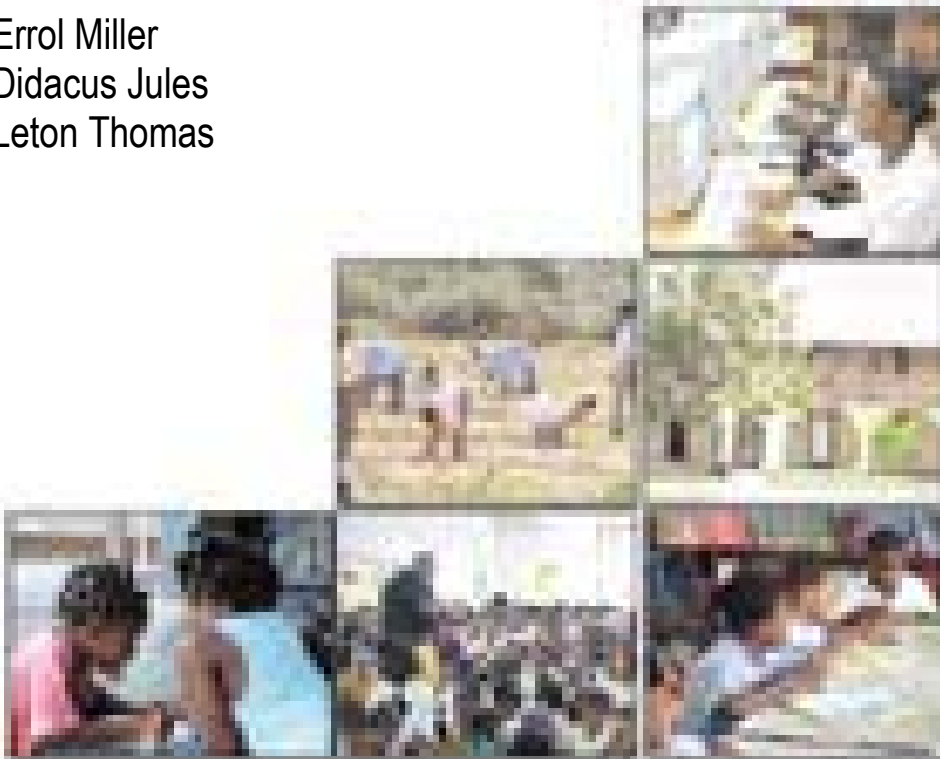


# PILLARS FOR PARTNERSHIP AND PROGRESS

**THE OECS EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY : 2010**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Pillars for Partnership and Progress* (PPP) is constructed, built and shaped on *Foundation for the Future*. As such, it fits seamlessly into the achievements made in implementing *Foundations for the Future* (FFF) and also picks up the shortfalls in accomplishments. In addition, PPP takes account of new developments and challenges facing the nine countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). These developments and challenges have arisen in the 1990s and must be addressed in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

*Pillars for Partnership and Progress* looks ahead to 2010. It tries to envisage the education systems that must be established in the sub-region in order for member countries to cope constructively, creatively and competitively with local, regional and global imperatives. As such, the reforms outlined in PPP are expected to be implemented and achieved by the end of the decade. Bearing in mind that more than fifty per cent of the reforms outlined in FFF were achieved in the relatively short time of about six years, the time frame set for the achievement of PPP are not unrealistic. The sub-region now has in place a sub-regional mechanism as well as strengthened national mechanisms for the implementation of reforms. In addition, the sub-region has learned from the experiences of FFF.

## **BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND PROCESS**

Based upon recommendations coming from visioning meetings sponsored by the OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU), at their meeting in June 1999, the Ministers of the nine countries of the OECS took the decision that it was prudent and necessary to assess the progress made in implementing FFF, to review the performance of the coordinating mechanism and, in light of these, to fashion a revised long term strategic framework for the continuing reform of education in the sub-region. These reviews coincided with the Mid-Term Assessment of the ECERP Project that provided the funding for the operations of the OERU over the last six years.

Acting on decisions made by the Ministers of Education in October 1990 in their meeting in Tortola, early in 1991 the OECS Secretariat commissioned a Working Group, chaired by Professor Errol Miller, to develop a long-term education reform strategy for the sub-region. Following extensive consultations, the Working Group produced the strategic document, *Foundation for the Future: OECS Education Reform Strategy*. In December 1991, FFF was accepted by the Ministers of Education and, in 1992, was approved by the Central Authority of the OECS. It therefore became the official strategic framework for the region of education in the sub-region.

Following the acceptance and approval of FFF, Mr Hubert Charles of CARNEID was commissioned to work with countries to develop national priorities within the context of the sub-regional strategy and to identify and develop projects that could be mounted to commence the implementation of FFF. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) that had provided the funding for both the development of FFF and the identification of national priorities decided to provide the funding for the establishment of the OECS Education Reform Unit, recommended by FFF. This OECS Education Reform Unit was established through the ECERP Project that commenced in 1994.

In addition to governments through their Ministries of Education and CIDA's funding of the OERU, several donor agencies have accepted and assisted with the implementation of FFF either through national or sub-regional projects. Substantial funding has come from the Department For International Development Caribbean (DFIDC) for teacher training and curriculum development; the European Union for Tertiary Level Human Resource Development; GTZ for development of Technical and Vocational Education; and the World Bank and Caribbean Development Bank for the upgrading of school plants and institutional strengthening in several countries.

It is timely and prudent to take stock of the progress made in implementing FFF, to take account of the lessons learned, to identify shortfalls in achievement and to take on board new developments and challenges that were not anticipated or articulated in 1991. *Pillars for Partnership and Progress* is, therefore, not starting from scratch. It embraces the achievements of *Foundation for the Future* and is premised on the same assumptions of an integrated, long term, collective approach to education reform within the context of national, regional and global imperatives. Thus, PPP is broadly conceived and interrelated to both internal and external developments within the educational landscape.

## **PURPOSE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

With assistance from the Department for International Development Caribbean (DFIDC), the OECS Secretariat and the OERU commissioned this exercise to develop a revised long-term strategic framework for the continuing reform of education in the OECS. The main purpose of the assessment was to review progress made by member states of the OECS in implementing the strategies outlined in *Foundation for the Future* as part of the process of developing consensus among the OECS member states with respect to outstanding commitments in the implementation process and new priorities that reflect and respond to changes and development since 1991.

The Terms of Reference for the development of this realigned Strategic Document are to take account of:

1. The extent to which *Foundation for the Future* is recognised and utilised, (e.g., in policy and strategy formulation) at various levels of the system within and between member states.
2. Progress made by member states in implementing the strategies outlined in *Foundation for the Future*.
3. The extent to which *Foundation for the Future* remains relevant and describes the optimal education response to the broader developmental needs and vision of the sub-region.
4. In light of Terms 1 to 3, develop a revised strategic framework for the continuing reform of education in the OECS.

## **PROCESS**

The stages of the process employed to develop PPP can be outlined briefly as follows:

1. The OERU developed an Assessment Matrix that included the fifty-nine strategies in FFF that countries were expected to implement over the decade of the 1990s. This Assessment Matrix provided a common framework within which countries could report the progress made in implementing FFF. The Assessment Matrix was circulated to the Ministries of Education in the nine member countries of the OECS.
2. Using the OERU Assessment Matrix, Ministries of Education assessed the progress made in the implementation of the fifty-nine strategies of FFF that applied to their countries.
3. DFIDC commissioned an assessment of the Coordinating Mechanism, carried out by John Hilsum and Verieux Mourillon who reviewed the progress made in implementing Strategies 60 to 65 of FFF. The assessment was planned to coincide with the Mid-Term Evaluation of the OERU commissioned by CIDA.
4. Reports of the nine National Assessments, along with the Assessment of the Co-ordinating Mechanism, were submitted to the team mandated to lead the process of realigning the strategic framework. Based on these documents and other important regional and international documents related to educational development, the team drafted a Sub-Regional Assessment of the progress made in implementing FFF. In drafting the Sub-Regional Assessment, the team classified information provided on country progress into five categories: No Action; Plans in Place; Limited Implementation; Substantial Implementation; and Achieved or Maintained the Objective. They subsequently included a sixth category: Insufficient Information.
5. With assistance from the OERU, the Draft Sub-Regional Assessment was circulated in each of the nine countries to Ministries of Education, teachers' unions, private sector organisations, non-governmental organisations, principals of schools and colleges and student groups in tertiary institutions. Through their representatives, these organisations were requested to meet on a country basis to review the Sub-Regional Assessment and, in particular, to agree on the classification of progress made with respect to each strategy within their country. Where there was insufficient information, country stakeholders were asked to agree and provide the missing information. Country stakeholders were also asked to identify new developments and challenges faced by their country that were not effectively addressed by FFF.
6. In the three-day consultation held in Antigua between July 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the participants included representatives from each of the national stakeholder group identified in 5. During this three-day consultation, the following activities were executed:
  - a) Each country reported on their review of the Draft Sub-Regional Assessment. They reported changes to the classifications made on progress on the implementation of the fifty-nine strategies that emerged from the consensus reached in discussions in their country prior to the Consultation.
  - b) Each country provided information considering the Insufficient Data category.
  - c) Following plenary discussion, the agreement was reached that where the majority of countries had implemented a strategy or a component of a strategy but a few countries had not, the latter would be urged to take immediate steps to implement these strategies or components in order to ensure sub-regional unity with respect to a particular reform. Where a few countries had implemented strategies or some

components and the majority had not, the factors related to non-implementation as well as the content of those strategies would be critically assessed during the Consultation.

- d) Working groups were formed with members from each or most of the nine countries. These working groups were composed of representatives from Ministries of Education, non-governmental organisations, teachers' unions, schools and colleges, private sector organisations and the OERU and Donor Agencies. Each Working Group was charged with the task of proposing new strategies that should be developed for education in the OECS and that of revising and realigning existing strategies in FFF. By constituting the Working Groups along these lines, a sub-regional approach to proposing the content of PPP was ensured – but from six different perspectives as reflected by the composition of each group.
- e) The six Working Groups presented their proposals for reforms at plenary sessions. During these sessions, there was discussion aimed at arriving at general consensus concerning the essence of the strategies that should comprise PPP. The Team took careful note of the both the proposals by the Working Groups as well as the plenary discussion and undertook to Draft the content of PPP.
- f) The Team drafted PPP and, with assistance from the OERU, circulated it to all the stakeholders that attended the Consultation in Antigua. The agreement was that these representatives would review the Draft, have discussions with their groups and submit recommendations for modifications and revision to their country's representative on OETEC.
- g) The OETEC meeting of September included a session to review the Draft PPP in light of the feedback coming from the stakeholder groups in the nine countries.
- h) The undertaking was for the Team to review and revise the Draft PPP in light of the discussions and decisions made at the OETEC Meeting.
- i) The Revised Draft of PPP was then be submitted to the OECS Ministers of Education Meeting in October for their scrutiny and comments.
- j) The Team undertook to finalise PPP arising from the discussions and decisions of the meeting of the OECS Ministers.

### **The Consultancy Team**

Consultants engaged to carry out the realignment of the strategic framework for education in the OECS were:

Dr. Didacus Jules, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education of St Lucia and Chairman of the Task Force developing the Caribbean Education Strategy of the World Bank.

Mr. Leton Thomas, former principal of Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, former Director of CARNEID, former Minister of the Public Service and currently St Lucia's Representative to UNESCO and Vice President of its Executive Board.

Prof. Errol Miller Director of the Institute of Education of the University of the West Indies and Chairman of the Working Group that developed Foundation for the Future. Professor Miller was appointed the Team Leader.

### **Documents Reviewed**

In drafting PPP, account was taken of regional and global initiatives within the education sector. These included:

- Education for All: Caribbean Regional Synthesis and Plan of Action.
- Education for All in the Caribbean: Retrospect and Prospect.
- Caribbean Education Strategy: Vision 2020.
- Time for Action: The Report of the West Indian Commission.
- The Human Development Statement of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of Government of CARICOM.
- The Caribbean Action Plan for Early Childhood Education and Development.
- The Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All.

### **A SYNOPSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FFF**

Bearing in mind that *Pillars for Partnership and Progress* follows on from *Foundation For the Future*, it is prudent to make some brief reference to some of the main findings from the assessment of the implementation of FFF undertaken as a prior and companion exercise. The assessment of progress in the implementation of FFF strategies underlined the following very clearly:

1. Countries not only agreed to undertake the challenges of implementing FFF but all countries in the sub-region engaged in some action to implement at least some of the strategies included in the strategic framework. Given the high rate of failure of education reforms in several other parts of the world, the fact that countries followed through with effective action in many areas of the reform indicate commitment to educational reform within the sub-region.
2. FFF did not set a time frame for the attainment of actions set out in the strategies. It took almost three years from the acceptance of FFF by the Central Authority before the OERU was established and funded. In effect, implementation of FFF at the country level has taken place over a six-year period. Given the lethargy that often surrounds educational reform, the extent of the overall implementation of actions contained in the strategies and components since 1994 is quite remarkable.
3. Action was taken on a wide range of strategies or components of strategies. All member states had implemented some of the elements of FFF. Some countries had achieved substantial or limited implementation while others had actually achieved certain goals and yet others had plans in place towards achieving them.



4. Notwithstanding the uneven implementation of the strategies and components of strategies (due in part to some member states having concentrated on strategies or components that were high on their national priority), it is possible to identify areas in which there is a high degree of implementation from five or more countries. These areas include Early Childhood, Primary Education and the mechanism for implementing the reform process. Similarly, there was a moderate to low degree of implementation in Harmonization of Education Systems, Secondary Education, Terms and Conditions of Teachers and the Financing of Education.

