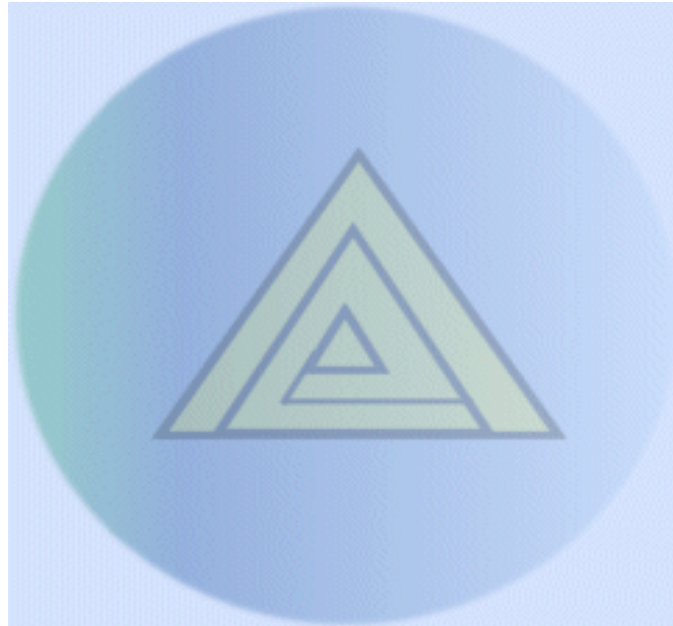


THE ACE JOURNEY: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT



**ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN ECONOMISTS
ASSOCIATION D'ECONOMISTES DES CARAIBES
ASOCIACION DE ECONOMISTAS DEL CARIBE
ASSOCIATIE VAN CARIBISCHE ECONOMEN**

Prepared for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Office for Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean,
by Racquel Peters, International Relations Intern, Department of Government, UWI
Mona Campus, September 2007.

THE ACE JOURNEY: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

This paper seeks to trace and identify the main programme areas of ACE; analyze the possible impact of its work on the regional integration process, and finally, to assess how far this work went towards the Association achieving the objectives of its stated mission.

FIRSTLY, WHAT IS ACE?

ACE stands for the Association of Caribbean Economists. It is a non-governmental organization that was founded in July 1987. Ideally, it is an Association that strives for the countries of the Caribbean to be in “economic good health” which, it is suggested, is possible through the process of regional integration. One might question why this Association is different from the others; the answer lies in their strong belief in regional integration. When one thinks of the Caribbean, reference is often only to the Anglophones of the region, for example, Jamaica and Barbados. However, if per chance the mind does wonder to non-English-speaking countries, it is then Haiti or Cuba.

It can be concluded that it is in response to this narrow definition of the Caribbean that ACE was born. Against the background of the economic turmoil being experienced by the region in the 1980s, we will look at three countries Haiti, Cuba and Barbados.

Haiti in that period was experiencing very little economic growth. The GDP per capita decreased from 9.0 in the years 1980-1985 to a staggering 0.6, a figure it remained at for the period of 1986-1987. Cuba was also going through hardships, with the sudden discontinuation of trade and economic support from the Eastern European bloc and the USSR in 1990, it was difficult for Cuba to manage its trade as well as counterbalance its losses. Cuba's foreign debt in 1989 was estimated at one thousand and five hundred million pesos and this only involved countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the then East Germany. Barbados was also facing its own economic challenges. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Barbados lost many offshore manufacturing operations to competitors whose wage costs in US dollars were equivalent or less. Their growth of labour productivity was below the levels required to sustain the growth of the export of goods and services, and as a result, foreign exchange earnings fell.

It is clear to see that these countries were having economic difficulties, but besides these challenges, what did they have in common? Yes, they were all Caribbean countries trying to find a way out of their economic problems. However, it would not be fair to say, that that is all they had in common. As countries in the Caribbean, we are linked by our past. Our forefathers established a mercantilist platform on which our present economies are built, and although we have evolved, created and formed our own cultures, types of governments and different economic policies, some characteristics of that link remain, making us more similar and in essence, Caribbean.

We acknowledge that we are one region but how does this similarity help our economies? ACE proposed a way forward. In its constitution, ACE defines the Caribbean as “all islands in the Caribbean sea and Guyana, Suriname, Cayenne and Belize”. This notion of

regional integration is most clearly depicted in the very first logo for ACE, which promotes the idea of integration, unity and togetherness by showing all the languages of the Caribbean in a triangle, each linked to the other. Hence, we are all part of one Caribbean. Beyond this however, ACE understands that there is a common thread, and it understands the importance of using this commonality to move forward.

The Association acknowledges a Caribbean Economy and aims to correct the imbalances within this economy, by firstly understanding this link, and using it to promote better economic policies shaped specifically for the Caribbean, via cooperation in the form of regional integration.

“Although the countries of the Caribbean region speak different languages and have slightly different cultural backgrounds, they share a common history and geographical area, and face the similar problems of development.” (Samuel, 1990)

In order to understand the mission of ACE, one must first understand its aims, objectives and its organizational structure. ACE consists of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. The General Assembly is the supreme authority and all decisions made in this forum are binding on the Executive Committee and members of the Association. The General Assembly previously met for ordinary sessions within a period not less than twenty-four (24) months and not greater than forty-eight (48) months. The decisions are passed by a simple majority of the members present at the voting session. The General Assembly handles any changes to the constitution and the election or removal of persons on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is responsible for the direction and management of all the activities of the Association in between sessions of the General Assembly. It is also the medium through which membership fees are fixed. The Executive Committee consists of the president of the Association, past presidents of the Association, the secretary-general of the Association, four vice presidents and four regular members of the Association. The Executive Committee exemplifies the backbone of the philosophy of ACE that is, regional integration demonstrated through its four vice presidents. On the Committee, there is one vice president each from the French speaking, Spanish speaking, the Dutch speaking, and English speaking Caribbean. Along with the above persons, there are members on the Committee who are chosen from individuals not holding positions in the General Assembly. However, these members like those of the vice presidents also demonstrate a regional vision, as each member is taken from the four different language areas of the Caribbean.

The president of the Association is elected by the General Assembly. His or Her term under normal conditions lasts for two (2) years; this however can be extended to a maximum of four (4) years. The duties of the President range from representation of ACE to presiding over meetings and setting goals for the year. The Association of Caribbean Economists has four (4) different types of members: the individual member, the institutional member, the fraternal member and finally, the honorary members. Having established the organizational makeup of the Association, we can now examine its objectives and the steps taken by ACE to achieve these goals. The objectives taken directly from the constitution of ACE are as follows:

- To promote professional exchange and collaboration amongst the economists of the Caribbean
- To promote the development of the discipline of economics, including political economy within the Caribbean for the purpose of contributing to the economic development and sovereignty of the peoples and states of the Caribbean, and to economic cooperation and integration within the Caribbean.

The Association of Caribbean Economists in its constitution lists a total of twelve (12) strategies to achieve the above objectives. For the purpose of the paper only the ones relevant to the discussion will be listed. The ACE constitution cites these, among other activities, for achieving its goals:

- Organize professional conferences, seminars, symposia and meetings of a similar kind
- Stimulate promote and organize professional research, particularly collaborative research between individual researchers as well as research institutions within the Caribbean
- Prepare and disseminate professional publications based on the conferences, research and other professional activities of the Association and its members.
- Establish links, and collaborate, with centers of teaching and research in the economic and social sciences in the Caribbean
- Promote and organize exchange visits of teachers and researchers in economics within the Caribbean
- Promote the development of professional training in the discipline of economics relevant to the conditions of the Caribbean and to the objectives of the Association
- Collaborate with other organizations in the Caribbean is relevant to the realization of the objectives and the carrying out of the activities of the Association
- Establish links and collaborate with other associations of economists and social scientists with similar objectives in other parts of the world

The first activity deals with the hosting of conferences and meetings. This has been the activity mostly used by the Association of Caribbean Economists to fulfill its objectives and promote regional integration. The conferences themselves illustrate the regional integration initiative because they are not held in a fixed country, but all over the Caribbean. Conferences have been held in Jamaica, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Martinique, Curacao, and Haiti. There is a specific theme for each of the conferences, which is usually based on the objectives of ACE and influenced by the economic situation in the Caribbean, at that time. Persons in academia from the Caribbean as well as from the international community attend these conferences. They incorporate all the listed activities. The conferences serve as the stepping-stone for the above activities because it is in this forum that the economic issues of the Caribbean are discussed, solutions put forward, research identified to be carried out by working groups

and publications made with papers documenting the results and discussions. In order to analyze how the activities of ACE have impacted on regional integration, it is important to examine the conferences.

The first conference was held in Kingston, Jamaica July 2-6 in 1987 at the Jamaica Conference Centre. The conference was held under the theme “Development in Suspense: Crisis in the Caribbean and Alternative Development Strategies”, a fitting theme in light of the developments in that era. The theme of the conference was so compelling to the region’s economists that there were over thirty (30) papers presented in response. It was a historical event and was attended by about one hundred and eighteen (118) economists and other academics from all over the region. The conference was organized around seven (7) panels. These were: (1) the external impact on Caribbean economies;(2) recent development experiences in the Caribbean, country case studies; (3) Adjustment and stabilization policies;(4) the social impact of the crisis: gender, labour and the informal sector; (5) Economic theory and Caribbean economy; (6) Long-term development strategies for the Caribbean and, (7) The state and the private sector in Caribbean development. As seen by these panels, the focus was essentially on improving the status of the Caribbean economy as well as finding ways to sustain the “economic good health”, when achieved. It is important to note that from the beginning, ACE, did not operate an economic vacuum.

