different views and the inequitable distribution of resources**
- **a social imbalance caused by a variety of factors**
- **a disturbance caused by someone's own interpretation and understanding**
- **a dispute which arises through different behaviour and opinions**

Mrs Kartick-Lewis was asked whether any of the presenters had come up with a definition of conflict. She responded that this had not been done at any of the sessions she attended. One participant commented that “**conflict**” was difficult to define because the causes were complex and the group agreed with this.

The lone resource person, Mr John Palmer of Love Outreach International arrived around 10:50 hours. After the break Mr Palmer was introduced to the participants and invited to share his experiences with the group.

Mr Palmer pointed out that social peace is necessary for economic progress. In order to achieve this attitudes have to be changed. He outlined some of the strategies that have been successfully used by his group:-

- **teaching the message of love and peace in schools**
- **working with PTAs and community groups**
- **teaching moral education**
- **encouraging forgiveness**
- **introducing physical education for young people**
- **encouraging adults especially teachers to serve as proper role models for youths**

This presentation was followed by discussion and a request was made to Mr Palmer for some of the materials published by Love Outreach International. Mr Palmer promised to

provide copies which would be reproduced and circulated to all participants by Mrs Kartick-Lewis.

Mr Francis Glasgow, IDCE Resident Tutor in Linden and Mrs Beverley Baker, IDCE Resident Tutor in New Amsterdam, both extended invitations to Mr Palmer to visit them. They indicated that they were interested in mounting a similar exercise in their respective regions i.e. exploring how education could be used for resolving conflicts.

Though it had been planned to develop an action plan, there was no time for this exercise. However, the participants felt that the exercise was timely and useful. They agreed that civil society needs to play a more pro-active role in resolving conflict in our society and that education was the key. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting to map out a strategy for peace education should be convened sometime in March (no date was set) and that Mr Palmer should be one of the resource persons. The representative from GETC also invited Mr Palmer to address his students.

The proposed activities arising out of this seminar are:-

- **peace education seminars in Linden and New Amsterdam**
- **follow-up meeting(s) to develop a strategy for peace education**
- **training in mediation**

Special thanks to Mr Chris Spies of UNDP for his encouragement and assistance in providing financial support for this project, and Mr John Palmer of **Love Outreach International** who willingly gave of his time to share his ideas and experiences with the group.

.....
Seta Kartick-Lewis