An overall summary of the extent of implementation of each of the nine strategic areas can be reported briefly as follows:

**a) *Harmonization of Education Systems***

Among the set of strategies designed to achieve harmonization of educational systems in the sub-region, the team found only modest action. Where action was taken, it related to the harmonization of grade names and establishing a common legal framework for education in the sub-region. With respect to the latter, progress was limited in that several countries are still to enact the legislation. The consultants were aware of the efforts of the OERU both at the national and sub-regional levels. There needs an intensification and acceleration of the efforts, however, to harmonize the education systems of the sub-region. In addition, it will be necessary to continue to collaborate with the ongoing work of CARICOM, the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI) and of the TLI Unit of UWI towards accreditation, equivalency and articulation of programmes at the tertiary level.

**b) *Early Childhood Education***

In this area, it was pointed out that there has been a high degree of implementation on many of the strategies. It is envisaged that if the demographic trend continues, more space will become available and further action at establishing pre-school departments in primary schools (Strategy 11) will need to be actively pursued.

**c) *Primary Education***

A major thrust of this set of strategies is the improvement in the quality of education. There was a high degree of implementation, albeit on certain key components of the strategies, such as improvements in the quality of teacher education. On the whole, implementation has included a wide range of strategies and progress was encouraging.

**d) *Secondary Education***

The seven strategies encompassed thirty components. In assessing progress, the consultants felt that while substantial components were not addressed and implementation was uneven, progress was nonetheless marked, bearing in mind that there were only two components on which few countries had acted.

**e) *Tertiary, Adult & Continuing Education***

It was reported that six countries had achieved the status of multi-disciplinary colleges and that substantial action had taken place by three of them on expanding tertiary provision.

There were only two of the fourteen strategies on which no action was reported. On the whole progress was quite marked.

***f) Terms and Conditions of Service of Teachers***

The implementation rate on this set of six strategies was low. Only one component of each of two strategies [S 41 (a) and S 44 (a)] had been addressed by the majority of countries.

***g) Administration and Management***

There were six strategies in this area. The majority of countries took limited action on most of the components. It was noted that no action was taken by any country in setting up of an OECS Human Resource Development (HRD) Institute.

***h) Financing of Education***

The centrality of financial resources to the viability of the educational enterprise was recognized. The majority of countries reported limited implementation on the components of the strategies. It is to be noted, however, that substantial action on the implementation of Strategy 53 that contained six components was impressive.

While recognizing that a number of areas were not addressed and that many of the strategies and components will have to be carried forward and action accelerated, the consultants are of the view that a surprising degree of progress has been made in the implementation of FFF.

The Antigua Workshop reinforced the need to continue to accelerate action in high and low implementation areas, albeit in different ways. The fact is that certain areas that have not yet received attention are indeed necessary and are complementary measures to areas already implemented. For example, common curricula and attainment criteria are complementary to a common designation of class groups.

Other areas for action and intervention that were identified relate to:

- Strategies to improve conditions and facilities for sharing technology.
- Mechanisms for disseminating “best practices,” especially where these are the results of sub-regional cooperative efforts.
- Strategies designed to build endogenous capacities in science.
- Strategies to improve the quality of learning and teaching through the use of the new information and communication technologies.

## **NEW IMPERATIVES AND CONDITIONS**

The decade coinciding with the publication of *Foundations for the Future* was a period of renewed interest and commitment to education reform at the global, regional and national levels. The Jomtien Declaration added further impetus to this drive and the Caribbean rallied to this call. With the advent of the Third Millennium, the Caribbean region – like many other regions – undertook a series of assessments and new projections on educational imperatives for the new era.

In preparation for a global EFA Forum on education, the region undertook an assessment of the movement for education for all and examined the prospects for the new millennium. At the same time, a Caribbean Task Force was developing an education strategy to the year 2020 under the aegis of the World Bank. Almost simultaneously, the OECS Ministers of Education were mandating the OECS Education Reform Unit to revisit *Foundations for the Future* and to redefine the strategy in the face of new imperatives and the rapid changes that had taken place in the decade of implementation.

Underpinning all of these initiatives is the recognition of the unprecedented pace of change particularly over the last ten years and an awareness of the importance of systematic evaluation as a tool of effective implementation. We have come of age when there is an acute awareness of the need to incorporate periodic evaluation and reassessment into the planning and implementation of systemic reforms.

There are many common imperatives that all of the recent strategy documents have identified. Many of these were not sufficiently developed trends in the decade of the 1990s to have warranted inclusion in the strategies developed in that era. These include:

- **Knowledge management:** A critical imperative identified by the Caribbean Education Strategy 2020 is that of narrowing the knowledge gap. The rise of a global knowledge-based economy has created a basis for inequality among nations. Knowledge has been elevated to the status of a factor of production and the capacity of countries to manage knowledge will be a determinant of their degree of competitiveness. The challenge for the education system is to develop mechanisms for acquiring, generating, disseminating and utilizing knowledge – in short to play a lead role in the transformation into a learning society. The implication of this is a whole new paradigm involving applied research, flexibility in curriculum design, innovation in instructional delivery, multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to learning, among other imperatives.
- **Affective development:** Accelerated social decline fuelled by the rise of the drug culture and reflected in the demise of family and community structures, has accentuated the need for the education system to play a more definitive role in the affective development of students. Greater prominence is now being given to the inculcation of attitudes, values and behaviours appropriate to the “Ideal Caribbean Person” through the achievement of social skills such as conflict resolution to ensure peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural society.<sup>1</sup> The growing marginalization of young Caribbean males is also an important trend that

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<sup>1</sup> Education for All Goals and Targets: 2000-2015 – Caribbean Region.

must be taken into account and appropriate interventions aimed at gender sensitisation and role modelling be developed.

- **Incorporation of Information Technology in education:** The emergence of new technologies of information with their tremendous learning potential is poised to revolutionize our ways and conditions of learning. The use of these technologies in education can help transform our classrooms to learner-centred spaces and will facilitate the provision of quality instruction at a distance. The potential for adult and continuing education and the cost-effectiveness of that modality cannot be overlooked.
- **Reduction of inequity and mitigation of poverty in the education system:** Notwithstanding the relatively extensive provision of educational opportunities by OECS member states, there is evidence of inequity in provision that needs to be addressed. Evidence from emerging research suggests that factors such as hunger, inadequate access to school texts, domestic conditions, etc. have a strong impact on student learning and achievement. If education is to help eradicate poverty, attention must be paid to this situation and appropriate poverty mitigation measures ought to be put in place.

In summary it is fair to say that the process of assessing the implementation of *Foundation for the Future* in the nine OECS countries revealed a higher degree of action than was the general perception from any single perspective or experience. In very crude terms more than fifty per cent of the 65 strategies were implemented to some degree over the six-year period from 1994 to 2000. While this is impressive, much more remains to be done not only in terms of the outstanding commitments with respect to FFF but also with respect to the emerging new challenges that were not addressed by FFF. *Pillars for Partnership and Progress*, therefore, continue the reform process commenced by FFF but goes beyond it in terms of the new challenges and circumstances.

## **THE EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGIES**

One of the major points of agreement emerging from the Antigua Consultation with stakeholders was that the nine strategic areas in FFF would be retained and that a tenth would be added – that of Information and Communications Technology applied in education. In the aftermath of the Antigua Consultation, further analysis revealed that some new elements for reform suggested at the Consultation could not fit neatly or comfortably in the ten areas agreed. Thus, an eleventh area was proposed: Urgent Societal Imperatives. This was agreed at the OETEC Meeting in St Kitts, September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2000. As it was also agreed at the Antigua Consultation that the format for presenting the strategic framework used in FFF would be retained in PPP. This means that *Pillars for Partnership and Progress* continues to employ the construction metaphor of *Foundations for the Future*. It implies that a foundation has been laid in the last decade of the twentieth century and that it is now appropriate to begin to construct the pillars that will bear the weight of the superstructure that must be constructed over the course of the twenty-first century.

### **The Philosophy Of Pillars For Partnership And Progress**

#### **Progress**

The overall goal of educational reform in the nine countries of the OECS over the next ten years, 2000 to 2010, is to continue to mobilise the people of the sub-region to progress by constructing their future, and that of the sub-region, in terms that are meaningful, satisfying and ennobling to them in the context of a world that is changing fundamentally. Though separated by sea and differences in their political status, the destinies of the nine island-states of the OECS are interwoven and almost inseparable. Their futures and fortunes are inextricably linked because developments or disasters in one have implications and consequences for the others.

The proposed reforms in education are therefore designed to:

- Foster and strengthen the collective identity of the people of the OECS.
- Nurture and promote deeper and stronger bonds of solidarity within the sub-region.
- Enhance and build robust mechanisms of collaboration and cooperation in order that the peoples of the sub-region may generate, acquire and manage the knowledge, skills and competences needed to compete successfully in the global economy.
- Build just societies that uphold the rights of all citizens.
- Enrich and conserve the cultures of the sub-region.
- Set an example in regional collaboration and cooperation to the rest of Caribbean region and, in the process, strengthen Caribbean identity and ideals.

Embedded in the proposed educational reforms is a vision of where the OECS should have progressed in education within the Caribbean by 2010 taking into account the circumstances that currently exist in 2000. As such, the proposed reforms do not represent where the OECS is currently in educational development. Neither do they represent what would be expected to have next year. Rather, they represent what could be realistically achieved by the end of the first decade of the new century.

## **Partnership**

In the knowledge economy, rights-based states and the regionalising and globalising world that is emerging, learning and education have become so important that education reform is literally everybody's business! Governments, businesses, parents and students, communities, non-governmental organisations, professionals, organisations of civil society and the international community all have important stakes in education that cannot be left to the generosity of other stakeholders. None can responsibly leave the prerogatives of education to others. Each stakeholder group must actively participate in the reform process in order to ensure that its vital interests are included in considerations of decision-making that charts the course of the reforms. Within this context, the reform of education to meet the changing circumstances at the beginning of the twenty-first century cannot be left solely to governments and their Ministries of Education.

In addition to its vital importance to a wide range of stakeholders, educational reform requires human and financial resources way beyond what any single stakeholder group can provide. This includes the government and the state. Sound education of high quality requires inputs from all the stakeholders. If the provisions for education are excellent but the participation of teachers, students and parents are mediocre and poor, then the impact of the reform will be disappointing in terms of their desired effects. Adequate and appropriate provision of education must be matched by purposeful and sustained participation by teachers, parents and students.

Another critical consideration is that the changes needed in education to cope with and constructively engage the imperatives of the times must of necessity be implemented at multiple levels. These levels include the OECS sub-region as a whole, the national level of each of the nine countries individually, the district or parish level within these nine countries, the level of the community in which each school is located, the level of school or college to ultimately the level of individual principals, teachers, students, parents and citizens.

Put another way, the scope of the changes that are needed in education to cope with and constructively engage the imperatives at the beginning of the new century require responses at different levels including:

- New mechanisms for collaborating and cooperating at the level of the OECS sub-region.
- Some reorganisation of national systems of education in the nine countries.
- New relationships between schools in districts, parishes or outer islands.
- New relationships between schools and the communities in which they are located.
- Reorganisations within schools and colleges that include new ways of relating between teachers, students and parents.
- Changed approaches to learning on the part of teachers, students and parents.

Thus, partnership is the new paradigm for education reform. Partnership is mandatory as a result of the interests of the large number of stakeholders involved with the education enterprise, the provision and participation required if education is to achieve its goals and the multiple levels at which educational reform is required.

The approach to accountability in a partnership must be that of mutual accountability. Each partner must be accountable to the others and all partners must hold each other to its part of the bargain, so to speak. Pillars for Partnership and Progress is, therefore, the shared commitment of the partners in the OECS: namely Ministries of Education, teachers' unions, schools and colleges, parents, the private sector, NGOs, the OECS Secretariat and those agencies within the international community that elect to support these initiatives. *Pillars for Partnership and Progress* should be challenging to all partners if the goals are to be achieved. Partners holding others to account must do so with clean hands. In other words, partners holding others to account must be effectively implementing the reforms for which they have principal responsibility. From this exemplary position, those partners should both inspire and exhort others to do likewise.

## **Pillars**

*Pillars for Partnership and Progress* is built on *Foundation for the Future* in many substantial ways. First, it accepts as still valid the political, economic, social, demographic and cultural imperatives outlined for the OECS in *Foundation*. Basically, the developmental imperatives for the sub-region have not changed radically over the decade of the 1990s. Hence, *Pillars for Partnership and Progress* is premised on the same developmental assumptions as *Foundation for the Future*.

Second, *Pillars* carry forward the nine strategic areas set out in *Foundations* and many strategies in the nine areas have been carried forward without revision. Some revisions were made to several strategies in the light of experience or changed circumstances and a few strategies, or components of strategies, were dropped altogether.

Despite the fact that *Pillars* is built on *Foundation* in substantial ways and there is significant overlap between the two strategic frameworks indicating a great deal of continuity in the reform thrust, *Pillars* is by no means identical to *Foundations*. *Pillars* differs from *Foundation* in two important respects:

1. *Pillars* adds two new areas for strategic action: Information and Communications Technology and Urgent Societal Imperatives. Although *Foundation for the Future* recognised advances in information technology as it applied to education, it did not anticipate the specifics of those changes, particularly the growth of the Internet and wireless technology. Also, the experiences of the 1990s have underscored the vulnerability of OECS states to natural disasters, shifts in the global economy and the adverse social implications of these phenomena. In moving to face the challenges of the first decade of the twenty-first century, *Pillars* accepts as mandatory the necessity to address these two areas specifically and directly.
2. While *Foundation For the Future* assumed partnership as necessary, *Pillars* makes partnership explicit and the most essential aspect of the modus by which the reforms have to be implemented. Partnership is, therefore, both implicit and explicit in *Pillars*.