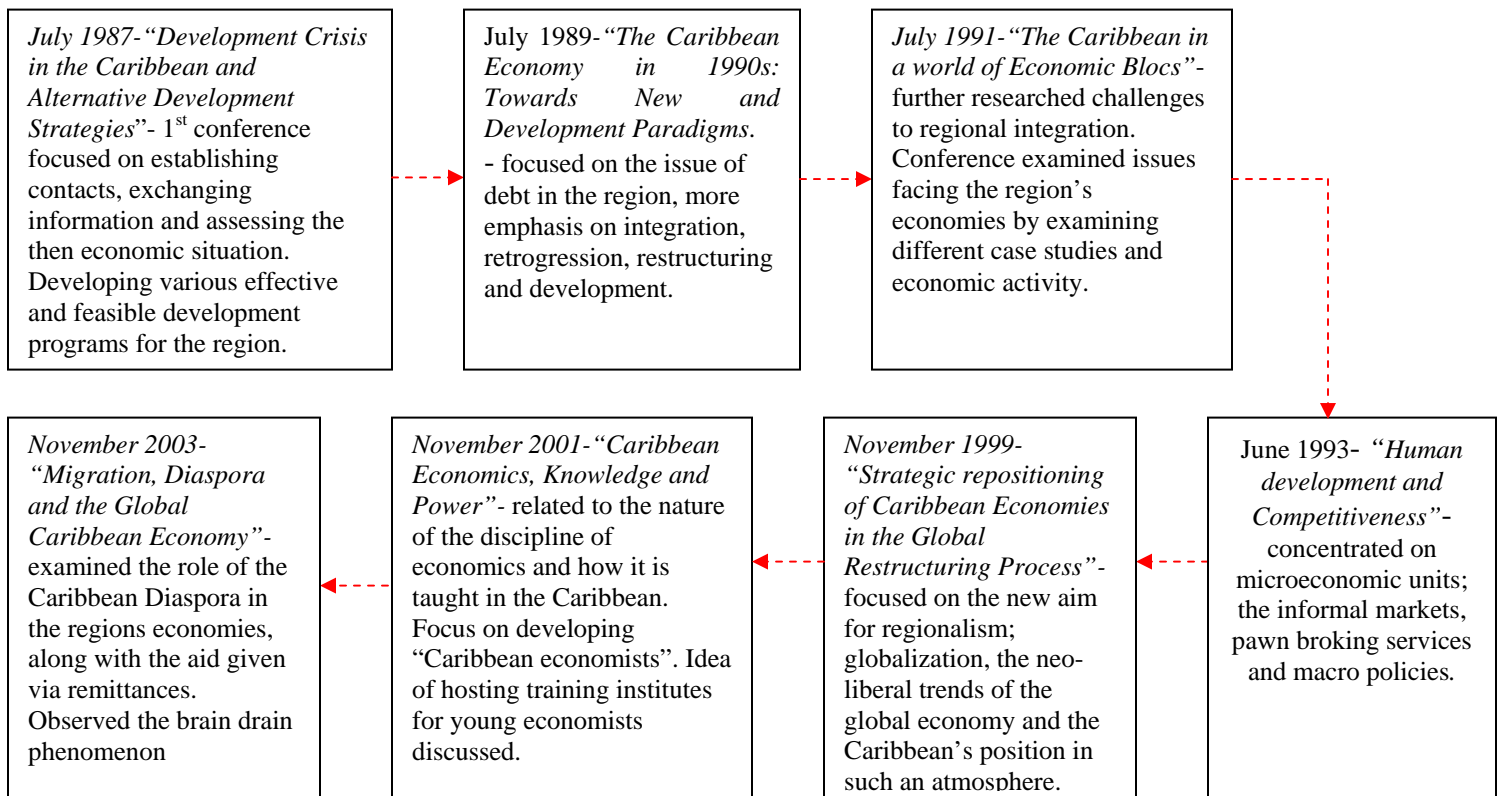
ACE took on a new dimension as a non-governmental organization of economists because it understood from the days of the first conference that economics is not only about “numbers”, but has to take into account the social implications of economic policies and how they affect vulnerable groups. Evidence of this foresight is present in panel four (4). The conference saw the making of several long-term decisions, among these, the year of the second conference and the making of smaller specialized working groups to function between conferences on specific themes. The specialized themes totalled five: (1) debt and structural adjustment; (2) the world capitalist system, the international division of labour and the Caribbean; (3) Caribbean economic integration; (4) the economics of decolonization and (5) the informal sector of the Caribbean. The first conference made tremendous headway in that it formerly acknowledged that all Caribbean peoples were feeling the pressure and that unity was needed to solve the problems.

“This was a telling indication of the sense of the magnitude and gravity of the crisis confronting several parts of the region. As well, it was a tangible manifestation of a shared conviction that, irrespective of differences of one kind or another, there is a core problematique of Caribbean economy that is common to all countries in the region” (Girvan, 1989)

It also facilitated dialogue between the economists of different language areas of the Caribbean, as part of the effort to identify solutions to the challenges. The first conference contributed to ACE’s achievements, in that it bore fruit in the form of a publication titled Development in Suspense, which presents selected papers and proceedings of the First conference. The publication is divided into four sections; the first

dealing with the external impact on Caribbean countries; the second dealing with adjustment, stabilization, and national experiences in the Caribbean; the third, the social impact of the development crisis in the Caribbean, and the fourth, alternative development strategies for the Caribbean. The publication itself is a representation of ACE's perception of regional integration through the form and content of its first conference, because it is a collection of papers written by economists from all over the region.

To examine the trends and development of the Conferences, the flowchart below is most useful. It provides the years, the themes of the conferences and a summary of the developed points of the conferences. Examining the themes, one notices that throughout all the conferences ACE has stayed true to its aim and objectives; that of using the economic difficulties of the region to promote integration while searching for solutions to the said economic difficulties to achieve "economic good health". The following flowchart displays the themes along with Summaries of the Conferences of the Association of Caribbean Economists.



On examination of the conferences, three (3) trends¹ can be identified. The first trend contains the first two conferences held in 1987 and 1989, the themes being “Development Crisis in the Caribbean and Alternative Development Strategies” and “The Caribbean Economy in 1990s: Towards New and Development Paradigms” respectively. This first trend was geared towards finding solutions to the economic challenges facing the region in the period 1987 to the 1990s. It focused on finding a path towards ‘economic good health’ and finding some stability for the Caribbean economies while promoting regional integration. In the publication Integration and Participatory Development, Wendell Samuel notes that in some cases, it is the international agencies that hinder the process of integration for the Caribbean.

“The international bilateral and multilateral lending agencies have also inhibited the move towards regionalism. The global economic crisis has left many countries quite vulnerable and susceptible to pressures from the international lending institutions. These institutions have used this to impose conditions on the countries as a pre-condition for assistance, which tend to reinforce historical divisions in the region and create artificial differences. The challenge for regionalism is to turn these diverse measures into measures to strengthen regional cooperation.” (Samuel, 1990)

The second observable trend encompasses the conferences held in 1991, 1999 and 2003. Where, the themes were “The Caribbean in a World of Economic Blocs”; “Strategic Repositioning of Caribbean Economies in the Global Restructuring Process” and “Migration, Diaspora and the Global Caribbean Economy”. They involved ACE examining the Caribbean economies in a global setting, determining how the Caribbean position in the global market hinders regional integration while assessing how integration can strengthen the Caribbean’s stance in the global trading bloc.

“...less developed countries need to intensify efforts at regional cooperation, in order to make their voices heard in the international arena” (Samuel, 1990)

The second trend indicates that ACE is not only centered on the Caribbean as a trading entity in which trading takes place only among countries of the region, but recognizes that it is apart of a global trading network as supported by Norman Girvan, past President of ACE.

“Indeed the Caribbean needs to get its act together here merely in order to have its position established as small island economies within the group of developing countries as a whole” (Girvan, 1990)

This trend also establishes that ACE has not been caught in a radical branch of “Caribbeanism” which limits Caribbean peoples to those living in the region but one which encompasses those in the Diaspora, and those working in the global economy.

¹ It is important to note that though the trends are distinguishable there is no definite end for each trend. They are all linked and intertwined in the actions of ACE to achieve its goals.

Hence the idea of Caribbean regionalism for ACE transcends global positions and acknowledges those who support the economies via remittances.

The third trend includes the conferences of 1993 and 2001. This is where one notices a shift in ACE's agenda from a more macro economic approach to integration to one more of a micro economic and social nature. The theme for the 1993 conference was "Human Development and Competitiveness" which saw discussion on the informal, small business people in the Caribbean economies such as higglers and pawnbrokers, and how by formalizing these persons the economy can benefit. The theme for the 2001 conference was "Caribbean Economics, Knowledge and Power"; this saw again focus on the people within the economic framework and concentrated on the students of tertiary level institutions, and the method and type of economics they were being taught. It is thought by ACE that tertiary Caribbean institutions should provide more instruction on Caribbean economy and development economics that would encourage the training of economists who more fully understand the challenges that small island economies face in the global economy.

"We (ACE) should seek to consolidate our own initiative by broadening and deepening our work, and extending it to collaboration at the formal level of university departments and research institutes concerned with economics" (Girvan, 1990)

This particular conference theme is monumental. It encompasses three of the steps cited in ACE's constitution to achieve its goals. These are to: establish links, and collaborate with centers of teaching and research in the economic and social sciences in the Caribbean; promote and organize exchange visits of teachers and researchers in economics within the Caribbean; promote the development of professional training in the discipline of economics relevant to the conditions of the Caribbean and to the objectives of the Association. This indicates that ACE has indeed been taking steps to fulfill the objectives as stated in the constitution.

Embodied in the ways of achieving the aims of the organization is the idea of collaboration.

"Collaborate with other organizations in the Caribbean is relevant to the realization of the objectives and the carrying out of the activities of the Association" (ACE Constitution, 1987)

Programmes of collaboration have been undertaken by ACE usually through forums, symposiums or workshops. These workshops and conferences have been beneficial to the integration process, and for sourcing possible solutions to the economic hardships facing the region, because they have promoted discussion and research on a range of issues. They have also been beneficial by preserving the idea of Caribbean economics. Table² depicts the different projects achieved by ACE, in collaboration with other organizations from its inception in 1987 to the present. It is important to note that apart from the

² Annex: Table 1

organizations mentioned in the table, ACE has received considerable support from other organizations and private sector companies based in the Caribbean.

The most recent collaborative projects (2003-2004) in the table are most notable. They illustrate a new approach taken by ACE to involve the region's young economists. The main aim and objectives of the training institutes, as described by Dr. Keith Nurse in the proposal were to use "the institute as a medium to allow the young economists to study the Caribbean's economy in a Caribbean frame of mind". That is, enabling them to examine the region's economic history, its role in the global economy, and discuss theories such as the plantation economy. ACE believes that these institutes will impact on the young economists by pushing them towards considering the issues of the region, and by better equipping them for their own quest for new Caribbean development paradigms.

