

**INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION IN DISTANCE
EDUCATION AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL IN THE SMALL,
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH
CARIBBEAN: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES IT ENHANCE
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT?**

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ABSTRACT

Institutional collaboration in distance education at the tertiary level in the small, developing countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean: to what extent does it enhance human resource development?

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This dissertation examines the extent to which institutional collaboration in distance education at the tertiary level enhances human resource development in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The premise is that such collaboration, although contributing to the human resource development in the region, is not significantly enabling the local institutions to develop and offer their own distance education programmes.

Through semi-structured interviews, self-administered questionnaires and document analysis, a cross-case analysis was done of 38 instances occurring between 1982 and 2002, to identify their genesis, strengths and weaknesses. The level of collaboration among the local institutions was also determined.

It was found that although the number of collaborative distance education initiatives, largely with overseas institutions, increased dramatically in the first three years of this decade, there was limited collaboration among local institutions. The arrangements did contribute to the satisfaction of the demand for tertiary education especially at the post graduate level, but did not substantially add to local institutional capabilities to develop and deliver distance education programmes.

Given three recent internationally supported initiatives being undertaken in the Caribbean that have collaboration in distance education at their core, and in anticipation of the liberalisation thrust of the General Agreements of Trade in Services that will impact the education sector, the reticence of the Caribbean institutions to collaborate with one another in distance education is cause for concern.

A major recommendation is the establishment of a regional facilitating body (or strengthening an existing organisation) to foster collaboration in distance education, helping with formulation of policies, identification of funding, training, regional and international collaboration, and marketing of regional programmes.

The recommendations arising from this study will contribute to the success of the three initiatives mentioned, as well as others. The study also fills a void in the literature available on collaboration in distance education within the Caribbean.

Key words: Christine Marie Marrett, collaboration, distance education, tertiary level education, Commonwealth Caribbean, human resource development.