While *Pillars for Partnership and Progress* stands on its own as a strategic framework for the OECS for the first decade of the twenty-first Century, *Foundation For the Future* is a useful companion document in terms of explaining the developmental rationale and assumptions.

## **STRATEGIES FOR HARMONISING THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE OECS**

### **Objectives**

- To support the efforts of the peoples and the governments of the OECS to continue to make the transition from development strategies based on the exploitation of natural resources to strategies based on the development of human resources, knowledge generation and master of technology.
- To continue to inspire the peoples and governments of the OECS to shape the developmental imperatives determining their future by the exercise of their creative imagination and problem-solving capabilities.
- To strengthen and further promote cooperation, collaboration, sharing and learning from each other's experiences in the process of educational development in the OECS.
- To facilitate, on a sub-regional basis, the incorporation of new ideas, thinking and approaches to education developed inside and outside of the OECS and the Caribbean.
- To minimise ad-hocracy in education in the OECS and continue to replace it with a planned long-term approach with the built-in capacity for research, evaluation of progress and the ability to make needed adjustments.
- To preserve the cultural sovereignty of the sub-region and to provide a framework for cultural enrichment.

### **General Philosophy**

The continuing reform of education in the OECS seeks to establish circumstances for inspiring noble visions of the Caribbean society and of the "Ideal Caribbean Person" as described by the Human Resources Protocol from the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CARICOM Heads at Montego Bay in 1998. The Caribbean region, though relatively poor in terms of natural resources, is rich in its potential of advancing notions of civilisation premised on the common humanity of people who originated from different continents and ethnic communities. Education must always be a civilising force and the continuing reform of education in the OECS takes account of a global vision of human civilisation and humanity and seeks to re-position the Caribbean in the mainstream of advancing civilisation in contemporary times.

Central to the continuing reform of education with the OECS is the harmonisation of education systems in the nine member states. By establishing a common system of education the sub-region seeks:

- To benefit from economies of scales in numerous areas including the production and purchase of textbooks, learning materials, school supplies and several other such areas.
- More efficient deployment of talent and freer internal movement of such talent.
- Pooling and sharing resources in effecting critical and important education functions such as planning, research, curriculum development and testing and evaluation.
- More effective functional cooperation among member states.
- Higher levels of sustainability of interventions designed to improve the delivery of education including its quality.



## **The Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 1:** Accelerate and complete the harmonisation of the schools' systems in the sub-region by:

- a) Maintaining the common designation of class groups across the region at the level of primary and secondary schools. A common designation of class groups across the OECS permits smooth transition from a school system in one country to a school system in another. Free movement of people within the sub-region dictates easy relocation in the school systems of member states.
- b) Accelerating the standardisation of the curricula of early childhood, primary and secondary education within the sub-region. Common curricula in primary and secondary schools is a companion measure to common designation and specification of class groups at the primary and secondary levels. This ensures that common content is taught in preschools and schools across the sub-region. In addition, this would allow the standardisation of textbooks used across the region, therefore promoting economies of scale in the production and purchase of textbooks.
- c) Developing common attainment criteria in the core areas at primary and secondary levels.
- d) Synchronizing the education system of the OECS within the framework of CARICOM.
- e) Reviewing the programme of teacher preparation in light of current trends and challenges. This includes ICT, Foreign Languages, Physical Education, Creative Arts, Health & Family Life, Guidance & Counselling, Special Education, etc.
- f) Developing a philosophy and policy for technology education within the school systems.

**Strategy 2:** Accelerate and complete the creation of a common legal framework for education within the sub-region through enacting the new Education Bill legislation in each member state and sharing regulations that have been developed to support the Act.

**Strategy 3:** Promote the infusion of environmental education in the curricula of primary and secondary schools in the sub-region. Particular emphasis should be placed on environmental education in the early grades of primary schooling where normally the curriculum is centred on learning about the children's physical surrounding and home communities.

**Strategy 4:** Develop a comprehensive language policy for the sub-region that takes into account the different sociolinguistic patterns and traditions in the sub-region, English as the official language of the sub-region and the need for all OECS citizens to acquire fluency in at least one foreign language. This policy should address issues related to:

- a) The native language of the child and the nurturing and non-threatening environment that needs to be developed in classrooms that would allow children to take risks with language learning in the development of their capabilities.
- b) Appropriate second language or dialect-to-dialect approaches that should be applied in the teaching of standard Caribbean English.
- c) The particular foreign languages that should be taught in primary and secondary schools.

By the year 2010, all students at secondary school levels should be fluent and proficient in the oral and written use of standard Caribbean English, at least ninety per cent of secondary school leavers

should be fluent in at least one foreign language spoken in the Caribbean and at least a half should be fluent in two foreign languages spoken in the region.

Foreign language continues to be one of the weaknesses of education in the Commonwealth Caribbean, including the OECS. The same holds true of learning about other cultures. In seeking to achieve the target set above, countries should seek to establish language policies that would ensure this outcome. In developing such a policy, countries would be advised to learn from the experiences of the Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries. In developing and implementing a common foreign language policy, countries should seek to establish exchange schemes for teachers and students in non-English speaking Caribbean countries.

**Strategy 5:** Develop a sub-regional approach to textbook production that is based on the harmonized curricula.

**Strategy 6:** Promote activities designed to develop an explicit and ennobling philosophy for education in the OECS.

The Education Division of the OECS Secretariat should take responsibility for this exercise and should take into account:

- Philosophies implicit in the syllabi and other curriculum materials, instructional strategies commonly used by teachers and textbooks widely used in schools in the OECS.
- The vision of Caribbean society and that of the “Ideal Caribbean Person” as enunciated by Time for Action and the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government.
- Similar experiences and exercises done in other parts of the world and seek to learn from those experiences.

## **REFORM STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS URGENT SOCIETAL IMPERATIVES**

### **Objectives**

- To address urgent societal imperatives in a constructive and creative manner.
- To make education relevant to the concerns of stakeholders.

### **General Philosophy**

Education at its most elemental level is about the mobilisation of a people to construct their future society, and within it build their personal lives, taking into account the past history of that society and the dynamic forces that are currently at work. The critical questions to be address are what are some of the urgent societal imperatives that the OECS must address at this time. The strategies outlined here were those identified by stakeholders as issues that must be addressed by education if it is to be relevant to the OECS reality in the first decade of the twenty-first century

## **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 7:** Institute the teaching of disaster preparedness, based on a common curriculum at specified grades of primary and secondary schools.

The Caribbean is subject to natural disasters. As recent experiences have shown, within the OECS, natural disasters in one country invariably have repercussions for other countries within the sub-region, for example: the eruption of the volcano in Montserrat and hurricanes that have hit many areas of the sub region.

The content of the curriculum on disaster preparedness should include

- Causes and types of disasters.
- Areas most prone to earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, volcanoes, etc.
- Types of preparedness
- Effects of disasters on homes, communities, countries and the sub-region.
- Coping with situations - including lessons learnt from recent catastrophes.

**Strategy 8:** Foster and encourage health-promoting schools in collaboration with the PAHO initiative in the hemisphere.

Health-promoting schools are schools which "...display, in everything they say and do, support for and commitment to enhancing the emotional, social, physical and moral well being of all members of their school community" (from the World Health Organisation).

The health-promoting schools concept is a comprehensive vision – a multidisciplinary approach that considers people in the context of their daily life and in the family, community and society. The focus is on the development of knowledge, abilities and skills to assist people to take care of their health and that of others and to prevent risk behaviours. The activities should be carried out by a variety of educational opportunities. A critical-reflexive analysis of values, behaviours, social conditions and lifestyles is encouraged – strengthening those that favour health and human development; facilitating the participation of all the members of the educational community in making decisions. It contributes to the promotion of socially egalitarian relations among the genders, encourages the construction of citizenship and democracy and strengthens traditions of solidarity and community spirit, as well as protects human rights.

Health-promoting schools can be created by:

1. Comprehensive school health education based on the needs of the students in each stage of their development and in accord with their individual social, cultural and gender characteristics. Comprehensive and participatory health education strengthens the self-esteem and the capacity of young people in order to form healthy lifestyles and practices and to increase their potential to be productive members of society. This component should strive to develop knowledge, abilities and skills, not only to provide information. This health education approach is based on positive values that strengthen a student's personal, family and community life skills and abilities.

2. Healthy and supportive environments and surroundings include basic sanitation for clean and structurally adequate physical spaces as well as support networks for healthy and safe psychosocial surroundings that are free from physical, verbal and/or emotional abuse and assault or violence. This component should develop and strengthen the capacity of each school to create and maintain environments supportive to health and learning for students, teachers and other personnel who work in the school. It should include health promotion for the teaching and administrative staff and maintenance workers as well as activities to promote health with teacher and parent associations and with different community organizations.
3. Adequate health services and food and nutrition programs should be developed that try to detect and prevent health problems, risk factors, behaviours and conditions, giving early attention to young people. It should include activities to detect and prevent risk behaviours as well as to increase self-control and preventive attitudes and practices. It should strengthen the relationship between school personnel with the health team and to increase their understanding of each other's roles and their capacity to complement and strengthen each other. This component should round out and enhance the health education activities and requires the creation of healthy and supportive environments, including counselling services and psychological support, physical education, sports, recreation and support for small productive projects.

**Strategy 9:** Develop mechanisms to identify and eliminate gender inequities in the school and educational systems as a whole. Investigate the gender-related sociological, psychological, cultural, political and economic factors that impact on the development of the student in particular and the human resources development of the region in general.

Historically, gender constructs are often seen to have divergent effects on male-female relationships, school performance, achievement and learning outcomes. Such constructs may be traced from early socialization, which set up gender expectations that influence social interaction between boys and girls. Differential treatment by gender is usually related to the distribution of power and authority in society (of related note are also issues of ethnicity, poverty, social class and community location). Beliefs about competence, respect and social acceptability are perpetuated in the media and incorporated in societal norms. Education systems and educators have a responsibility to address and correct gender differentials where their manifestation negatively influences/affects either gender.

In developing mechanisms to eliminate gender inequities in the school system, it will be necessary to:

- a) Institute curricular and other mechanisms to explore issues of gender to promote among students a healthy acceptance of self, identity, positive behaviours and to improve male – female relationships in school, at home and in society.
- b) Work with the regional universities to carry out gender analysis and research and develop programmes with a view to enabling students and teachers to:

- Understand and reduce gender stereotyping and misinformed gender roles as they impact on self-esteem, learning styles, inequities in subject selection, career development and employment possibilities.
- Examine power constructs and differentials including issues of superiority and inferiority, inclusive and exclusive language, domestic violence, parental responsibility, physical sexual differences and strength differentials.
- Uphold mutual respect for all persons.
- Understand the role of society reflected in such areas of influence as the media, church, laws, parenting, etc.
- Understand the International Conventions on gender and other human rights of which our governments are signatories.

**Strategy 10:** Improve the participation, performance and retention of boys in schools by:

- Introducing preventative interventions in primary schools that identify at risk boys between the ages of 7 and 11 years addressing the challenges facing these boys through counselling for boys and parents, sensitivity training for teachers, moral education, behaviour modification and financial and welfare assistance where necessary.
- Introducing corrective interventions in secondary schools that target boys who have already begun to manifest antisocial and deviant behaviours. These interventions should include counselling for boys and parents, sensitivity training for teachers, a behaviour modification programme in an out of school setting for one or more terms followed by reintegration into the school community and support for schools in the form of social workers who interface between schools and homes.
- Sponsoring on-going research in support of the initiatives suggested above.

**Strategy 11:** Promote partnership between the public sector, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and organisations of civil society by:

- Including and involving private sectors, NGOs, parents' organisations, teachers' organisations and community representation in all policy advisory and consultative mechanisms established by governments to address the formulation of educational and human resource development policies.
- Including and involving board-based representation of the groups identified in the composition of boards of management of schools.
- Promoting participation of the groups named above in the programmes and projects implemented to effect educational reforms at the school level.
- Promoting school community partnerships that involves the private sector, parents, teachers and organisations of civil society operating at the local level.
- Encouraging meaningful exchanges and interaction between students and teachers and private sector, NGOs and public sector groups with the purpose of strengthening the relevance of schools' curricula and programmes to cultural realities and social and economic imperatives in the wider society.
- Encouraging private sector groups, NGOs and organisations of civil society to participate with schools in developing attractive, enriching and lively co-curricula and vacation

programmes that would appeal to students as well as provide positive grounding in wholesome values and healthy living.

**Strategy 12:** Assist parents to effectively participate in the education of their children and cope with their responsibilities as parents by:

- Providing continuing education programmes for parents who desire such in order to participate meaningfully in the education of their children.
- Improving communication between parents and schools concerning the curriculum and programmes of schools and the progress of their children.
- Establishing a framework in which parents can volunteer to support schools in the delivery of their programmes.
- Requiring schools to have open days and other such activities that will facilitate parents, community members and others to better understand and appreciate the programmes of the schools.
- Revitalising parent-teachers associations.