"The goal of the Institute is to prepare young professionals to play an expanded role in shaping the options and improving the prospects of the economies of the Greater Caribbean. This calls for advanced and specialized training facilities to tackle the new areas and issues in economic development. ACE is well positioned to facilitate in this regard given its regional spread, depth of academic and research resources in new areas and philosophical commitment to critical thinking." (Nurse, 2003)

The training institutes hold true to ACE's core value of regional integration while incorporating Lloyd Best's notions of "independent thought and Caribbean freedom". This is seen with the deliberate decision to change the venue for each institute; hence, the first institute was held in Trinidad and Tobago while the second was held in the Dominican Republic. The use by ACE of these institutes as "a space for specialized training" for the region's young economists is evident from the pool from which the participants are drawn. Participants were selected from both Anglophone and Hispanic countries and had to have at least a masters degree in economics, development studies or international relations. The theme for these institutes has been "Trade, Industrial and Innovation Policy in the Greater Caribbean". This is a contemporary theme which facilitated productive study and analysis of the wave of neo-liberal ideology and policies taking over the region. It encompassed the discussion of topics like the external negotiation and policy options; contemporary trade policy agenda and the imperative of industrial development along with related presentations and debates.

Another means by which ACE strives to achieve its objectives is through the use of publications³, as stated in the constitution.

"Prepare and disseminate professional publications based on the conferences, research and other professional activities of the Association and its members." (ACE Constitution, 1987)

There are three categories in which ACE publications can be placed:

Periodical – a journal, bulletins and newsletters

³ Annex 1 & Annex 2-Publications of the Association of Caribbean Economists

Occasional – scholarly research and policy papers, essays, bibliographies.
Publications – texts resulting from ACE conferences.

Efforts have been made in recent times to post a variety of ACE publications on the ACE website. Publications for ACE have been in both English and Spanish and to date there have been over twelve (12) occasional publications. Of the publications by ACE, the one that most accurately depicts the drive of the organization towards regional integration is Caribbean Economies and Global Restructuring because it contains presentations from the sixth ACE conference in the language in which they were presented; therefore the book contains articles in English, French and Spanish.

“...the quality of the contributions from English, French and Spanish-speaking Caribbean authors is a landmark in communication across three of the four language areas of the Caribbean.” (Levitt, 2002)

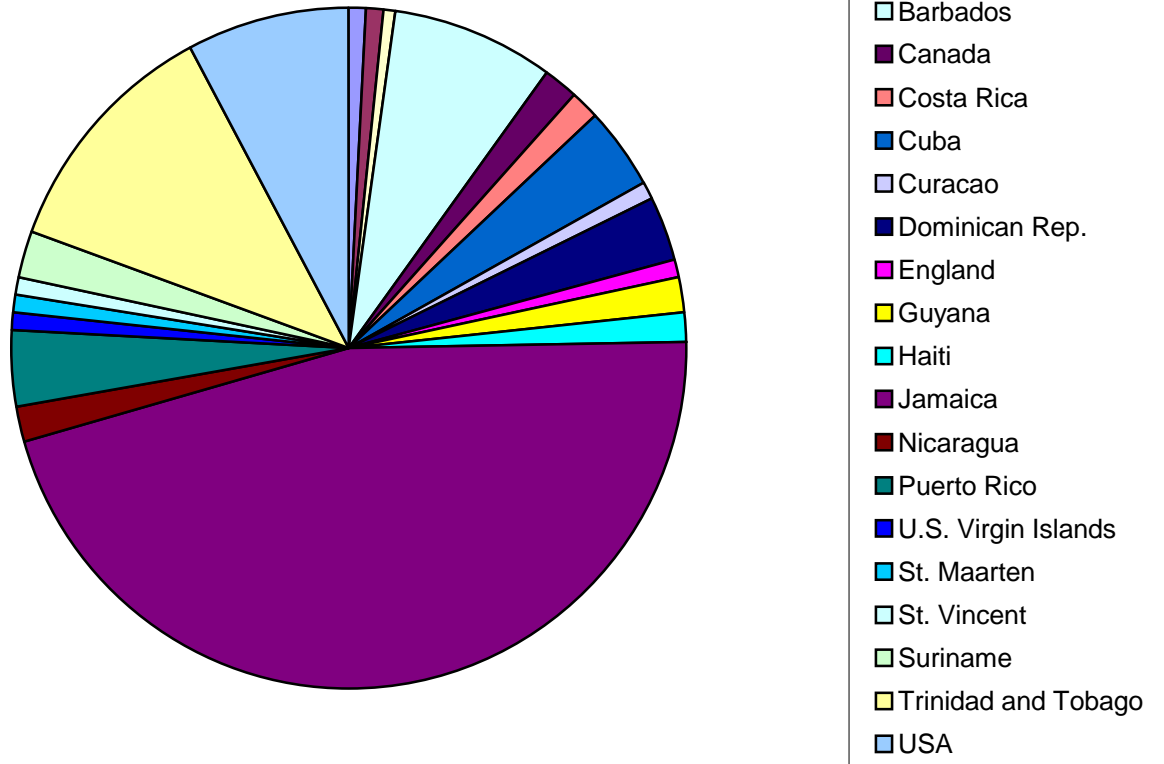
Having established the structure and aims of the Association of Caribbean Economists and the various ways that they have gone about achieving their mission, the question remains: has it been successful?

PERSONAL STATEMENT/OBSERVATION

As a third year international relations student at the University of the West Indies, Mona, it appears strange that I have never until now heard of ACE, nor have I ever been so blatantly reminded about the seriousness of the issues facing the Caribbean as a region. To me, it has always been mainly my homeland Jamaica or I hate to admit, the United States of America that I think of when studying economic issues. More importantly, I fear I have been, like most of my fellow students; brain washed into knowing geographically what the Caribbean is, but in reality, viewing it as only English and Spanish speaking countries surrounded by the Caribbean Sea. In my opinion, the mere fact that as a young academic and professional my previous viewpoints have been altered signals that ACE has indeed been successful.

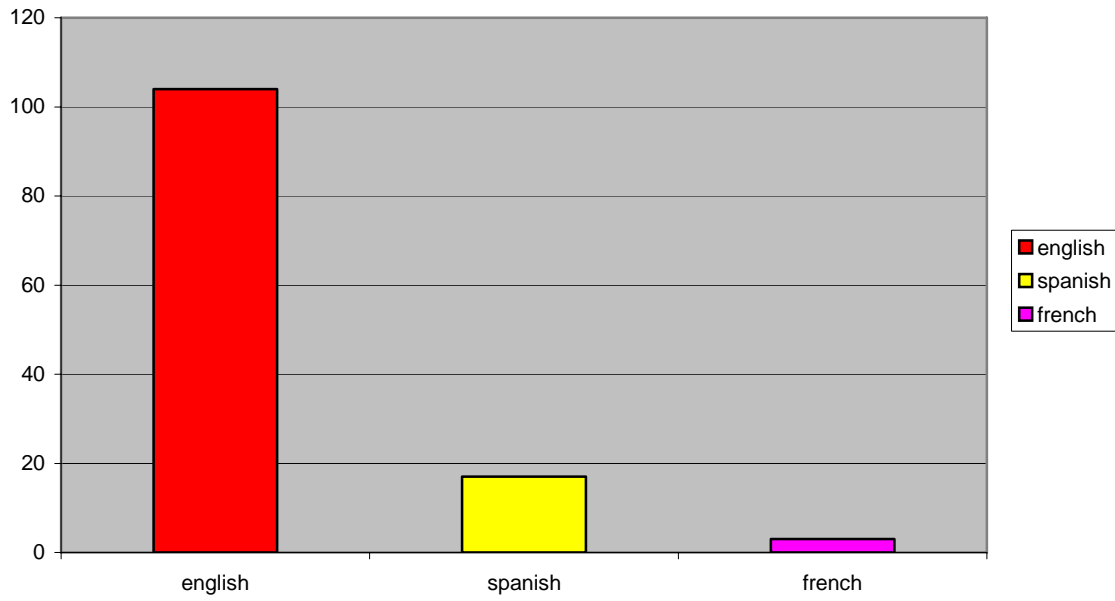
In preparing this paper I had to research the history of the organization and get into the “meat of the matter” and discover what this organization is all about. ACE, I am impressed! Never before have I felt the compelling need to get out there and do something, or realize, that even though there is talk of integration via CARICOM and the CSME that we, as a united Caribbean people have a long way to go. Now I question what have we been doing to achieve this, and thankfully, I can reply that ACE has been playing an important role. In the very first conference of ACE persons turned out from all spheres of the Caribbean and the world. The pie chart below displays the attendance for the first conference held by ACE, which is truly remarkable. It signals a need by many of our fellow regionalists to overcome our differences and realize that we help ourselves by helping each other.

Pie Chart showing the attendance for the first Conference

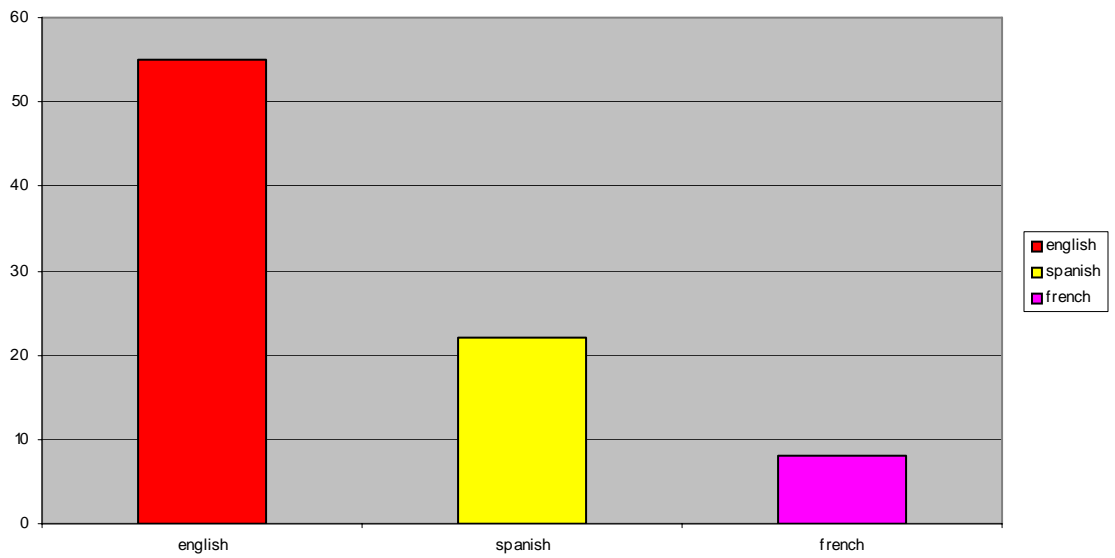


ACE has pushed integration by functioning as a constant provider of a medium for the region's economists to integrate via their numerous conferences, publications and training institutes. As to the question of whether integration has been stimulated, one need only examine the steady support for the ACE conferences, which displays a common need by the region's economists to unite and forge ahead. The bar graphs below show the general trends in attendance of the English, Spanish, Dutch and French-speaking countries for the seven (7) conferences.

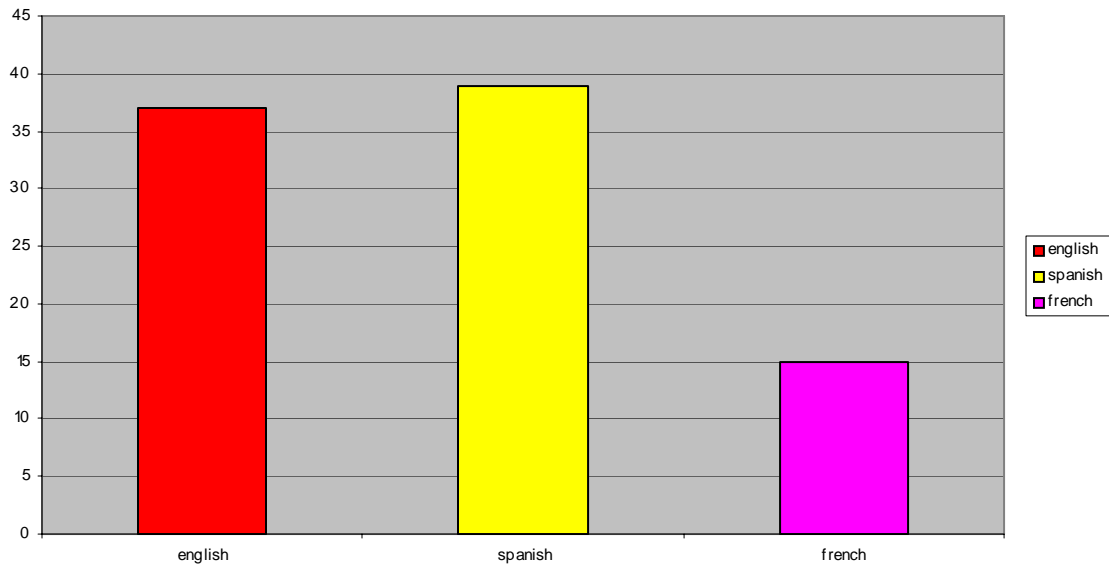
Bar Graph showing the attenddace of the different language areas for the 1st conference



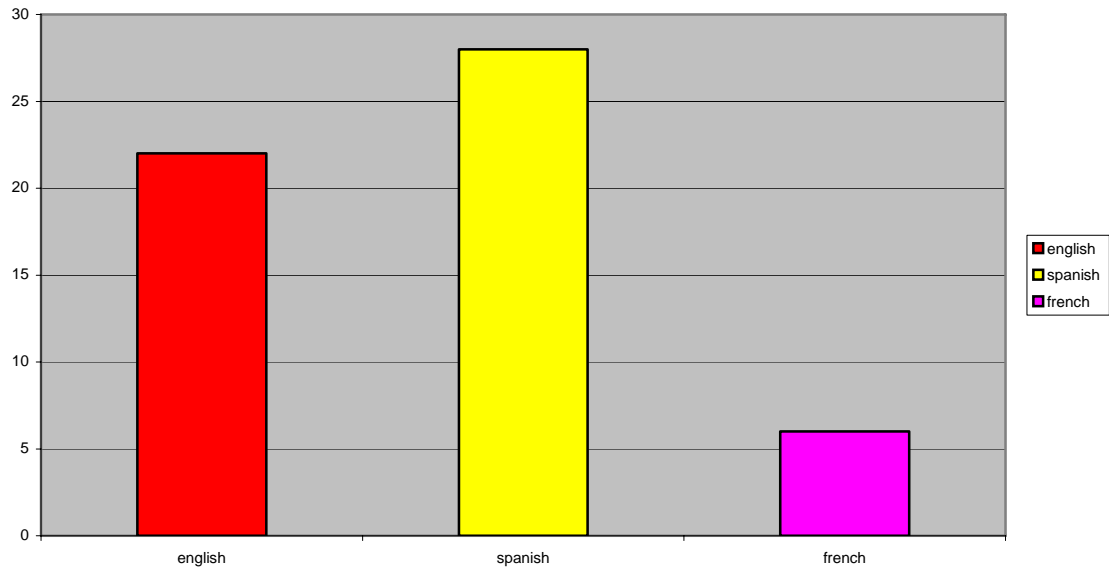
Bar Graph showing the attenddace of the different language areas for the 2nd conference



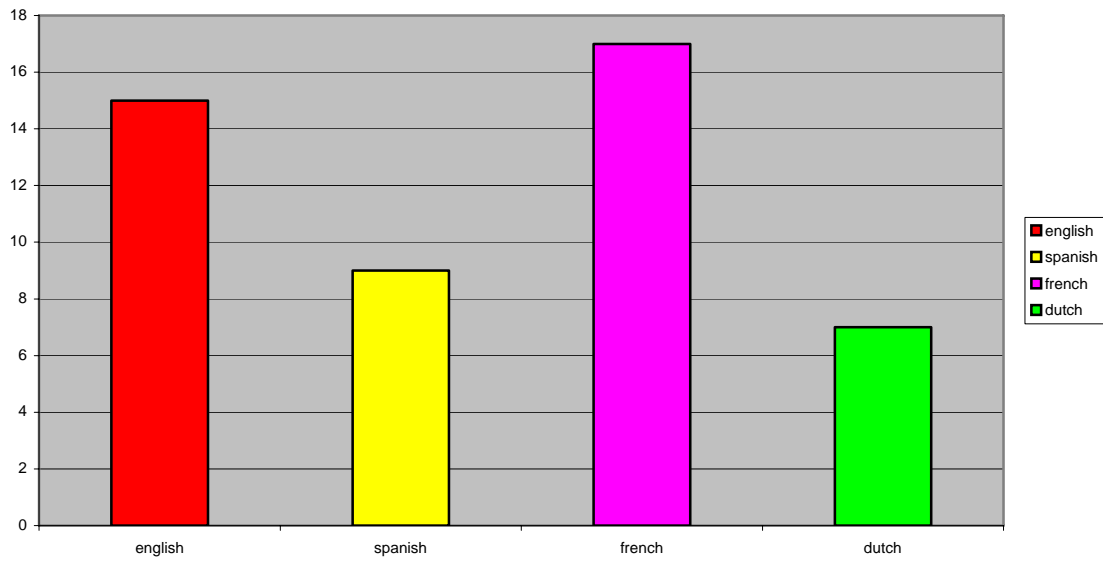
Bar Graph showing the attendance of the different language areas for the 3rd conference



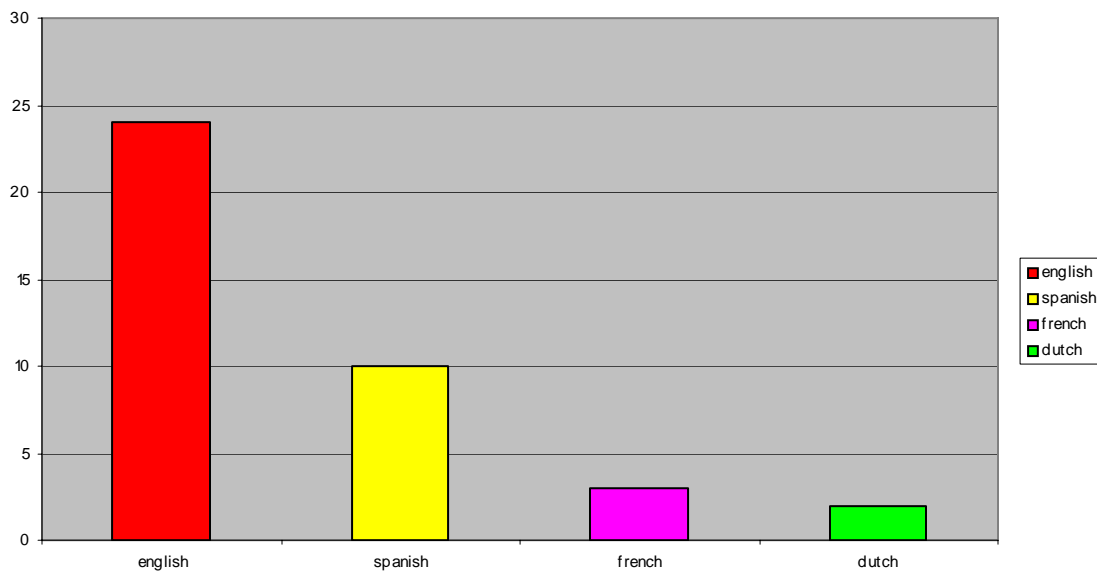
Bar graph showing the attendance of the different language areas for the 4th conference