## **STRATEGIES FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

### **Objectives**

- To foster, facilitate, enhance and build functional collaboration, cooperation and the pooling of resources among students, teachers, managers and administration in education through the use of Intranets and the Internet.
- To improve and modernise teaching and learning through the use of information and communications technology applied to the teaching and learning processes in schools.
- To ensure that all students leaving a school system at the end of at least nine years of schooling are computer literate and can effectively use information and communications technology applied to the activities of daily life.
- To improve, modernise and make more efficient the management of schools and Ministries of Education through education management information systems that are networked and linked dynamically.
- To expand the pool and improve the quality of persons in the OECS who can be educated and trained as information and communications technology specialists.

### **General Philosophy**

Information and communications technology has become ubiquitous in its applications to modern life. It is a tool of work, learning, entertainment, communication and management. As important is the fact that it has become a symbol of modernisation and progress. For people living, learning and working on islands but who wish to share a common destiny, information and communication technology becomes a virtual bridge across the expanse of sea that separates islands from each other.

Information and communications technology applied to education reform in the OECS, therefore, does not only represent a skills of skills to be acquired for its effective use, but more importantly as tools of learning, teaching and management as well as a symbol of modernisation and progress, and most critically as a virtual bridge linking students in schools and colleges, managers and administrators in institutions and Ministers within and across islands. Taken together information and communications technology skills can be effectively applied to modernise and enhance teaching, learning and management, mobilise new support for education and provide the infrastructure for regional collaboration, cooperation and the pooling of resources to unprecedented levels. The impact of the latter is likely to be a great sense of sub-regional identity and solidarity than could be achieved by any other means.

The revolution that has taken place in information and communications technology is ushering in the knowledge society. Wealth creation is now predicated on knowledge and technological competence matched with creativity and perspicacity. Schools and colleges are about knowledge – generation, dissemination and acquisition. Schools and colleges are, therefore, seen as focal points in the knowledge network centrepiece of community access that can interface with the information and communications technology infrastructure. As information and communication resources are established in schools and colleges, they must serve the wider communities in which they are located with respect to access and training in their use. In this regard, the sharp boundaries of in school and out-of-school will be blurred and rendered ambiguous in meaning.

### **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 13:** Establish an intranet in each of the nine OECS countries linking schools and colleges with Ministries of Education using appropriate technology – whether cable or microwave or some combination of both – and link the country intranets to create an OECS Education Intranet. The country and sub-region intranets must be designed and structured to permit the transmission of voice, video and data seven days per week, twenty-four hours per day.

Developments taking place in wireless and other technologies and the proximity of the islands that constitute the OECS make it distinctly possible and feasible to establish a dedicated intranet linking all schools, colleges and ministries in the sub-region on a twenty-four hour, seven days per week basis. A great advantage of a wireless intranet, using microwave technology, is that it requires no monthly connection charges and, therefore, limits recurrent costs for the maintenance that is mandatory for any system. The point here is not to prefer wireless technology to every other and to make it the technology choice but rather to highlight those features that are of great relevance to the financial circumstances faced by education systems. Should other technologies offer the same financial advantages, then they should also be considered and applied where appropriate.

The great virtue of creating an infrastructure connecting educational institutions in the sub-region is that it has the potential to inspire individual institutions to mobilise resources to acquire most of the equipment needed to make maximum use of its potential. Indeed, some of these resources could come from more costly and less efficient and effective means of communication and contact that are currently employed.

**Strategy 14:** Establish and promote a cost sharing partnership framework for mobilising resources to modernize school plants with Information Communications Technologies.

This framework should be premised on matching contributions of at least equal amounts, from Government, the private sector and the school community in equipping schools and colleges with the Information Communications Technologies (ICT) and educational technology needed to modernise and improve learning, teaching and management and to connect to the OECS Intranet. Where schools have already mobilised resources on their own and acquired equipment, such efforts should be counted in their contribution in receiving matching funds from Government and the private sector. Guidelines would need to be developed with respect to gifts of hardware and software donated to schools and colleges. These guidelines should address issues of compatibility, obsolescence, maintenance, training and technical support.

**Strategy 15:** Create guidelines whereby communities, on a cost recovery basis, can utilise the schools ICT resources for the purpose of accessing the Internet, e-mail, fax services and on-line courses and for schools and colleges providing desktop publishing and other services for the communities in which they are located.

From the resources acquired through community access and services, schools and colleges should both maintain and upgrade their ICT capabilities. Such an arrangement should ensure the sustainability of the ICT infrastructure of schools and colleges.

**Strategy 16:** Put in place, on a project basis for five years on a country basis, in partnership with the private sector and tertiary institutions:

- a) Training and technical support resources for teachers and managers in schools and colleges who engage in applying information and communications technology to enhance learning and management and also for technicians in schools or the private sector, whose responsibility it will be to maintain the ICT systems.
- b) A university-moderated certificate course on Integrating Information and Communications Technology in the Curriculum. By 2005, at least ten percent of teachers in every school and college should have pursued such a university-moderated certificate course. By 2010, at least fifty per cent of teachers should have pursued such a university-moderated course.

While initially teachers and managers will require training and technical support in shifting from paper-based systems of management and conventional modes of learning and teaching, over a five year period schools and colleges should develop sufficient expertise in ICT applied to management and learning to be able to sustain themselves thereafter. Without training and technical support, however, teachers and managers will take a much longer time to achieve proficient and effective use of ICT and are likely to maintain the old ways of operating. Without proper maintenance of hardware and applications in order to ensure the reliability of the ICT systems, teachers and managers are unlikely to have confidence in the ICT infrastructure and, therefore, are unlikely to invest substantial time and talent in effecting the desired improvements and enhancements.

**Strategy 17:** Through a system of incentives, encourage teachers, managers and students to develop software, applications and databases designed to enhance, develop and conserve Caribbean culture and knowledge and in areas in which the imported applications are inappropriate or not affordable.



While Caribbean countries (including OECS) are currently importers and consumers of ICT, the region and sub-region must develop the capacity to be designers and producers of information and communication products. Persons with talent and inspiration must be encouraged to embark upon this path.

**Strategy 18:** Encourage and support schools, colleges, educational organisations and associations within the OECS to establish virtual learning and cooperative communities through making use of the OECS Intranet. In the first instance, particular encouragement and priority should be given to associations, organisations and administrative units that currently operate functional face-to-face networks across the sub-region to add a virtual capacity to their operations. At the school level, students and teachers should be encouraged and given special recognition for establishing virtual communities with colleagues and peers in other countries within the OECS and the wider Caribbean.

**Strategy 19:** Establish an evaluative mechanism to ensure that by 2010:

- a) All students receiving nine years of schooling – six years of primary and three years of secondary – are computer literate and can use ICT as it is applied to everyday activities in homes, schools, entertainment and communications.
- b) All students entering tertiary institutions are proficient users of ICT at the time of entry to those institutions.
- c) All students entering the world of work after completing secondary schooling are proficient users of ICT.
- d) Each school system within the sub-region is producing students who have special aptitudes and talents in ICT and who have begun to specialise in this area, sufficient to meet the demands for the ICT industry in that country.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### **Objectives**

The major objectives of the strategies outlined for early childhood education are as follows:

- To provide appropriate training and education for all parents and caregivers of infants from birth to five years old.
- To provide appropriate education for all children between the ages of 3 to 5 years.
- To strengthen the partnership between the private sector, non-governmental organisations and the public sector in providing education at this level on a more equitable basis.
- To improve the quality of early childhood education, especially in pre-schools that cater to children from poor circumstances.

## **General Philosophy**

Early childhood education is conceived as education to foster and nurture the cognitive, social, emotional, moral and physical development of young children. It is education to assist in their developmental levels as well as to promote their readiness to enter the formal school system. The provision of early childhood education must be particularly sensitive to socio-economic inequities since some types of early intervention and stimulation could arrest and probably reverse conditions with far reaching adverse effects. Because of this strong preventative aspect, early childhood education can be the most effective component of social compensatory programmes.

Early childhood education also provides the first point of interaction between the child, the home and the school. It is this area that mental stimulation of the child as a member of the wider community begins. Early childhood education must, therefore, begin the process of developing children in the OECS as Caribbean persons through their awareness of their identity with their community and country and the wider Caribbean.

The focus of early childhood education must be on readiness and the exploration of the physical and social environment through play and a wide variety of concrete experiences associated with language and number development. Health and nutrition are also vital elements.

While there is a strong custodial element related to the intense demand for the provision of pre-schools, new research on the development of the brain clearly indicate that exposure of young children to a rich environment is critical to their cognitive growth. In addition, exposure to a safe, secure and caring environment is vital to the subsequent emotional health of children. Both the content and the methodology of delivery of education at this level are of critical importance.

## **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 20:** Ensure that all children between the ages of 3 to 5 years are enrolled in preschools. The target of one hundred per cent enrolment of this age cohort should be achieved by 2010.

**Strategy 21:** Continue to promote and facilitate private initiative and philanthropic contributions as a major source of the establishment and operations of pre-schools.

The majority of existing preschools are owned and operated by individuals, churches, community groups and non-governmental organisations. This strategy does not envisage Government take-over of this sector. Rather, Governments should continue to encourage these groups to establish and operate preschools.

Governments, however, should create pre-schools in circumstances in which needy children are at risk of missing out on early childhood education because of the inability of parents to pay the modest fees charged by privately owned and operated preschools. Governments should look at the feasibility of entering into partnership with private sector sources in such circumstances.

**Strategy 22:** Alter Government policy to allow pre-school departments to be established in primary or all age schools where schools have the physical capacity to accommodate such departments and where there is demand for early childhood education in the community that is not met by the existing preschools in those communities.

In circumstances of declining birth rates and declining live births in several countries, primary and all age schools in some communities may have the necessary physical facilities and teaching staff to allow pre-school departments to be established to enrol children between the ages of 3 to 5 years. In these circumstances, preschool enrolment of children could be expanded without any addition physical facilities or recurrent expenses. What would be necessary is the provision of in-service training of teachers to deliver appropriate education to these younger students.

**Strategy 23:** Enact appropriate legislation and regulations in the relevant sections of the OECS Model Education Act to require the registration of all preschools with the Ministries of Education and to establish safety standards for the physical plant and criteria for the operation of preschools.

**Strategy 24:** Actively promote and strengthen parent involvement in early childhood education and development by:

- a) Mounting a systematic programme of parenting education supported by appropriate materials and recognition of participation and achievement.
- b) Establishing a system by which parents, unable to afford the payment of fees, could contribute services in the operation of preschools in lieu of paying fees. The services needed by preschools would need to be clearly specified, quantified and costed in relation to fees charged.
- c) Encouraging parents and members of the general public wishing to give voluntary community service to identify early childhood education as a priority area in which to give such service.

**Strategy 25:** Increase and expand Government support for early childhood education by:

- a) Mounting a systematic programme of training for caregivers in the early childhood sector, from birth to five years, supported by appropriate training materials.
- b) Including early childhood education as a programme of teacher preparation as is the case with the training of primary and secondary teachers. Given the number of students and staff required to establish a viable programme of training in teacher training colleges, it may be that only some training colleges might need to establish such a programme but admission would be on a sub-regional and not a national basis.
- c) Governmental offering of full or partial salary subsidies to all or some teachers working in private pre-schools that meet criteria established by the Ministries of Education for such assistance.
- d) Articulating early childhood education with primary education to facilitate the smooth transition of students between preschools and primary schools. A standardised Grade One Readiness Inventory should be developed to facilitate the transition between kindergarten classes to Grade 1.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING PRIMARY EDUCATION**

### **Objectives:**

- To maintain universal primary education in the sub-region.
- To improve the quality of primary education in the sub-region.
- To transform the prevailing practices of primary schooling from emphasis on student passivity to an emphasis on active student engagement in his or her learning, integration across subject disciplines, independent learning and multilevel teaching.
- To provide adequately for the special needs of students who require such.

Since countries of the OECS have developed self-sustaining systems of primary education that are reasonably efficient in terms of attendance, repetition of grades, drop- out and completion rates within the prescribed duration of primary schooling, the objectives address maintaining universal primary schooling, transforming the learning process and improving quality to make primary education more responsive to the needs of students requiring remediation and special education. The emphasis of the strategies is to concentrate on capital and developmental inputs that would have optimal impact on raising the quality of primary education while adding only minimally to recurrent costs.

### **General Philosophy**

Primary education should be designed to meet the basic learning needs of students. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.

Every child should have access to primary education and should master the basic functional standards set for this level of education.

### **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 26:** Accelerate and complete the modernisation of the primary school plant.

Modernisation of the primary school plant requires the provision of a library, resource rooms for individual and small group instruction, improved sanitary facilities for teachers and students, staff rooms, individual classrooms with adequate storage space, catering for students with disabilities, the provision of playfields and adequate security. Modernisation also entails the installation of effective communication media within schools and assisting schools to obtain photocopying and duplicating machines, audio and video cassette players and computers.