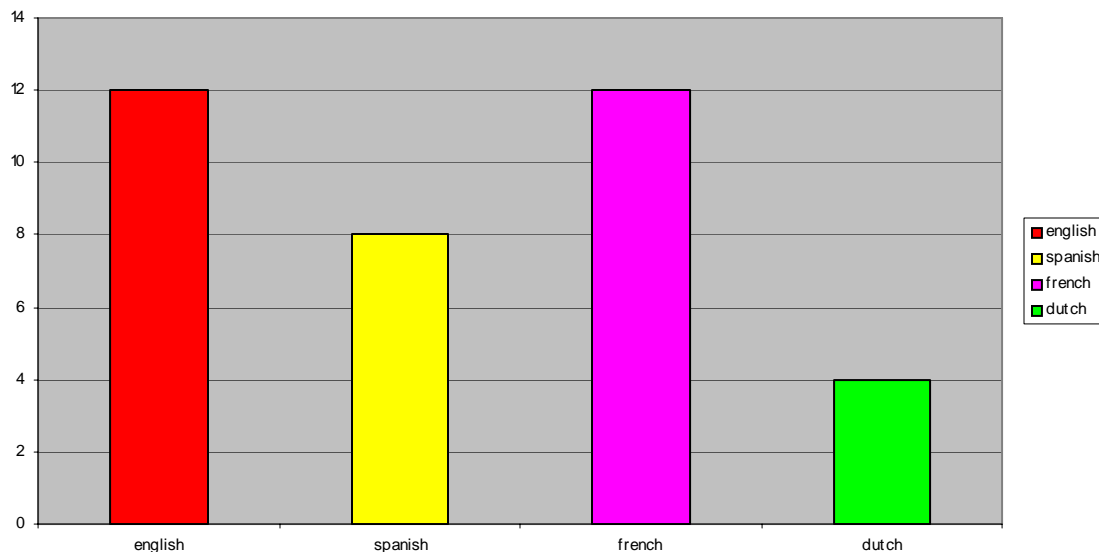
Bar graph showing the attendance for the different language areas for the 5th conference



Bar graph showing the attendance of the different language areas for the 6th conference



Bar graph showing the attendance of the different language areas for the 7th conference



In examining the graphs, one would note that there has been steady support for the conferences by the English speaking countries. The same can be said about the Spanish speaking countries, while the French witnessed a gradual increase as evidenced with the number of French speaking persons for the first conference numbering three (3) to twelve (12) persons for the seventh conference. The Dutch speaking countries followed the trends of the French by starting at a low and experiencing a gradual increase. However, all languages saw a decrease in attendance for the sixth (6) conference, with a hike in all for the seventh conference.

Having examined these figures I am not disheartened because it is imperative to note that there has been an overall steady support for the conferences. This is encouraging because in some cases there was a shortage of capital and trips to the conferences had to be personally funded. Therefore, the decline is explained while the constant participation provides supportive evidence for ACE's relevance. In conclusion, I believe that as a member of the younger generation ACE is needed for the present and the future to promote active participation in integration and, as it has done for me, open the minds of the young professionals of the region to the hardships, barriers and opportunities facing us as a region. ACE has been effective and will continue to do so with new projects and new membership promoting regional integration. The following reflections by Georgia McLeod, a young economist on the Mona Campus are instructive.

Reflections on the ACE Professional Training Institute, November 2004

The Association of Caribbean Economists (ACE) held its 2nd Professional Training Institute on November 1 – 6, 2004 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The theme of this Training Institute was "Trade, Industrial and Innovation Policy in the Greater

Caribbean". Participants, from the both the English and non-English speaking Caribbean, were involved in discussions, role-play, simulation exercises and lectures so as to facilitate their total involvement and interaction with each other. There were interesting and dynamic presentations from experts on various policy options and strategies for the Greater Caribbean particularly at a time when the region was facing increased challenges from both external and internal sources. Special emphasis was placed on the region's external trade negotiating context emphasizing the need for industrial upgrading and innovation in traditional and non-traditional sectors.

Prior to attending this Training Institute, the Department of Economics, UWI, Mona, arranged an internship programme for me at the Jamaica Customs Department. This initiated a strong interest in trade related matters, especially as these impacted the Caribbean region. This experience, along with courses done in the Masters Degree programme at UWI, Mona, created a foundation for my understanding and appreciation of the challenges which the region faced externally, and how these impacted its internal economic dynamics. Through my interaction with participants and presentations made at the Training Institute, I obtained significant exposure to the various factors which highlighted the vulnerabilities of the Caribbean region. This, in my opinion, further emphasizes the need for the region to be given special priority and consideration in the external trading fora.

In my opinion, the most rewarding aspect of the workshop surrounded the facilitation and development of the critical thinking and analytical abilities of the participants, particularly regarding the measures that could be implemented to encourage innovation and creativity in our respective countries, and the wider region. As a region, we will continue to face challenges, but we have the responsibility to determine how we may transform these challenges into opportunities through innovation so that we can mitigate the negative effects being experienced.

If I were to make a judgement based on the lectures by the experts, the quality of the presentations, and the interest and competence of the participants, I must conclude that there exist strategies and policies which can significantly enhance the development process of the Caribbean.

For further information, readers should consult the following annexes: table summarizing ACE programmes of collaboration with other organizations, document Whither ACE, the reference list and bibliography.

Prepared for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Office for Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean, by Racquel Peters, International Relations Intern, Department of Government, UWI Mona Campus, September 2007.

APPENDICES

1. Whither ACE? By Prof. Norman Girvan
2. List of Publications by Dr. Keith Nurse
3. Reference List & Bibliography

Association of Caribbean Economists

WHITHER ACE?

A RETROSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF NINE YEARS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN ECONOMISTS

*Prepared for ACE retreat, Tobago, June 1-2, 1996
by Norman Girvan'*

The ACE Mission and its Roots

ACE---the Association of Caribbean Economists---was founded in the mid-1980s, at the height of the neo-liberal resurgence². ACE's founding mission was to critique structural adjustment, and to formulate alternative, people-oriented development strategies for the Caribbean. Pan-Caribbean cooperation--across language areas and political systems/status -could be a means to this end. The ACE Constitution defines its objective as promoting professional exchange and collaboration amongst the region's economists to the end of contributing to the "economic development and sovereignty of the peoples and states of the Caribbean, and to economic cooperation and integration within the Caribbean region"³. I argue in this paper that this mission remains highly relevant in the mid-1990s, although the specific concerns and modalities of our work may change.

The historical and philosophical roots of ACE go further back than the conjunctural circumstances of the mid-1980s. The idea of establishing a Pan-Caribbean association of economists had been mooted by the late George ("GBeck") Beckford during the Congress of the Association of Third World Economists (ATWE) held in Havana in April 1981. GBeck had convened a caucus of about 30 economists from different Caribbean countries attending the ATWE meeting. The group adopted his proposal to form a Caribbean Association of Political Economists (CAPE) with a Steering Committee representing the four principal language areas of the Caribbean. "The Caribbean" was defined as the archipelago plus the three Guianas and Belize. This definition was later adopted in the ACE Constitution (Art. 2).

CAPE never held any meetings due to lack of financing. But the Interim Chairman, the present writer, eventually secured funds from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) to organize the first Conference of Caribbean Economists in Kingston in July 1987⁴ which launched ACE. By that time "Political Economists" had been replaced with the more politically neutral "economists" in the name of the proposed organization⁵. The aim was to be as inclusionary as possible, given the changed ideological climate of the 1980s. However in keeping with ACE's ancestry and orientation the Constitution deliberately includes the subject of "political economy" within the ambit of the discipline of "economics" (Art. 3(a)). The differentiation between the essentially political economy orientation of ACE and the increasingly conservative bent of mainstream economics has persisted and, if anything, has grown sharper since then.

The CAPE/ACE project also responded to the vision of a unified, integrated Caribbean that has fascinated Caribbean thinkers for decades. Both Beckford and I had been members of the New World Group, which was a strong intellectual influence in the Anglophone Caribbean in the 1960s. The Pan-Caribbeanism of the New World Group derived from a view of the region as having a common historical experience resulting from the pervasiveness of Plantation Economy-type structures and institutions. This frame of reference was associated with the work of Beckford, Lloyd Best and Karl Levitt in the late 1960s and 1970s. Its spirit was captured in the

evocative words of Lloyd Best on his receipt of the first George Beckford Award at the ACE Conference in Santo Domingo in 1991:

Beckford's work did indeed alter our perspective not only through the relevance of its concerns but also through its insistence on encompassing the whole of the region. The scope of Beckford's vision excluded none *of* the parishes whether hispanophone, francophone, creoleophone, nederland spreken or English speaking; whether island, mainland or littoral; barlovento 0 sotavento; grandes ou petite antilles; LDC or MDC. (Best 1992, 5).

Plantation theorising was itself influenced by the work of earlier generations of historians and literary figures from various parts of the Caribbean: people like CLR James (**The Black Jacobins**), Eric Williams (**From Columbus to Castro**), Juan Bosch (**De Cristobal Colon a Fidel Castro**), Alejandro Carpentier, Manuel Fraginals, Aime Cesaire and George Lamming. It is no accident that the closing speech at the first ACE Conference was delivered not by an economist but by the cultural giant from Jamaica, Rex Nettleford; that George Lamming was the guest speaker at the launching of ACE's second book in English; and that Lloyd Best was the first recipient of ACE's George Beckford Award. *Vide* too, Gerard Pierre-Charles' stirring words on receipt of the second George Beckford Award at the ACE 1993 Conference held in Curacao (published in **Roads to Competitiveness**, ACE, 1996). The conceptions and vision of the Caribbean's historians and artists provide ACE with its inner soul, and we should take care to nurture these linkages. 6

The Record of Ace's Work

ACE has organized several major Pan Caribbean conferences on economics. It has also promoted collaborative research among Caribbean economists, been actively involved in policy issues and advocacy and published and disseminated widely the results of its work.

In summary, four large Conferences of Caribbean Economists have been held in different countries of the region-Jamaica, Barbados, the Dominican Republic and Curacao. Some 387 participants have attended from all four language areas, though the majority have been Anglophones (60 percent) and hispano-phones (27 percent). Over the past nine years ACE has also organized six Working Groups on different subject areas which have held approximately 18 seminars and workshops (including public sessions), often meeting at the same time as the Executive Committee. 8 Fight major English language publications (books, pamphlets and special journal issues) and at least five in the Spanish language can be attributed to ACE. Joint projects with the NGO community in public education, training, and policy advocacy have been undertaken, as well as one dialogue among public officials dealing with IFIs. The record is detailed in Annexes 1-6 to this paper.

ACE has managed to do all this with very modest financial resources. The key ingredient, apart from core funding from the FES, has been the sustained commitment and work of people who share its vision and subscribe to its mission. Continuity of leadership has been a major factor--stalwarts like Sergio Plasencia and Eduardo Klinger from Cuba, Miguel Ceara from the Dominican Republic, Charles Clermont from Haiti, Pedro Rivera from Puerto Rico, Dennis Pantin from Trinidad, Mhango from Suriname and Hasham from Curacao, and Judith Wedderburn and myself from Jamaica, have provided leadership to ACE from the outset or shortly thereafter. We have been supported by several others in working groups and other activities. Younger economists are emerging to assume leadership roles, which augurs well for the future of ACE.

Evaluation requires us to pose other questions. What has been the substantive content of ACE's activity? What has been its impact? And what lessons can we draw for our future programme?

ANNEX 1: CONFERENCE THEMES, SUBJECT AREAS AND PANELS

1ST CONFERENCE (Jamaica, July 1-7, 1987).

Theme: "Development Crisis in the Caribbean and Alternative Development Strategies".

Panels & Subject Areas:

Panel 1: The External Impact on Caribbean Economies

Panel 2: Recent Development Experiences in the Caribbean: Country Case Studies

Panel 3: Adjustment and Stabilization Policies

Panel 4: The Social Impact of the Crisis: Gender, Labour, and the informal Sector

Panel 5: Economic theory and the Caribbean Economy

Panel 6: Long-term Development Strategies for the Caribbean

Panel 7: The State and Private Sector in Caribbean Development

Number in attendance: 1291

Number per country

Antigua I	Curacao I	Puerto Rico 5
Antilles I	Dominica Rep.4	U.S. Virgin Islands I
Bahamas 1	England I	St. Maarten I
Barbados 10	Guyana 2	St. Vincent I
Canada 2	Haiti 2	Surinam 3
Costa Rica 2	Jamaica 59	Trinidad & Tobago 15
Cuba 5	Nicaragua I	USA 10

2ND CONFERENCE (Barbados, July 10-12, 1989)

Theme: The Caribbean Economy in 1990s: Towards New Development Paradigms

Panels and Subject Areas:

Panel 1: Debt, Retrogression, and Development

Panel 2: The Project for the Restructuring of Caribbean Economics

Panel 3: The Potential of People-Based Development

Panel 4: Development and Caribbean Economic Co-operation

Number in attendance: 96

Number per country

Bahamas 1	Guyana 2	St. Lucia 3
Barbados 17	Haiti 4	Surinam 3
Costa Rica 2	Martinique 2	Trinidad & Tobago 14
Cuba 5	Mexico 2	Jamaica 12
Dominica Rep.5	Nicaragua 2	USA 8
France 2	Puerto Rico 6	

3RD CONFERENCE (Dominican Republic, 16-20th July, 1991).

Theme: "The Caribbean in a World of Economic Blocs"~

Panels and Subject Areas:

Panel 1: Overview: Caribbean Economic Performance and Case Studies

Panel 2: Challenges to Regional Cooperation

Panel 3: Cooperation and Development in the Caribbean: The International Challenges

Panel 4: Dominican Republic and Haiti: Tendencies and prospects far economic cooperation.

Panel 5: Development in the Caribbean: Case studies by branch of economic activity.

Number in attendance 103

Number per country

Antilles I	Curacao 1	Martinique I
Bahamas 1	Dominica Rep.12	Mexico I
Barbados 6	France 3	Puerto Rico 15
Belize 2	Guadeloupe 3	St. Ictts 5
Benin 1	Guyana 4	St. Lucia 2
Canada 1	Haiti 6	Surinam 4
Costa Rica 2	Holland 3	Trinidad & Tobago 13
Cuba 6	Jamaica 7	USA I
		Venezuela 2

4TH CONFERENCE (Curacao, June 22-25, 1993)

Theme: Human Development and Competitiveness

Panels and Subject Areas:

Panel 1: Netherlands Antilles

Panel 2: NAFTA, the Caribbean and Central America

Panel 3: Survival Strategies and Macro-policy

Number in attendance: 59

Number per country

Aruba 1	Dominica Rep. 10	Mexico I
Barbados I	Haiti 5	Surinam 2
Costa Rica 3	Jamaica 8	Trinidad 10
Curacao 2	Nicaragua I	St. Vitts 1
Cuba 6	Puerto Rico 5	St. Maarten I
		USA 1

Thematic Evaluation of the Work of ACE

ACE's thematic concerns have evolved in response to the rapidly changing global and hemispheric economic order as well as to the immediate problems facing Caribbean economies. ACE has also sought to be proactive, dealing with several political economy issues before they had entered the mainstream of disciplinary and public policy discourse. Examples of this are **gender issues** (discussed at the 1987 Conference), **participatory development** (discussed at the 1989 Conference), **Caricom-non-Caricom integration** (also discussed in 1989, before the Report of the West Indian Commission, and again in 1991), and **human development and economic empowerment** (both subjects at the 1993 conference).

The early years saw a strong concern with the problems of **debt and structural adjustment**. The Report of this Working Group was a notable attempt to treat the economies from the Caribbean and Central America within a common analytical framework. It was used widely by the academic and NGO community, and may have helped to fuel the critiques of debt/adjustment programmes which gathered momentum towards the end of the 1980s. It also inspired the dialogue among public officials ACE on negotiating with IFIs. At the Second Conference (1989), **Caribbean integration and participatory development** were *advanced* as elements of an alternative development model to structural adjustment. Follow-up work on integration was undertaken by a Working Group and some results were presented at the Third Conference. This took place in the shadow of the European Single Market and NAFTA, hence the theme "The Caribbean in a World of Economic Blocs". The issue was whether the Caribbean could envisage forming an economic bloc of its own.

ACE's works on integration may have helped to influence the climate of opinion leading up to the formation of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). But it is not clear that ACE has broken new ground on the thorny issue of how to develop trade and economic relations between the English, Spanish, French and Dutch Caribbean; let alone that of forming a Caribbean economic "bloc".

The theme of **participatory development** was further explored by the Working Group on Survival Strategies and Microenterprises. This Project has been one of the most ambitious undertaken by ACE so far. The results, which are being prepared for publication, consist of five case studies from different countries of the region, with an overview Report. The theme was further developed in the Fourth ACE Conference, which sought to establish the linkages between **human development and competitiveness**.

But it is not yet clear that this work has produced the elements of a "model" of development in which economic growth, economic empowerment of the poor, and human development can be integral and mutually supporting elements. From this perspective, a content analysis and critical evaluation of **Roads to Competitiveness** and the Report on the Survival Strategies/Microenterprises project is called for. (See Annex 2: Working Groups)

The Impact of ACE

We need to ask what has been the impact of ACE on the research, teaching and discourse of the economics profession in the region. We are not sure, for example, how much use is made of ACE publications in University courses and government offices. In the Anglophone Caribbean, the bulk of UWI and public sector economists have been involved in the ACE process only through sporadic attendance at the biennial Conferences. 9 The non-involvement of the bulk of the economics profession is even more true of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Dutchspeaking countries. There is a particular need to secure greater participation by our colleagues from the French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, who represent only 6 and 7 percent respectively of the total attendees at the biennial Conferences.

The number of economists participating in ACE research projects and smaller meetings has been relatively small. This may have been unavoidable at this stage of the development of ACE, and especially given limited resources. A natural ally for ACE would have been the ECLAC Office for the Caribbean, which services the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC). The CDCC arose out of an initiative of the late Dr Eric Williams in the late 1960s, and its membership and mandate are consistent with those of ACE. Regrettably the ECLAC Caribbean Office has never provided institutional support for any of ACE's activities, although the sustained involvement of Trevor Harker from that office has been extremely valuable. New opportunities for ACE may arise with the establishment of the Association of Caribbean States' Secretariat; we will need to be proactive here.

At the same time we should not underestimate the value of the professional and personal relationships developed among those of us who have been closely involved in the ACE process. Numbers are not everything. The tradition of collaboration is an asset---in current jargon, a form of "social capital"-which should not be squandered. Here support for regular meetings of the Executive Committee and Working Groups from the FES Jamaica office and particularly of Judith Wedderburn have been decisive. Simply put, without the FES, and without Judith, there would be no ACE! (See Annexes 3, 5 & 6)

ANNEX 2: WORKING GROUPS

WORKING GROUP 1

Dates: Oct. 24-25, 1987; 10-11 June, 1988; May, 1990; Nov 1990

Subject: External Debt and Structural Adjustment

Number in Group: 33

Results: Report on the debt problem of the Caribbean and Central America was presented to 2nd the Conference of Caribbean Economic Association, Convened in Barbados, May 1989. This report was revised and published in *The Debt Problem in Small Peripheral Economies: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Central America and Debt and Restructuring in the Caribbean*. In *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 24. (1-2), 1991 (special issue).

Conducted case studies, in collaboration with CRIES, of the renegotiation of the external debt in Central America and the Caribbean. ACE members prepared case studies of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Dominican Republic. These case studies were presented at a seminar hosted by CRIES/CIECA/ACE in the Dominica Republic in July 1990.

This group organized a private Dialogue on Negotiations with Multilateral Lending Agencies in Kingston which was attended by Central Bankers from Jamaica, the Dominica Republic, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, Members of the group participated in the Freedom from Debt Campaign.

WORKING GROUP 2

Date: May 6-10, 1988; Nov 17-18, 1989; May 4-6, 1990;

Subject: Caribbean Economic Integration/Co-operation

Number in group 19

Results: This group was divided into three sub-groups to address the following subject areas (i) the external economic environment affecting the Caribbean and the scope for regional cooperation in dealing with it, (ii) business opportunities for intro-Caribbean trade and investment, and (iii) the scope for professional and technical collaboration.

Progress reports were prepared and presented on these three areas at the Executive Meeting held in Puerto Rico in May 1990. A report, "Regional Cooperation as an element of Caribbean Development Strategy", was prepared for the South Centre Commission. Selected papers were presented at the Third Conference held in the Dominican Republic in July 1991.

WORKING GROUP 3 Date: Nov. 21-25, 1992 Subject: Micro-enterprises (Micro Economic Units in Selected Caribbean Countries) Number in Group: 14 Results: Report prepared for IDRC. Publication in preparation.