**Strategy 27:** Improve the quality of primary education by:

- a) Expanding the primary teacher training programmes in colleges so that the supply of teachers to the primary schools can sustain the primary teaching force to a level where at least ninety per cent of primary school teachers will be professionally trained.
- b) Extending the duration of teacher training programme to three years accompanied by an upgrading of the status of the professional credential that is awarded to graduates of the new programme.
- c) Upgrading the competence of teacher educators in the use of up-to-date educational technology and ICT applications and in the use of adult education methods in the instructional programmes of the colleges.
- d) Establishing teacher resource centres in association with teacher education institutions. These centres could be established on a district basis and should have facilities that would permit the design and production of materials and the holding of workshops and seminars. Through these centres, teachers, as part of their regular professional practice, would tackle common problems and issues; design, develop and produce appropriate teaching and learning materials and instruct each other in their application and use.
- e) Instituting a systematic training programme for primary school principals. In the past, primary school principals conceived their roles traditionally as head-teachers and did not receive further professional preparation. Currently, primary school principals must function as instructional leaders and managers so that they can inspire and guide staff.
- f) Encouraging schools and teachers to experiment with a wide variety of instructional strategies. Many teachers are using a variety of instructional practices in an ad hoc and unstructured manner. These include involving individual and small group instruction, peer tutoring, homework, cooperative and mastery learning and attempts to match instructional strategies with learning styles. What is needed is institutionalised support to these initiatives and a sustained use of these strategies in order to establish validity.
- g) Adopting functional standards that primary schooling should achieve. What is recommended is the development of functional standards that primary education should achieve and measures that will assess the readiness of children to embark on the courses of instruction, assess the progress, diagnose problems during the instructional process and evaluate their achievement at the end of primary schooling. It is recommended that these functional standards should be developed for the sub-region and that responsibility to develop and administer the tests and measures to assess these standards could be contracted to CXC. Following its usual practice, CXC would be required to involve teachers at each stage of the assessment.
- h) Establishing a system of records. The purpose of the records would be to store necessary information related to student performance and to keep track of the progress of each child through the primary school system. These records would provide the basis for regular reports to the parents of each child.
- i) Commissioning research studies on such topics as student achievement, streaming practices and other issues that relate to improving the learning outcomes.

**Strategy 28:** Accelerate the democratisation of the management of primary schools.

To achieve democratisation of the management of schools, boards should be established either for each primary school or on a district basis. Such boards should be made up of representatives nominated by parents, teachers, church leaders, past students and community members. The School Board, which would be linked to the National Education Advisory Council, would be responsible to the Ministry for the day-to-day management of the school and work be mandated to foster closer linkage between the school and the homes and community it serves.

**Strategy 29:** Establish support services in respect of children with special needs.

These support services would include screening and testing for disabilities, providing special education units in some primary schools and periodic surveys to determine the incidence of various disabilities in the child population. In addition, they would provide for the instructional needs of special children and for the social welfare of children in need.

**Strategy 30:** Accelerate and expand the integration of the creative and fine arts into the teaching/learning process.

To stimulate creative imagination, students should be encouraged to explore concepts, ideas and social solutions through the medium of creative and fine arts. While efforts had been made to use creative and fine arts to teach the core subjects, these efforts need to be accelerated, expanded and made more systematic. The Caribbean and the OECS sub-region have rich sources of creative experiences and expressions that the school needs to tap in the education of Caribbean children. Art, music, dance and drama have much to contribute to the learning of English, mathematics, and science, not to forget social studies. The pedagogical practices and curricula of primary schools must be systematically restructured to accommodate this integration.

**Strategy 31:** Review the policies for promotion from one grade to the next within the primary school and the mechanism for transfer of students from the primary to the secondary level in the sub-region.

Promoting policies in the sub-region range from strict social promotion based on age to promotion based strictly on achievement or merit. Transfer mechanisms range from automatic transfer of all students from primary to secondary school to transfer of a minority of students based on performance in the Common Entrance Examinations. It is necessary to review these policies and mechanisms in order to establish their objectives and effectiveness on the way to implementing common policies and practices within the sub-region.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **Objectives:**

- To expand the provision of secondary education in the sub-region.
- To reconceptualise and change the nature, form and content of secondary education.
- To improve the quality of secondary education.

### **General Philosophy**

Secondary education and schooling have a multifaceted character:

- a) It is education for persons at a particular stage of human development – adolescence. As such, it must cater to the personal developmental needs of adolescents.
- b) It is education of a standard above that of the primary level. That is, it assumes some mastery of basic functional standards in several areas as preconditions for successful learning at this level.
- c) It is really intermediary education. That is, it can no longer be considered terminal education for those who receive it. Secondary education should be followed by tertiary education in specialized fields or skills training for specific jobs in the labour force. As such, secondary school leavers must either be fitted for further education in a particular field or to be trained in some specific skill area in the world of work. Accordingly, secondary education must be of a general nature in a wide range of fields while facilitating the initial stages of specialization based on individual aptitude, achievement, interests and aspiration.
- d) It is schooling that can enhance and foster social cohesion and solidarity on the one hand or deep social cleavages on the other, depending upon how it is structured. Secondary schooling is an instrument of fashioning the social order.

Taking into account this multi-faced character of education beyond the primary level but before tertiary education and the world of work, the approach adopted here is that education beyond the age of 11 or 12 years should be related to the developmental status of children. The assumption is that in each chronological age cohort, there will be children at different developmental stages. These stages can be broadly defined as:

1. Precocious or gifted in several areas, that is, developmentally advanced relative to their peers.
2. Normal, that is, children whose capabilities are considered standard for that stage.
3. Slow learners, or children who are developmentally lagged. These children will achieve the same levels as the so-called normal children but who can and will take a longer period, time, and require sympathetic and supportive treatment from teachers and parents.
4. Children who are developmentally challenged, disabled in one or more areas so that they will not be able to do all that so-called normal children do, even with supportive and sympathetic treatment by parents and teachers.

There are three important qualifications to these assumptions.

- a) Categories overlap, they are not neat and mutually exclusive.
- b) All human beings are possessed of multiple intelligences and they overlap with all categories.
- c) Empirical studies and surveys are needed to give approximations of the incidence of developmentally disabled students in any age cohort. For example, the occurrence of severe malnutrition or rubella could significantly alter the incidence of various developmental disabilities in a specific cohort of children in a particular community or country.

## **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 32:** Restructure the school system along the following lines:

- Provide or maintain the provision of universal education for all children up to the age of 16 years.
- Provide secondary education for all children whose developmental status and level of educational attainment permit their acquisition of this level of education.
- Provide special education opportunities for all developmentally challenged students up to the age of 16 years.
- The time of transfer of students from primary to secondary education should be conditional upon their satisfying functional standards of literacy and numeracy and the achievement of minimum standards of achievement in science and social studies.
- Students meeting these functional standards should receive certification of their achievement in the form of a primary school certificate
- The age of transfer from the primary to the secondary education programme should be allowed to vary from 10 to 15 years.
- All students transferred to secondary education should be guaranteed five years of secondary schooling from the time of their transfer.
- Establish a common sub-regional policy for granting school leaving certificates where students have met common criteria related to conduct and behaviour, character and deportment, school citizenship and performance as measured by continuous assessment. CXC should be approached to work with the sub-region to rationalise its SBA requirements with the continuous assessment of schools.

**Strategy 33:** Re-conceptualise the nature, form and content of secondary education as follows:

- a) Continue to reinforce general education that emphasises and promotes
  - i) Problem solving
  - ii) Creativity and imagination
  - iii) Independent judgement
  - iv) Generic technical skills
  - v) Interpersonal skills
  - vi) Self understanding



- b) Establish a common curriculum in the first three years. Subjects of the common curriculum would be English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Integrated Technology, Social Studies, Foreign Languages, Physical Education, Religious and Moral Education and the Creative and Performing Arts. The latter refers to Art, Drama, Dance, Music and Physical Education. Integrated Technology, which is a new subject, should include content previously provided by Home Economics, Industrial Arts and Computer Science. Design should provide the unifying foci for integration.
- c) CXC should be commissioned to carry out an exercise to establish the prerequisites that should be taught in the first three years if students are to meet the General Proficiency standards in the various subjects. The prerequisites identified by CXC should be incorporated into the common curriculum of the first three years.
- d) Allow some degree of specialisation in the last two years. While specialisation would be allowed in the sense that students will be limited in the number of subjects they could take and would be permitted to choose the subjects that make up their programme, all students should be required to take English Language, Mathematics, a foreign language, a Science and a Technology subject as the core of their programme of study. In selecting optional subjects, students should be guided and take into account personal interests as well as national and sub-regional priorities.
- e) Enable all students to pursue subjects in which they are interested and have talent. While it is not practical for each secondary school to offer the entire range of subjects taught at the secondary level, the complement of secondary schools in a country should offer the entire range. The Ministries of Education should implement measures to ensure this outcome. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to subjects in the areas of Creative and Performing Arts, Technical and Vocational and Information and Communications areas. Currently, the provisions of these areas are very limited or non-existent.
- f) Where either the size or the resources of a country, or both, does not permit secondary schools offering the full range of secondary subjects, Ministries of Education should make arrangements with other countries within the sub-region to accommodate students wishing to pursue particular specialisations.

**Strategy 34:** Encourage innovation in schools in respect of the following:

- a) Continuing to reinforce setting and other forms of grouping for instruction.
- b) Modular programmes.
- c) Flexible programming across year groups.
- d) Internal assessment and promotion strategies.

**Strategy 35:** Improve the quality of secondary education by:

- Establishing a formal programme of training for secondary school principals.
- Establishing a comprehensive programme of training for secondary school teachers in the sub-region.
- Lengthening the school year to at least 190 days and the school day to include at least five and a half hours of classroom instruction in cases where these minima do not currently obtain.

- Strengthening foreign language teaching through cooperation with neighbouring non-English speaking Caribbean and Latin American countries.
- Encouraging and supporting schools and teachers in the use of creative and performing arts and information and communication technology in the teaching of the other subjects of the secondary curriculum

**Strategy 36:** Strengthen and enhance the delivery of support services in:

- a) Guidance and counselling.
- b) Social welfare
- c) Libraries and learning resources that should integrate the use of information and communications technology in their operations.

**Strategy 37:** Strengthen and expand the articulation of secondary schooling with:

- i) The upper grades of the primary school.
- ii) Tertiary programmes.
- iii) Continuing education.
- iv) Regional, sub-regional and national TVET programmes.

**Strategy 38:** Promote vacation programmes especially in the summer:

- a) Enrichment programmes in vacation periods, particularly summer.
- b) Summer programmes to assist students in meeting functional standards.
- c) Sub-regional exchanges of students and teachers with appropriate guidelines governing their execution.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING TERTIARY, ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **Objectives**

1. To transform tertiary education into the engine of human resource development and knowledge generation in the sub-region.
2. To facilitate the consolidation of technology transfer in the sub-region.
3. To provide educational programmes for all persons who missed or were not afforded the opportunity to complete formal primary or secondary education.
4. To provide the opportunity for educational renewal and advancement for all citizens with the relevant educational background to continue their education throughout life.

## **General Philosophy**

Tertiary and adult education in the OECS context is quite distinct from primary and secondary education. First, it is geared to older adolescents and adults. Second, it embraces a wide array of sectoral and individual interests, for example, teacher and nursing education, technical and vocational education, traditional university-type education as well as the education of adults wishing to learn to read or to learn about some new disease or pursue some other area of interest. Third, it is both the highest rung of the ladder of educational achievement and a point at which individuals can make up for past lack of attainment at the lower levels.

Given the variegated character of tertiary, continuing and adult education it embraces a wide diversity of outcomes:

- i) Specialization within the context of vocational interests.
- ii) Integration of education with specific skills training and consequently their articulation with the world of work.
- iii) Lifelong education and training of OECS citizenry. As technologies change, society is transformed and other related developments occur that require education and training responses.
- iv) Additional chances for individuals who did not capitalise on earlier education and training opportunities.

Institutional autonomy and self-direction of the participants are essential components and must be supported by an adequate legal framework and an appropriate system of accountability.

Tertiary education is underdeveloped within the OECS. Any new thrust must be mandated to provide for a higher percentage of the population thereby decreasing the tendency of OECS nationals to migrate in search of tertiary education. This means expanding tertiary education opportunities within the OECS. At the same time, the under-representation of females in Science and Technology and the deprivation of rural residents require attention.

There should be a partnership involving all the beneficiaries in order to ensure that the best relevant quality education is delivered. Only a national effort that maximizes government, private sector, personal and external support can provide the needed expansion and improvements.

The integration of single-discipline colleges into larger multi-disciplinary institutions is seen as a feasible measure to ensure the better utilization of manpower and scarce and expensive resources.

Regional cooperation is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of tertiary education since no single country can be self-sufficient in meeting its manpower training needs or in enabling its citizens to achieve their maximum potential.

## **Reform Strategies**

The reform strategies proposed for tertiary education are expected to strengthen the OECS tertiary institutions and enhance their capability to deliver quality education in keeping with the general philosophy enunciated above.

**Strategy 39:** Continue the amalgamation and integration of small single-discipline colleges into larger multi-disciplinary institutions.

Apart from the possibility of cross lecturing to maximally utilize the expertise, this approach creates a situation whereby students can exploit the course offerings at different branches of the institutions. In turn, this situation fosters a spirit of cooperativeness as well as greater interaction between students of different disciplines.

**Strategy 40:** Expand tertiary education by increasing existing institutional capacity, establishing new facilities and programmes where necessary and articulating OECS institutions with external colleges and universities where appropriate.

In the absence of expansion, the OECS will continue to lose students who seek tertiary education overseas. Also lost will be the money used for their primary and secondary education. New facilities and programmes are consistent with the need to keep abreast of the technological and information explosion and economic development.

Tertiary level opportunities should be provided not only for secondary level graduates, but also for individuals already absorbed into the work force and the unemployed. As such, courses should be provided for "white collar" and "blue collar" workers as well as courses in creative movement, singing and voice production and music to all talented individuals to exploit opportunities in the entertainment industry.

Finally, in the same way that increased access to secondary education has lifted the standard of primary education, expansion of the tertiary sector can impart a "pull" on achievement at the secondary level.

**Strategy 41:** Re-think and reorganise Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) to produce a standardized system that functions in a partnership with the private sector and is intimately integrated into the world of work and further study. Different aspects of engineering must be taught to technicians and vocational training with "hands on" emphasis provided. In addition, computer skills training will be essential not only to allow technical and vocational students to access Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) and computerised simulation software but also because the computer has become such an integral part of all business organizations.

Technical and vocational education is expensive. Facilities and equipment are costly as is their maintenance. To justify costs, TVET should be channelled to students with an adequate general education and the courses must be related to future employment opportunities as well as further study. Costs may be reduced by the provision of centres of specialization as well as through distance education using varied methodologies. Job placements and apprenticeship systems will allow students to make the transition from the tertiary institution to the real world while receiving "hands on" experience at the same time.

**Strategy 42:** Improve and enhance existing programs of training of teachers of adults.

Teachers of adults, whether in formal or non-formal sectors, are usually recruited from primary and secondary school teachers and are not usually provided with any additional professional or academic preparation. They require and need, however, special preparation and training to be effective in teaching adults within literacy programmes, continuing education classes or in certificate, diploma or degree programmes.

While a good start was made under *Foundation for the Future*, these programmes of training need to be improved and expanded. Future growth and development in tertiary, continuing and adult education require measures to improve the competence of the teachers at this level. Further and future development of colleges within the OECS should provide expanded and enhanced opportunities for staff development to teacher educators, nursing tutors and all the specialist staff involved in the various areas of TVET. Likewise, more training opportunities should be provided for teachers in continuing and adult education programmes.

Given the nature of the tasks involved, programmes to upgrade teachers at this level would need to be mounted in conjunction with the UWI and other universities. Much of the training would need to be provided using in-service modalities.

**Strategy 43:** Mandate tertiary institutions to establish more intensive and extensive working relationships with the sectors, occupations and individuals they serve. Establish arrangements to ensure occupational standards are included in the curriculum. Establish links with NGO's and Private Sector that will promote learning in particular disciplines or areas of study. Open opportunities for new career areas.

This strategy proposes that all aspects of tertiary education, not only technical and vocational education, need to get involved in partnerships with the private and non-governmental sectors.

**Strategy 44:** Implement and make operation the appropriate sections of the OECS Model Education Act.

Prior to the drafting of the OECS Model Education Act, no education ordinance actually addressed tertiary education. Although the Education Acts of Antigua, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia and to a lesser extent Grenada, made reference to post-secondary education, there is no provision that made specific reference to tertiary education.

Where the necessary legislation is not put into place, the tertiary institutions will continue to be administered in a similar manner to that of secondary schools. While the lack of a legal framework might not always be a disadvantage since it gives the institution added flexibility as it evolves, without the legal basis there is uncertainty, lack of commitment and endless scope for mediocrity.

**Strategy 45:** Re-structure the governance of tertiary institutions to allow greater autonomy, wider national representation and greater accountability.

When the legal framework is being enacted and implemented, the above reform strategy can be adequately addressed. Greater autonomy allows the organization the flexibility to realize its full

potential especially if there is total involvement in the decision making process by all the players, coupled with a system of accountability.

**Strategy 46:** Rationalize existing programmes in terms of their relevance, costs, demand and maximal utilization of available quality teachers.

Courses offered at tertiary institutions must be relevant not only to projected economic development but also to the needs of individuals. This flexibility will allow part-time students to access as many courses as do full-time students, albeit over a longer period of time. It is clear that many students will need to combine work with study.

Apart from the partnership with the private sector which is absolutely necessary to defray costs, students should be charged fees in proportion to the rewards they will receive at the end of their courses when they access better job opportunities.

Course offerings, however, must be realistic. For example, it is recommended that university programmes set up in response to demand be abandoned if only two or three students take the courses. In fact, strict programming to advanced levels and UWI first-year and second-year courses ought to be weighed against gearing students to complete associate degree programmes. Having completed these associate degrees, students might then progress to the UWI or other universities.

With the associate degree structure, tertiary institutions might then be better able to offer programmes for mid-level professionals. For example, paramedics, paralegals and mid-level accountants, engineers, architects, as well as public health inspectors, customs officials and the whole spectrum of middle managers can be accommodated at OECS tertiary institutions.

**Strategy 47:** Encourage private and public sector initiatives in providing continuing education for adults.

Appropriate steps need to be taken to ensure the following:

- Strengthen efforts to eradicate illiteracy and to sustain functional levels of literacy in the sub-region.
- Provide, through evening classes, study groups, open learning opportunities and distance education learning opportunities for out-of-school youths and adults to pursue general education, vocational skills, life skills and social and civic responsibilities.
- Promote linkages between adult and continuing education on one hand and the formal school system on the other hand, through the establishment of common standards of achievement, methods of assessment and forms of certification that are accessible through both formal and non-formal education.
- Allow for easy transfer of learners within and between formal and non-formal systems, both vertically and horizontally.
- Establish appropriate regulations, guidelines and structures for the organization and coordination of adult and continuing education programmes.

The point has already been made about costs and the need for partnership between the private and public sectors. Inherent in the strategy above is the need for part-time teachers from the private sector to assist with the training and re-training needs of both the public and private sector.

**Strategy 48:** Articulate programmes at tertiary institutions with those at the UWI and other universities within the Caribbean region.

This would ensure that the course designs, their scope, duration, focus and mode would be in keeping with acceptable university standards and facilitate accreditations when students opted to pursue further studies beyond the scope of the tertiary institution. Validation or accreditation of certification would need to be worked out with the universities with which articulation arrangements are established.

Over the next 10 years, the UWI should increasingly divest Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor Degree programmes to tertiary institutions in the various territories it serves. The UWI should increasingly focus on graduate programmes. In other words, the various Faculties of the UWI would increasingly become Graduate Schools fed by graduates from the various national colleges affiliated with the regional universities.

**Strategy 49:** Upgrade the modes of delivery of tertiary education in keeping with current worldwide trends.

Delivery should move away from the course centred approach to the student-centred approach. The use of modules, computer assisted instruction, on-line learning and media of all types ought to be included in the delivery of instruction at the tertiary level. Additionally, linkages with other institutions using electronic media ought to be established.

**Strategy 50:** Ensure equity in the access of students from poor homes, girls and rural residents to tertiary education.

Scholarships, flexible course offerings at secondary level as well as distance education, among other methods will facilitate the implementation of the above strategy.

**Strategy 51:** Provide incentives for the private sector to establish and operate hostel accommodations for out-of-island students. While boarding accommodation is an expensive proposition, it is not possible to implement the concept of centres of specialization without making provisions for students from other countries. Every effort should be made to learn from innovative Caribbean experiences in providing hostel accommodations for students. It should also be noted that these facilities have an income generating potential in student vacation periods when the facilities can be used to accommodate groups other than students.

**Strategy 52:** Create an OECS College Council under the aegis of the OECS Secretariat.

The establishment of the Council would be in support of the proposals for the reform of tertiary education within the sub-region. The objectives and activities of the Council would be:

1. To promote the most effective and efficient use of available resources in providing access to and mobility within the collegiate system.
2. To review and monitor matters pertaining to standards, certification, equivalence, accreditation and articulation of college programmes and accreditation of institutions.
3. To promote active involvement with the private sector in developing both conventional and innovative programmes and services.
4. To encourage co-operation, research and collaboration between colleges in matters pertaining to academic, research administrative and professional development and student welfare.
5. To seek and establish methods of funding the activities and business of the Council.
6. To empower a Select Committee to represent the Council at ACTI or other regional or extra-regional meetings of Tertiary Level Institutions.
7. To act as arbitrator/ombudsman, if invited to do so, in general academic & administrative matters affecting any of the colleges.
8. To deliberate and take action on any matters pertaining to the business of the Council.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF TEACHERS**

### **Objectives**

To improve the quality of education by upgrading the status of the teaching profession through improving the terms and conditions of service of teachers.

### **General Philosophy**

The society depends upon teachers to mould personalities of children and youths so that they can contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and economic progress of the community. Teachers are not only the key element in the provision of good quality education and critical to the success of any strategy for human resource development, but they are the chief standard bearers of the efficacy of the educative process. Who the teacher is and how the teacher is perceived in society are as important as what the teacher does. How the teacher and the teaching profession are perceived is critical to the success of the educational enterprise. Recruiting and retaining good teachers who are appropriately educated and trained is vital to the provision of good quality education and for the development of human resources in the sub-region.



The task of recruiting and retaining good teachers is complicated by several factors. At present, morale in the teaching profession is relatively low. The public perception is that the teaching profession has lost status. Low salaries and poor working conditions in many schools contribute to this perception. In addition, as a result of the higher levels of general education in the population as a consequence of the vast expansion of educational opportunity in the last fifty years, teachers no longer command respect by virtue of superior education nor are they automatically elected or appointed to leadership positions. Advancement in the education of teachers has not kept pace with the advancement of education in the general population. Standard teacher qualifications are still predicated on Certificates and Diplomas in circumstances in which an increasing proportion of the population hold degrees. Affirmative action is required to promote teaching as a career.

### **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 53:** Improve salaries through a periodic review of remuneration and reclassification exercises.

The essence of the strategy recommended here is to substantially improve the salaries of professionally trained teachers. The practice of increasing salaries at the same rate across the board encourages unqualified teachers because it provides no incentives for professional upgrading. The following elements are critical to the implementation of this strategy:

- Recognize all Teachers' Unions as bargaining agents of the profession.
- Examine with a view to ratify all ILO Conventions specific to the teaching profession.
- Reclassify teachers' posts taking account of experience, extra training, performance and responsibility.
- Address and improve pension schemes for teachers.

**Strategy 54:** Improve benefits for teachers

An accompanying and complementary measure to improving salaries is to provide benefits to teachers in areas that are of great importance and concern among teachers. It is recommended that governments should:

- Create or support loan schemes at concessionary rates of interest to provide teachers with home mortgages and car loans.
- Establish or contribute to health insurance schemes for teachers in which teachers also make contributions.
- Include preferential clauses in general policies in favor of teachers.

**Strategy 55:** Improve working conditions by:

- Adopting a system of best practices across the sub-region with respect to such matters as physical accommodation of principals and teachers in schools.
- Setting minimum standards with respect to the provision of basic teaching materials, the provision of janitorial staff, the provision of secretarial/clerical staff and the provision of necessary school equipment.

**Strategy 56:** Expand and upgrade the training of teachers.

- Expand teacher training to achieve ninety per cent trained teachers in primary school by 2003 and in secondary schools by 2005.
- Diversify the modalities by which teacher education is delivered and assess their effectiveness.
- Identify areas of specialization critical to the sub-region to determine where centers should be established based on agreed criteria.
- Upgrade teacher education such that by 2010, fifty per cent of teachers in primary schools and seventy-five per cent in secondary schools hold degrees related to their teaching responsibilities.

**Strategy 57:** Enhance status of the teaching profession by:

- Encouraging and supporting teachers' unions in the sub-region to convene a Working Group to draft a harmonized Code of Ethics from among existing codes.
- Encouraging teachers' unions in the sub-region to formally adopt the Common Code of Ethics drafted by the Working Group and to use it both to inspire and discipline their members.

**Strategy 58:** Establish a career path for teachers by:

- Continuing to introduce paid ranks – such as Senior Teachers, Heads of Departments, Grade Supervisors and Vice Principals – between the current starting grades of qualified teachers and principals.
- Providing senior posts at a ratio of at least one third of the professionally qualified staff in each school.
- Establishing a mechanism to determine the duties and responsibilities of such senior staff within schools.

**Strategy 59:** Redesign recruitment and appointment protocols in dual management systems.

Where there are areas of concern between church, Ministries of Education and teachers' union, the issues should be addressed, rationalized and harmonized with solutions found in the keeping with human rights and natural justice and through a process of consultation between the parties concerned.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

### **Objective**

To continue the process of restructuring and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and administration of the educational systems within the sub-region at both the national and institutional levels.

### **General Philosophy**

The management and administration of education within free open and democratic societies both reflect and advance the precepts and ideals of freedom and democracy. Accordingly, the management and administration of education should be characterized by:

- Broad representation and participation in the decision making bodies and processes.
- Constant dialogue, communication and consultation between all the stakeholders.
- Periodic negotiation and renegotiation of goals, missions and methodologies.
- Access to public information and the right to know.
- Provision for the nurturing of leadership potential and a climate for the personal growth of individuals.
- Public accountability through reports and audits at regular intervals.

### **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 60:** Promote wider participation in the management of education.

The management and administrative structure of the educational system must be redesigned to allow for greater participation in goal setting, policy making, implementation and evaluation.

Given the tendency in the modern world for people to prefer democratic, collaborative and participative management approaches and as more and more persons within and outside the various ministries of education become better trained and qualified, strategies that tend to restrict participation will be counter-productive. Moreover, as the various education systems expand and presumably come to depend more and more on resources outside of the regular system the pressure for wider participation will become greater.

In this regard, the following strategies are recommended:

- Appoint and train National Advisory Councils of Education with well-defined roles and membership coming from a wide cross-section of the society. The actual roles, composition of, terms of office of members of these councils should be specified in legislation. Provide information on regional education matters to the Council on a systematic basis.