WORKING GROUP 4 Date: 1991 - 1996 Subject: Current Economic Conditions in Selected Caribbean Countries Number in Group: 8 Results: Results published in several bulletins of "Coyuntura Caribena".

WORKING GROUP 5 Date: Nov. 29-30, 1990 Subject: Dialogue on Negotiating with Multilateral Lending Agencies Number in Group: 12 Results: Papers on file.

WORKING GROUP 6 Date: April 19-20, 1996 Subject: Trade Liberalization and Economic competitiveness in the Caribbean Basin Number in Group: 10 Results: Still pending!

ANNEX 3: ACE LINKAGES AND WORK WITH NGOs

1. Participated with FONDAD/CRIES in the "Freedom from Debt" campaign.
2. Collaborated with the Association of Development Agencies (ADA) in the production of a video "The Debt Crisis: An un-natural Disaster" and a work-book for work-shops. This video has been widely used in Jamaica, the Caribbean and by selected NGOs in the USA, Canada and Europe.
3. Collaborated with CPDC in conducting training workshop on "Political Economy of Debt and Structural Adjustment". Produced "Regional Economic Education Training Kit".
4. Participated in the "Ecumenical Encounter on Debt in Latin America and the Caribbean", held in Kingston, Jamaica in June, 1990.
5. Participated in the "Etats Generaux de la Guadeloupe pour son Devenir" held in Guadeloupe in July, 1990.
7. Participated in the Fifth International NGO forum on the World Bank and the IMF held in Washington D.C., in September 1990.
8. Collaborated with other NGOs in: - preparing for and participating in the Regional Economic Conference of CARICOM held in March 1991. ACE Vice-president, Dennis Pantin, along with members, Taimoon Stewart, co-authored the final NGO position paper submitted to the Conference. - Debt and Drugs Conference, June 1990. - Preparation of position/advocacy papers on NGO participation in CARICOM Joint Consultative Committee; preparation of publication re: impact of Structural Adjustment on Caribbean, and, recommendations of NGOs.
9. Represented CPDC at various IMF/World Bank Forum.

ANNEX 5: ACE LINKAGES WITH GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Public Officials on Membership list or who attended ACE Conference/seminars/workshops:

Number per country:

Antigua 2	Jamaica 20
Bahamas 1	Puerto Rico 4
Barbados 12	St. Lucia 4
Cuba I	St. Vincent I
Curacao 1	Suriname 3
Grenada I	Trinidad & Tobago 8
Guyana 4	

ANNEX 6: ACE LINKAGES WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATIONS:

FES	Funded four (4) ACE Conferences; ACE Publications as listed; most meetings of Working Groups and regular twice-yearly meetings of the Executive Committee, and ACE participation in CPDC.
IDRC	Funded research "Micro-economic units in Selected Caribbean Countries: Responses to Structural Change and implications for Macro-economic policy". Study being prepared for publication. Report presented at 4th Conference.
CRIES	Sponsored Working Group Debt. Collaborated with ACE on proposal for conference on Export Processing Zones.

FONDAD Debt Conference, Santo Domingo, July 1990.
Ford
Foundation Support for 1st and 2nd Conferences; pre-Conference Meetings
Andrew
Mellon
Foundation Publications of reports/bulletins on Caribbean economy.

Whither ACE?

Fresh perspectives require a certain degree of detachment, which for obvious reasons I cannot claim to have. With this caveat, here are my summary observations and suggestions.

Sovereignty and Intellectual Space

The goals of **sovereignty, cooperation and integration** are today even more relevant to the objectives of ACE, given the continuing debt crisis, the emergence of NAFTA and the FTAA process, and the security concerns of the major hemispheric power. With the end of the Cold War, one emerging view in the United States defines the Caribbean as an area of instability due to overpopulation, poverty, and drug trafficking, and argues the case for a partial surrender of sovereignty to the United States (Abrams 1996). Here we should heed the warnings of Carl Parris:

... To depict the sovereignty of Caribbean states in the light of a potential and/or future "threat" to U.S. national security is a warning bell to the region as a whole; a pressing call for an acceleration of the integrative process that may finally, lead to the formation of a confederation of nations capable of asserting their right to articulate their own self-interests (Parris 1996, 14; emphasis in original).

In the present context, it is not just the sovereignty of nation-states in the sense related to international law that is the issue, though this of course should be defended to the utmost. What is particularly relevant to ACE is a **sovereignty of thought, of analysis, of problem-solving**; as the basis of our own **capacity to shape the development of our societies and to negotiate effectively in international relations in our own interest**. In this sense, the exercise of sovereignty is essentially **thinking for oneself and expanding the room to manoeuvre** in a world which is highly asymmetrical in power-relations, and in

a hemisphere and region that are under the long shadow of US influence. 10

ACE should, in other words, see its task as creating an "intellectual space" and hence contributing to **sovereignty of thought and ultimately of action** in a region that is highly fragmented and subject to external influence. The challenge is implicit in the apt observations of Kari Levitt at a Workshop on the demand for economists held last year at St Augustine:

There is a disjuncture between the number of economists who can situate a given problem area-whatever it may be within the larger context of Caribbean reality and the rapidly changing external environment on the one hand, and the need for intellectual leadership and vision required to address the manifold economic problems facing the region, on the other ...

Given the totality of economic problems, one might expect an emerging consensus among professionally trained economists regarding what should be done to mobilize the natural and human resources of the region to achieve self-sustaining growth with equity. There is no such vision. (Levitt 1995, 1,4; emphasis added).

This is a disturbing, if not damning, indictment. It provides the rationale for a recommitment to our mission and a reinforcement of our work.

Publications

ACE publications have provided analyses with supporting empirical information on a wide range of key policy issues affecting the different language areas of the Caribbean. The treatment given to these issues has provided

alternative viewpoints to that of IFIs and to the extremes of neoliberal thinking and practice, on which public officials, NGOS and students can draw.

In that sense, ACE has had some success in creating an "intellectual space". However, greater use can be made of ACE's work. Like good economists but bad businessmen, we have been underselling ourselves. (See Annex 4)

ANNEX 4: PUBLICATIONS (English)

Development in Suspense: Selected Papery and Proceedings of the First Conference of Caribbean Economics. Eds. George Beckford and Norman Girvan. Publishers: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Mardi, 1989. *The Debt Problem in Small Peripheral Economies: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Central America.* N. Girvan, Mario Arana, Ennio Rodriquez & Miguel Ceara Hatton. Publ. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Caribbean Council of Churches, June 1990.

Integration and Participatory Development: Selected Papery and Proceedings of the Second Conference of Caribbean Economists. ED. Judith Wedderburn. Pub. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Association Caribbean Economists, November, 1990. *Debt, Adjustment and Development in the 1990s.* Kari Polanyi Levitt. Publ. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Association of Caribbean Economists, 1990.

Debt and Restructuring in the Caribbean.

Special Issue of Caribbean Studies vol. 24 (1-2) 1991. Eds. Marta M. Quinones and Pedro J. Rivera. Publ. Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico.

The Caribbean in a World of Economic Blocks: In memory of George Beckford: Selected Papers from the third Conference of Association of Caribbean Economists. Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 41 (3), September 1992. (Special Publication in memory of George Beckford).

Roads to Competitiveness: Human Development with Export Growth, the Caribbean Challenge. Eds. M.F. Hasham. Publ. Universtiy of the Netherlands Antilles, 1995

PUBLICATIONS (Spanish)

Las Economias Caribenas en los Anos Ochenta. Miguel Ceara Hatton. Publ. Cieca/Association of Caribbean Economists, 1990.

Perypectiva Caribena. (A weekly column in Hoy). CIECA/ACE

Reestructuracion y Deuda en el Caribe.

(Numero especial sobre economia Caribena). Instituto de Estudios del Caribe, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Univerdidad de Puerto Rico/ACE.

Cuadernos de la Coyuntura Caribena #1 &

11. Publ. Departamento de publicaciones del Centro de Investigacion Economica para el Caribe (CIECA).

Republican Domininana: Negociaciones Internacionales 1986-1990. Boletin de la Asociacion De Economistas Del Caribe, Sept. 1991.

Gaining Sustainability

ACE will need to secure greater financial independence if it is to sustain its mission. We need to capitalize and commercialize the assets, represented in our work and collaborative relationships, in more directly income-earning activities like consultancies, studies, training workshops, and publications. More of us should be prepared to finance our own attendance at ACE activities at our own expense or that of our institution. Thus a strategic objective should be to "lever" the resources provided by the FES and other agencies to get the maximum impact on current activities and to develop the financial sustainability of the organization.

Maintaining Relevance

ACE will need to make a continuing effort to address issues of current relevance, and to do so with freshness and originality. Many of the issues which have occupied us have been taken on board by the IFIs and by governments, eg the debt crisis, poverty reduction and human development, and the integration project. ACE must provide fresh insights, interpretations and proposals on these issues, and seek to put fresh issues on the public agenda. Two problematiques that stand out as deserving of additional research are: (i) the interrelationship between economic and social development, and (ii) the scope and benefits of Caribbean economic integration.

Original Theorising

ACE should pay more attention to original theorising. While the preoccupation with topical policy issues has been valuable, this needs to be complemented by more fundamental work which critically evaluates the theoretical models underlying liberalization policies from the perspective of small, open economies, and advances alternative theoretical schema. This is the only enduring rationale for having an ACE at all, as distinct from having a wider association embracing larger countries in the region, or that of simply joining the American Economics Association or the International Economics Association as individual members (though this may be useful for other reasons).

The efforts of Miguel Ceara in developing quantitative models which capture the functioning of the Dominican economy and permit simulations of alternative growth scenarios are one example of this kind of work. Unfortunately, earlier initiatives in this direction at UWI have recently faltered. I propose a workshop--better still, a series of workshops--on the subject of Economic Theory and Small Open Economies.

Broadening Collaboration and Exchange

ACE should seek to broaden the scope and modalities of collaboration and exchange amongst economists from the different language areas in the region. We should make efforts to have our published materials more widely used in University courses in economics, where relevant. We should invite each other to give lectures and courses at our Universities more frequently and systematically. We should establish regular staff and student exchanges to spread a consciousness of the wider Caribbean amongst young economists in the region.