- Establish and train School Boards with extended powers (e.g., in the areas of staff selection, financial management, discipline of staff and students). These School Boards may vary from individual to District boards.
- Establish and train student councils at all secondary and tertiary institutions. Ministries of Education in consultation with the schools will determine guidelines that specify the issues on which these councils should be consulted.
- Re-design the procedures and practices used in the supervision of schools to include greater involvement and participation of principals and teachers. Effective supervision requires close contact between supervisors and schools. Such contact might best be achieved if there is fast, easy communication growth of individuals between the parties concerned. Supervision must not, however, be regarded as an entirely external function. Individual schools or groups of schools must be sufficiently empowered to function as integrated teams, setting their own goals and objectives and putting in place mechanisms for monitoring their progress on an on-going basis. The job of the principals must therefore be defined as managers with commensurate authority to function in their role. The interdependence of administration, supervisors, teachers, students and the community that the school serves must, however, be understood and appreciated. Share and support best practices on supervision by establishing a school supervision and management network across the region.
- Review the dual system of education management. Some territories have continued to operate the historic dual system of management of the education system in which Church and State are the principal partners. The inclusion of parent/ teachers associations, past students, communities, private sector and other groups in the decision making system and management functions of the decision making system and management functions of the education system would require some review of the dual system of management and appropriate changes and adjustments would have to be made.

**Strategy 61:** Provide adequate and appropriate training in management and administration for Ministry and school managers.

In an information age, managers and administrators need to understand that people will become more committed to goals when they feel a sense of ownership in what is going on. Administrators must therefore learn how to lead while allowing individuals to participate fully in the decision making process. It is therefore necessary to:

Develop and implement guidelines on management and administration for Ministry and school managers or administrators to include:

- Training prior to appointment,
- In-service training
- Mandatory upgrading,
- Appraisal and assessment
- Incentives

In essence, the professional personnel working in the school system in both the Ministry and the institutions should be generally aware of the overall goals and operations of the system and their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of education. It is also felt that in general, the training that most OECS managers and administrators receive is theoretical, academic, too specialized and outside of their operational experience. It is often the case that the training is based on resources that are either not available locally or not appropriate to the local context. Moreover, it is generally the case that small island managers and administrators are required to perform multiple roles and duties. Managers must be trained to perform the tasks that will confront them in their everyday duties. Accordingly, management training for education staff should incorporate:

- Appropriate participative/consultative management approaches .
- A redefinition of roles in keeping with these perspectives.
- Strategies to make maximum use of community resources, human and non-human.

**Strategy 62:** Promote effective networking and exchange of education development specialists in the sub-region.

The smallness of OECS territories makes it almost impossible for them to provide all the development specialists required to support the education system in each country. The sub-region constitutes a more economic and affordable basis on which to provide such specialist support. All territories, to a greater or less extent, currently possess some specialists. However, the existing specialist capacity in all territories manifests major gaps. That is, there is no territory that currently has development specialists covering all of the following areas: planning, curriculum development, measurement and evaluation, special education, education media and production, guidance and counselling, adult education and project management. Yet all are needed to support the dynamic functioning of the education system.

While the principle of pooling is readily acceptable, the exact ways for organizing the pool are not so self-evident or universally acceptable. The essence of the proposal here is that the principle of pooling education specialists in the sub-region be accepted but further study and discussions should be held concerning the exact way in which this could be done. The following proposals are offered as guides to further discussion of the matter. The proposals represent the two ends of a continuum of ways in which the pooling of education development specialists could be organized:

- a) Re-organizing the existing territorial specialists into a sub-region network mandated to deliver specialist support to the education systems in the sub-region. The sub-regional education specialist network would require the following:
  - Co-ordination in its composition and operations.
  - Re-writing of the job descriptions and the responsibilities of the specialists.
  - Linkages with Ministries of Education such that some services could be "on line" through modern communication devices.
  - A mechanism of requesting services, assessing benefits and allocating costs related to the contributions made by each territory in providing specialists and the specialist services received by that territory.

- b) Creating central units of development specialists in planning, curriculum development, measurement and evaluation, media and production, adult education, special education and project management. These central units could be located in different territories or in a single territory depending on what would be considered most desirable and effective. The establishment of central development specialist units would require:
- Formal long-term agreements between the territories.
  - A mechanism for territories to access the services.
  - A system of relating costs borne by each territory relative to the benefits received.

**Strategy 63:** Establish or maintain independent bodies to award scholarships. Strengthen the representation of stakeholder interest on committees where they exist and establish committees where absent.

Attention is drawn to the highly personalized environment of small states leading to the problem of excessive political influence on personnel selection and training. Also associated with the issue of training is the fact that in some territories selection for training awards is done by another Ministry, for example, the Ministry of Planning. It is recommended therefore that:

- A broad based selection committee for scholarship awards be set up in the Ministry responsible for education. Such a committee would then set up appropriate strategies to ensure fairness in the allocation of awards.
- A negotiated number of scholarships or fellowships be assigned to the Ministry responsible for education and that these be disbursed in keeping with its planned goals.

**Strategy 64:** Devolve responsibility for research into human resource development to OECS Secretariat.

Generally, experimentation in education and human resource development has been scanty – probably because the role of timely and appropriate data in education policy making has been underestimated. It is recommended therefore that the OECS Secretariat should be mandated to:

- Conduct policy and other decision-oriented studies.
- Conduct applied research and disseminate results.
- Develop and maintain an indigenous literature.
- Develop databases on human resources, e.g., promote the systematic collecting, processing, analysing, storing, and retrieving of data on human resource development.
- Evaluate projects.
- Promote innovative approaches to the solution of persistent problems in human resource development.

The development of this capacity would necessitate:

- An endowment – the investment of which would provide the OECS Secretariat with an independent source of core funding.
- A structure of governance that would ensure its credibility and technical competence while maintaining a development focus on the issues and problems engaging the attention of public, professionals and politicians.
- The employment of a core of competent professionals and the training of promising individuals to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience;
- A mode of operation that easily combines core staff and funding with project staff and funding.
- A constant programme of marketing the OECS Secretariat inside and outside the sub-region so that it maintains a capacity to generate some of its operating income.

**Strategy 65:** Implement continuous review of the Ministries of Education in light of emerging technologies and new developmental imperatives and challenges.

The current rigid separation of administrative/financial and professional education functions in the organization of Ministries of Education has created numerous problems in their operations and in the management of the education system. This approach to organizing the Ministries of Education should be reviewed to:

- Investigate the apparent ambiguity/duplication of roles and responsibilities.
- Examine the career paths and scope for mobility among professionals.
- Assess the feasibility of introducing results oriented management systems.

In summary, management of the system should be decentralized, participatory, designed to empower local- and school-level actors and should be based on clearly defined policies, protocols and standards. It should also emphasize service and support rather than control and command and it should be strengthened by a supervision and support network throughout the sub-region.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION**

### **Objectives**

- To increase the financial resources allocated to education from all sources.
- To maximize the efficient and effective deployment of resources.
- To promote long-term investment in programmes and projects and in the education sector generally.
- To ensure public accountability for the funds allocated or granted.

### **General Philosophy**

Financial resources constitute only one of the essential components of educational development and reform. Yet it is a key factor. Below certain levels of funding many programmes and projects are jeopardized. At the same time additional resources are not synonymous with better education. Accordingly, investment and financial support for education must take account of the following:

- Education is a long-term process, therefore funding and investment must be sustained if optimal results and returns are to be obtained.
- No single source of funding can effectively sustain and support the education enterprise. Single sources operating in isolation have proven inadequate as the basis of funding education. These include user fees, grants and endowments, government subvention, special taxes, donor assistance and local and external loans. Partnership in funding from different sources in funding education is the only feasible option.
- No child should be denied education solely on its parents' inability to pay. Human resource development considerations as well as human rights obligations dictate that every child, regardless of the socio-economic circumstances of birth, should have access to good quality education.
- Schools and colleges are, or can be made, capable and competent to manage their financial affairs.
- Education is an enterprise that can generate some of the income needed to develop itself.

## **Reform Strategies**

The reform strategies proposed for the reform of the financing of education seek to meet the objectives stated previously within the context of the general philosophy outlined.

**Strategy 66:** Redefine and restructure financial obligations.

Reference was made to the fact that in the post independence period Caribbean states have attempted to assume total responsibility for education. The public purse, especially in the period of prolonged recession, has been unable to sustain this position. Reform strategy seeks to advance a new framework for determining the financial obligations of the state, parents, private sector, communities and the nation. The essence of the approach proposed here is to advance a principled basis on which the contributions and investments of the different stakeholders in the education enterprise would be made. The framework is set out as follows:

- a) The State should assume full responsibility for tuition at the primary and secondary levels. This is the State's obligation to all its citizens irrespective of the circumstances of their birth. It is what the State provides from regular taxes collected to provide basic services. Free tuition at the primary and secondary levels should be provided within the context of a balanced budget. The State should not normally require any assistance from any source in meeting this obligation. To offer tuition, the State would be obligated to undertake the following:



- The provision and maintenance of school buildings, equipment, furniture, and playfields
- The employment of teachers in appropriate numbers – with adequate academic education and professional training – and with salaries and conditions of service to ensure effective teaching and learning.
- The provision of high quality teaching and learning materials in adequate quantities to classrooms.
- Support services, enrichment activities and programmes which would ensure and enhance learning, for example, libraries, audio-visual equipment, material, production equipment, field trips, etc.
- Management and supervision of the system at the institutional, regional and national levels.

To ensure that the State shoulders this responsibility on a continuing basis, the State should be required by law to allocate a set proportion of its annual budget to education – at least twenty per cent of its overall budget, of which at least seventy-five per cent would go to provide tuition in primary and secondary schools. These figures are derived from current sub-regional averages and are illustrative of the principles being enunciated. (Note that a study would need to be done to determine the exact proportions that are feasible and workable from several perspectives.)

- b) Parents would be expected to take responsibility for the following, as part of their obligations to their children:
- Books, even if bulk purchase and rental schemes, or some combination of both, are put in place to minimize costs, thus making books more affordable.
  - Nutrition, even if school feeding programmes are organized to keep costs low.
  - Clothing, even if uniforms are employed to reduce costs and schemes are put in place to bulk purchase the same.
  - Transportation, even if school bus services are organized to make the service effective and affordable.
  - Examination fees, where these are charged.
  - Extra tuition, where these are charged.

The point needs to be underscored that even if the State, in seeking to keep costs down, organizes such programmes or regulates contractors providing such services, the recovery of costs from parents ought to be a clear understanding of these arrangements. Parents would also have the option not to participate in the State organized scheme and could seek the service from others willing to provide it on terms acceptable to them.

- c) Poverty alleviation and provisions for needy children. It goes without saying that there will be parents who will not be able to shoulder the responsibilities outlined. In this case, those children should become beneficiaries of assistance and poverty alleviation measures from various sources including the State, communities, NGO's, private sector, international

agencies and groups that espouse humanitarian causes. There are several modalities that could be adopted to address the needs of these children from such homes. These can be listed briefly as:

- An endowment fund, the interest of which would be continually used to make provision for pupils from poor families. This fund would be open to contributions from all sources. The management of the fund would be by an independent foundation whose Board would be drawn from wide sectional interests. The State would not have any access to these funds or have any control over the operation of the fund.
- Scholarship schemes covering the annual costs of the items listed. Companies, individuals, service clubs and churches could establish such schemes.
- Direct assistance schemes organized at the local level that help families or children of school age, or schools or communities. Again, such schemes could be operated by NGOs and other interested parties.
- School projects, where schools through their own fund raising efforts organize their own ways of helping their students who fall into this category.
- Community projects, where communities organize their own schemes of helping families and children from their, or other, areas.

The essence of the proposal here is that where assistance is being mobilized for education, such assistance should be channelled directly to the children and families in need and should not be routed via subsidy to the State. The corollary is that the State cannot be expected to single-handedly meet the needs of all those who must be subsidized in order to participate fully in the educational system. Accordingly, mechanisms need to be created to ensure that the assistance given reaches the children in need and is used for the educational purpose for which it was donated.

- d) The costs of tertiary education should be shared. Tertiary education benefits the students who receive it, the public and private entities that employ them as well as the State. All beneficiaries should bear some meaningful proportion of the costs involved. There is no gainsaying the difficulties involved in gaining acceptance of such a system of apportioning costs. Nevertheless, it should be the framework within which the financing of tertiary education is approached
- e) Financing developments. The proposals put forward deal essentially with the operation of the school system and the maintenance of children participating in the system. The issue not dealt with is that of developments to keep the school system contemporary with advances pioneered elsewhere and the capacity to generate its own advances. Examples of developments would include:
  - The introduction of new technologies in the school system including computers to assist with both management and instruction.

- The expansion of foreign language teaching and learning as a means of fostering regional interaction and cooperation across the various language and cultural barriers.
- Nationally and regionally developed and designed innovations to improve various aspects of education.
- The design and production of local and regional teaching materials.
- Incentives to teachers to generate higher levels of learning efficiency.
- Research and development projects.

From the perspective adopted here, the responsibility for system-wide development properly belongs to the State. Where regular taxes are unable to meet the cost of such development, and then the State could introduce special taxes, the proceeds of which would be used to partially or totally finance developments. The proceeds from the tax should not form part of the general revenue of governments and therefore should not be part of the consolidated fund. The State should be required to account annually and publicly for deployment of the revenue collected including statements on the items on which funds were expended and the amounts involved. Where special taxes are imposed for education, the purposes for which the funds are to be expended must be reconciled with the responsibilities of parents and communities in order to avoid double or triple taxation for the same educational purposes. It should be transparently clear that additional taxation for the benefit of education clearly and manifestly benefits education.

- f) Monitoring mechanism. There should be some monitoring mechanism established by law to ensure that all partners are fulfilling their obligations. The monitoring mechanisms would have the responsibility of determining (a) how well the State is fulfilling its obligation to provide tuition, (b) parents' obligation to meet ancillary costs, (c) the extent to which needy children are being provided with the necessities and (d) how well the State is responding to its obligation to keep the education system contemporary by appropriately deploying taxes collected for that specific purpose. The most appropriate body to perform such a monitoring role would be a National Council on Education with broad based representation from all sections of society and the education community.