Modalities of Work

Given our financial limitations, ACE should reassess the cost-effectiveness of the large biennial conferences, in relation to the alternative of holding smaller thematic working meetings at which more serious deliberations and exchange can be facilitated. My proposal is that we hold the large Conferences every three years instead of every two, and plan them very carefully to obtain the maximum benefit. For example in a three-day major conference, devote one part to a consideration of trends in regional economic cooperation, one to a select theoretical issue, and one to a topical policy issue.

Position Papers

ACE should consider adopting a more formal advocacy role on issues relevant to its mandate. What I have in mind is the preparation of well-researched and tightly reasoned "ACE position papers" which, once agreed by the Association, are disseminated to the wider public with the objective of informing and influencing public opinion on critical issues.

One of these is the issue of the **embargo/blockade on Cuba** as a consequence of that country's choice of a development path that does not meet with the approval of the United States. This has had, and is having, serious consequences not only for Caribbean sovereignty but also for intra-Caribbean trade and investment. An ACE position on this is long overdue.

There is also the issue of Caribbean integration. Can we not prepare a position on the widening of the Caribbean Community to include Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the Netherlands Antilles, with Associate Membership for Puerto Rico and the other non-independent countries? A good case can be made for functional cooperation across a wide range of issues of common interest, with trade liberalization and a customs union coming at a subsequent stage.

Other possible issues for ACE position papers are **financial and currency liberalization**, which has had enormous consequences in Jamaica; and **privatization**, which has been pursued by many countries in the region.

In concluding, let me recall the words of Rex Nettleford at the final session of the First ACE Conference:

The Caribbean is crying out for new ways of living, and is beckoning its economists to turn their energies to this task. Are you ready? I read this Conference to have said, you are. Well, the work has only now begun!

Endnotes

1. Founding President, Association of Caribbean Economists
 2. The first planning meeting for ACE was held in October 1986 in Barbados. The First Conference of Caribbean Economists, which established the organization, was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in July 1987.
 3. From Article 3(a) of the ACE Constitution.
 4. The support of Michael Weichert, head of the Caribbean regional office in Jamaica, and Judith Wedderburn, then project officer and now head of the Jamaica office, was decisive in the sponsorship of the first ACE Conference. Ford Foundation also provided assistance.
- "Political Economy" is strongly associated with Marxist economics, but the wider sense of Political Economy would embrace any kind of economic analysis which takes into account class and property relationships, and structures of power, and their impact on resource allocation, income distribution, and economic growth. Anglophone readers of Spanish language literature should also be careful not to confuse the term "politica economica", ("economic policy" in English), with the term "economia politica" (political economy).
6. In his reflections on the Plantation Economy Conference held to honour Lloyd Best at St. Augustine in 1994, Dennis Pantin has noted "Where do ideas come from? There is no categorical answer. However, it would seem that the very language, culture and values of a people have some significant influence." (Pantin 1994, 12)
 7. Actually the proportion of hispanophones has grown from one Conference to the next, and at the last ACE Conference (Curacao) they were the largest single group.
 8. An early decision was that every meeting of the Executive Committee would include an activity with a substantive intellectual content related to the work of ACE: money would never be spent on purely administrative travel.
 9. The premier annual meeting of Anglophone economists is that of the Regional Programme of Monetary Studies, (now the Caribbean Centre for Monetary Studies at UWI in Trinidad). This has a narrower and more restricted focus than ACE.
 10. Or more simply
"Emancipate yourself from mental

slavery, None but ourselves can free our
minds" ...
(Bob Marley)

References

Abrams, Elliot (1996) "The Shiprider
Solution: Policing the Caribbean".
The National Interest, No. 43 (Spring)

Best, Lloyd (1992) "The Contribution of George Beckford", *Social and Economic Studies*, 41, 3 (September).
Special Issue in Honour of George Beckford: The Caribbean in a World of Economic Blocs

Levitt, Kari (1995) "The Case for Relevance and Creativity in Economics". St Augustine, Trinidad: Department
of Economics Symposium on the Demand for Economists in the Caribbean in the 21st Century

Nettleford, Rex (1989) "New Ways of Living", in Norman Girvan and George Beckford (eds) *Development in
Suspense: Selected Papers and Proceedings of the First Conference of Caribbean Economists*. Kingston: FES
and ACE

Pantin, Dennis (1994) "Proposals for Economic Research and Teaching at LTWI: Reflections on the Planation
Economy Conference". St Augustine, Trinidad: Department of Economics (Unpub. MS)

Parris, Carl (1996) "A 'Limited Sovereignty' for Caribbean States?"
u I
St Augustine: Institute of International
Relations, U-WI (Unpub. MS)

Pierre-Charles, Gerard (1995) Address on receipt of George Beckford Award, in M.F. Hasham (ed) *Roads to
Competitiveness: Human Development with Export Growth, The Caribbean Challenge*. Curacao: University
of the Netherlands Antilles with ACE.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN ECONOMISTS

General Publications

Since its establishment in 1987, the Association of Caribbean Economists (ACE) has engaged in an active program of publication.

In line with the objectives and strategies of the Association, publications are aimed at promoting the development of the discipline of economics - including political economy - within the Caribbean, with the ultimate view of contributing to economic cooperation and integration within the Caribbean and to the economic development and sovereignty of the peoples and states of the Caribbean.

Publications focus on the interests and needs of a diverse audience of professional economists, teachers, researchers and students in economics and related disciplines, decision-makers and citizens.

Three categories of ACE publications may be distinguished: periodical publications, occasional publications, and continuous (electronic) publication by means of the ACE Website.

General descriptions of these three categories of publications are provided below; specific information about the most recent and forthcoming publications are distributed through special mailings and are also announced on the Website.

Periodical hardcopy publications

ACE Bulletin - The Bulletin is scheduled for publication twice a year in English and Spanish. The purpose of the Bulletin is to inform members and other interested parties of the work, progress and latest news of the Association. The contents of the Bulletin may typically vary from reports on events (conferences, seminars), announcements of upcoming events, news from the Executive Committee, reports on research projects, short papers authored by members, and other selected items of interest.

Marronage - This ACE Journal provides an intellectual space within which economists working on the Caribbean can exchange the results of their research with each other and the wider world. It is intended to "carry" thoughts on subjects varying from the Caribbean role in the international economy to trade liberalization and poverty, crime and cultural economics. Issues of Marronage normally center on particular themes but this does not preclude the acceptance of individual articles that fall outside of the given themes.

Each issue of Marronage is edited by one or more Caribbean scholars with special interest in the themes chosen. The Association looks forward to the suggestion of readers for themes to be covered. Prospective contributors should look out for calls for articles and adhere to the detailed guidelines issued with respect to submission of articles.

Articles may be submitted to the editors advertised for issue of interest, the Director of Publications or the Vice Presidents of the different language areas. Authors should feel free to submit articles in Spanish, English, French or Dutch. All articles are subject to independent review.

Occasional publications

Occasional publications have addressed topics of interest to the Association,- the professional community of economists and the broader Caribbean community. ACE's thematic concerns evolve in response to the changing economic order, but ACE also seeks to be pro-active, dealing with issues before they enter the mainstream of disciplinary and public policy discourse. The biennial Conferences of Caribbean Economists (organized by ACE) have been and will remain a significant source for the publication program of the Association. However, publications are also based on the results of other activities undertaken by the Association or its individual members, and often involve collaboration with other organizations. The nature of the Association's occasional publications may range from scholarly research papers to policy papers, essays, bibliographies, textbooks or other educational and/or informational resources.

Chronological list of occasional publications up to 1999

Development in Suspense [Selected papers and proceedings of the First Conference of Caribbean Economists], edited by Norman Girven and George Beckford (FES/ACE: 1989).

The Debt Problem in Small Peripheral Economies: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Central America, by Norman Girvan, Mario Arana, Ennio Rodriguez and Miguel Ceara Hatton (ACE/FES/Caribbean Conference of Churches: 1990).

Debt, Adjustment and Development in the 90's, lecture by Kari Polanyi Levitt (FES/ACE: 1990).

Integration and Participatory Development [papers from the Second Conference of Caribbean Economists], edited by Judith Wedderburn (FES/ACE: 1990).

Debt and Restructuring in the Caribbean [papers from the Second Conference of Caribbean Economists, special issue of the journal *Caribbean Studies*, volume 24, numbers 1-2, 1991], edited by Marta Magaly Quiflones and Pedro Juan Rivera (IEC(UPR)/ACE: 1991).

Las Economias Caribehas en los Años 80, by Miguel Ceara Hatton (CIECA/ACE: 1990).

Reference List

1. Derne, M. & Nurse, K. (eds) (2002). Caribbean Economics and Global Restructuring. Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers. Page 9
2. Girvan, N & Beckford, G. (eds) (1989). Development in Suspense-Selected Papers and Proceedings of the First Conference of Caribbean Economists. Jamaica: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Page iii
3. Nurse, K. (2003) Summer Institute: A proposal- "Preparing the Greater Caribbean for the New Global Economy"
4. Wedderburn, J. (ed) (1990). Integration and Participatory Development- Selected Papers and Proceedings of the Second Conference of Caribbean Economists. Jamaica: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Pages 6, 8,9.

Bibliography

1. Association of Caribbean Economists. (2002) Report on the VIIth ACE Conference
2. Association of Caribbean Economists. (1987). ACE Constitution
3. Association of Caribbean Economists. (1994). The Caribbean Conjecture No. 1
4. Derne, M. & Nurse, K. (eds) (2002). Caribbean Economics and Global Restructuring. Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
5. Girvan, N & Beckford, G. (eds) (1989). Development in Suspense-Selected Papers and Proceedings of the First Conference of Caribbean Economists. Jamaica: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
6. Girvan, N. (1996). Whither ACE?
7. Nurse, K. (2003) Summer Institute: A proposal- "Preparing the Greater Caribbean for the New Global Economy".
8. Nurse, K. Publications of the Association of Caribbean Economists.
9. Wedderburn, J. (ed) (1990). Integration and Participatory Development- Selected Papers and Proceedings of the Second Conference of Caribbean Economists. Jamaica: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.