**Strategy 67:** Guarantee the education subvention and decentralize the control of spending.

Currently Ministries of Finance are not obligated to disburse the budgeted allocations for education to the Ministries of Education. Ministries of Education also exercise central control over the spending of the funds disbursed by the Ministry of Finance. Schools, and sometimes even colleges, receive little cash.

The reform proposal here is that the Financial Regulations of Government should be revised to permit and guarantee the following:

- The funds allocated in the annual budget are disbursed to the Ministry of Education.
- With the exception of teachers' salaries, the control of spending by the Ministry of Education be decentralized to school boards which would be accountable to the Ministry on an annual basis. The principal of the school would be the chief accounting officer of the school board. Funds would be allocated to the school according to an approved budget.
- School boards would retain all funds raised or earned by the school and be able to deploy those funds as they see fit. Ministry permission would only be required where the board seeks to erect buildings on government-owned schools.
- School Boards would be audited annually with respect to all funds that are raised, earned or granted through Government subvention. Audited financial statements of schools should be made available to all stakeholder groups that request the same.

**Strategy 68:** Devise equitable bases for allocating funds to schools.

Public funds allocated to education should be disbursed to schools on some equitable basis on which budgets are developed. Currently, some schools enjoy huge financial advantages from the public purse that cannot be sustained on any rational or just basis. These are largely the results of history, privilege and influence. The strategy proposal here is that Ministries of Education should commission the following:

- Studies to immediately devise equitable bases on which schools at different levels of the educational system, are funded. Such studies would seek to establish appropriate funding differentials between the different levels of the education system and equitable bases of funding within each level.
- Periodic studies to assess the equity of the system of allocating public funds to schools and the efficiency and effectiveness of the utilization of those funds by the school management. The assessment would be over and beyond the audited financial reports that school boards would be required to submit to the Ministries. Such periodic assessment would facilitate improvements in the system of allocating funds and their efficient and effective utilization over the long term.

**Strategy 69:** Strengthen the financial management capabilities of Ministries of Education and of schools and colleges.

Decentralization of spending within the education system would require as a necessary corollary that both the central management capability in the Ministry and the institutional capability in the schools and colleges be considerably strengthened. This would require the following:

- The establishment of systems of budgeting, financial management and annual audits.
- The provision of training in financial management for Ministry and school managers.
- The provision of support equipment and accounting staff to operate the systems established.

**Strategy 70:** Introduce cost recovery schemes for tertiary education and for specific Technical Vocational Education and Training.

Both tertiary education and specific Technical and Vocational Education and Training are underdeveloped areas in the OECS. The proposal anticipates rapid growth and development in these areas and seeks to set out a financial framework within which this growth and development can be facilitated. Both areas are conceived as coming after primary and secondary education. The education and training would therefore be directed at young adults and adults who either are or shortly will be employed.

The proposal is that governments would set in motion the process by which cost recovery schemes could be developed to fund education and training in these areas. Feasibility and other studies would need to be commissioned. The elements of the schemes that should be explored include:

- Student fees or in-kind contribution through work.
- Revolving loan schemes or concessionary loans to students through special windows in financial institutions.
- Employer levy based on payroll and/or in kind contribution through providing instructors, equipment or classroom facilities.
- Government subsidy that would vary with occupation according to location in the private or public sectors.
- Grants and soft loans from donor agencies.
- Sale of places in local institutions to foreign students.

**Strategy 71:** Provide incentives for private investment in education.

The strategy here is not focussed on encouraging private investment in operating as schools but rather on providing incentives for the following:

- Delivering services in the education sector, for example, services such as transportation, school meals and other support.
- Developing education software in the form of books, teaching and learning materials, audio-visual materials and computer packages.
- Marketing and providing expertise within the region and in other developing countries.

Schools, colleges, companies and individuals establishing and operating income generating programmes and projects within the education sector should benefit from the same facilities, have access to the special windows in financial institutions and enjoy the same incentives as businesses and other economic ventures in agriculture, tourism and other such areas. Special tax and other incentives should be given to those institutions, companies or individuals that develop education goods or services for export.

**Strategy 72:** Control external borrowing for education.

It is unlikely that education and its reform can be financed solely from regular revenue from the local sources identified, that is, the State, parents, private sector, communities and philanthropic bodies. Education reform will require borrowing. As far as possible, governments should seek local sources through floating bond issues and other such measures. External borrowing should only be resorted to in very specific circumstances:

- Where foreign exchange is needed to purchase foreign expertise, technology transfer or vital equipment.
- Where a source of repayment is identified and the project is linked to that source.
- Where there are no conditionalities that are inconsistent with, or contradictory to, the reform objectives and strategies.

Accordingly, external borrowing for education should be restricted to developmental projects for which repayment is assured and where conditions for borrowing do not seek to alter the reform process. Grant funding should always be welcomed where ever it is consistent and compatible with the reform objectives.

## **STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUING AND SUSTAINING THE REFORM PROCESS**

### **Objectives**

- To continue and complete the reform process by 2010.
- To sustain the reform process over the next ten years.
- To ensure a dynamic element to the reform process allowing it to make adjustments respond to unanticipated developments and unplanned outcomes.
- To coordinate the actions of member states and the stakeholders engaged in implementing the reforms.

### **General Philosophy**

Education reform is as much a process as a set of planned outcomes. No reform strategy can fully anticipate and plan in every detail all the needed educational responses demanded over the next ten years. This is because insufficient knowledge of many aspects of education generally, and in the OECS, limited insight into the operation of critical variables and future developments that cannot now be anticipated. Nor can any reform strategy forecast most of the unintended consequences of planned change. In addition, not all of the elements of various reforms may be agreed on from the very onset. There will be reservations on some elements for a variety of reasons. These factors pose considerable problems for developing a detailed implementation plan for reforming the education systems of the sub-region.

Limited foresight, unresolved issues, insufficient knowledge and unplanned developments should not, however, forestall action. At the same time, prudence requires that the reform strategy possesses the capacity to benefit from hindsight, new knowledge, future agreements and fresh

insight. An alternative to a detailed implementation plan is the proposal of a framework for the reform process and a mechanism to ensure that the process is carried out within this framework.

The same broad process that created the revised strategy points to the approach that needs to be adopted to implement it. The reform strategy, therefore, cannot be constituted solely of recommendations and prescriptions but also of mechanisms to maintain its dynamic character. A framework and the mechanisms that seek to ensure continuous review of goals, objectives, outcomes and achievements, which allow new components to be added and which promote ongoing consultation and partnership among the stakeholders in education in the sub-region are vital to the success of the entire reform exercise. The implementation of the reforms is not the sole responsibility or prerogative of governments, but also of teachers and their unions, parents and their organisations, principals of schools and colleges, non-governmental organisations involved in delivering education, the private sector in the form of small and big businesses, students and their councils and other organisations of civil society engaged in the educative process. The implementation of the reforms is the responsibility of the partners, the stakeholders, in the education enterprise.

Recognizing that education in the OECS has always benefited from partnership between OECS Governments and institutions on the one hand and regional and international agencies and regional bodies and associations on the other hand, the implementation of the reform strategies would require that continued use should be made, where appropriate, of existing capacities, skills and relationships with these partners.

## **Reform Strategies**

**Strategy 73:** Accept and approve the revised and realigned Reform Strategy as a whole.

The Education Reform Strategy cannot be implemented all at once. Yet the overall revised and realigned Reform Strategy needs to be adopted as a whole. While some aspects can be implemented almost immediately, others will take years before meaningful action can be taken. Common sense dictates that a start be made in some areas and not in others. To retain its integrity, however, the entire revised and realigned Reform Strategy needs to be accepted in principle by the competent authorities. The proposal is that:

- a) In their meeting in October 2000, Ministers of Education of the OECS accept the Education Reform Strategy in principle.
- b) On the recommendation of the Ministers of Education, the Central Authority of the OECS would accept and endorse the entire strategy in principle.

**Strategy 74:** Mobilize the sub-region for implementation.

Successful implementation of the Reform Strategy will require broad based support and involvement from all the partners who come from a wide cross-section of groups, institutions and individuals inside and outside the OECS. Actions must therefore be taken to mobilize for implementation. The proposals are:

- Distribute the revised and realigned Reform Strategy to all partners, that is to all the groups, institutions and individuals who participated in the national and sub-regional consultations using the same means by which the national and sub-regional consultations were organized. In addition, publish the revised and realigned Reform Strategy as a monograph and make it available to all who request it within the OECS.
- Circulate the revised and realigned Reform Strategy to ALL regional agencies engaged in education in the sub-region.
- Ministers of Education should table the Reform Strategy as a White Paper in Parliament and request that a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Strategy and report to Parliament.
- Convene a Donor Conference of all multilateral and bilateral agencies currently funding or interested in funding education in the sub-region. Invite to this conference regional agencies, Government and opposition spokesmen and advisors and representatives from critical interests within the OECS.

**Strategy 75:** Maintain, sustain and augment the coordinating mechanisms, which were established under *Foundation for the Future*, to coordinate, manage and monitor the reform process.

The following is proposed:

- Retain the Council of Ministers of Education as the main mechanism for coordinating the implementation of the reforms.
- Retain the OECS Education Technical Education Committee, OETEC, as the chief advisory body to the Ministers on the matters of implementation and coordination and for providing the technical input needed to deal with unanticipated developments and unplanned outcomes. The membership of OETEC, however, should be expanded to include representatives from the other partners.
- Create National Education Reform Councils composed of all the partners and stakeholders critical to the implementation of the reforms. Where National Education Advisory Councils already exist and are constituted in the same manner as the proposed Reform Council, to avoid duplication, consideration should be given to having the NEAC perform the functions of the Reform Council. The major role of the National Education Reform Council is to give general oversight, monitor and coordinate the efforts of the partners in the implementation of the reforms in each country. Chairpersons of the nine National Education Reform Councils should be members of OETEC.
- Establish Technical Advisory Committees in all areas where sub-regional programmes or projects are created to implement the reforms in any particular strategic area. These Technical Advisory Committees should be sub-regional in composition, representative of the institutional stakeholders and partners in the particular area of implementation and knowledgeable about the particular programme or project focus. The role of the Technical Advisory Committees will be to provide stimulus, guidance and knowledge for the ongoing



work of implementing the reforms through the particular programme or project. The Technical Advisory Committees should report to OETEC.

**Strategy 76:** Establish an Education Division within the OECS Secretariat and restructure the existing OERU accordingly.

The coordinating mechanisms of the reform will need to be supported by staff of full-time professionals whose sole responsibilities will be that of taking executive action to ensure the implementation of the reform. The proposal is to establish a permanent Education Division within the OECS Secretariat that would be the executive arm of the Reform Council. This Division would be headed by a director and staffed by a small core of five or six professionals performing leadership and management roles and functions. Programme and project units would be created within the Education Division in relation to the provision of funding for the implementation of reforms in specific areas. These units would be appropriately staffed for the duration of the programmes or projects.

The OERU would need to be restructured to form the Education Division in terms of both core staff and project units. All other existing project units would also need to be integrated into the Education Division.

The functions of the OECS Secretariat Education Division would be as follows:

1. To coordinate the implementation of the reform strategies with the policy framework and general directions given by the Council of Ministers – the Reform Council.
2. To manage sub-regional programmes and projects related to the implementation of the reform strategies financed through loans or grant funds.
3. To provide leadership in the implementation of the information and communications strategies in the sub-region and to manage the hub of the sub-region information and communication infrastructure and sub-regional databases.
4. To provide leadership in such areas as curriculum development, planning and material development thus ensuring collaboration, cooperation and coordination of the work of national curriculum, planning and material production efforts.
5. To act as a broker of knowledge and expertise between the countries and with the wider Caribbean by engaging in information transfer, knowledge generation where necessary and building a knowledge base of OECS experience of reform and delivery of education.
6. To manage a Response Fund that seeks to stimulate initiatives in countries relative but not exclusive to the implementation of reform strategies by stakeholders other than Ministries of Education.
7. To support and provide services to Council of Ministers, OETEC and the Technical Advisory Committees as well as to provide appropriate training to representatives of the partners with respect to collaboration and cooperation in the reform process.
8. Represent the OECS in various regional and international forums as well as liaising with regional and international bodies engaged in educational activities in the sub-region. In this regard, ongoing working relationships would need to be maintained with the CARICOM Secretariat, CXC and the University of the West Indies.

The Education Division would be financed from three sources:

- a) Direct contributions of member states to the salaries of the Director and small core staff.
- b) Income generated from fees charged for the management of projects, the management of the hub of the ICT infrastructure and the management of the Response Fund. These operations should be established on a self-financing and income generating basis.
- c) An endowment fund started from grants from the donor agencies and built up by surplus income earned in (b).

**Strategy 77:** Establish national priorities within the context of solidarity with the sub-regional commitment to develop a common education system in the OECS, create country clusters related to stage of development in particular strategic areas and use these country clusters as the units of implementation through sub-regional programmes and projects.

The nine countries of the OECS are at different stages of development and of implementing the various strategies of Foundation for the Future. In addition, countries have their own priorities within the strategic framework of the reform. This requires that each country would need to assess itself along three dimensions:

- Its national priorities arising from its assessment of the urgent needs of the country.
- Those strategies that may not be within its national priorities where the particular country is among the few that have not implemented them. Solidarity with the sub-region commitment to a common system dictates that where countries are out of sync with the rest of the sub-region in the implementation of the reform strategies, they should bring themselves in line by including those areas as national priorities
- Other countries within the OECS with which its national priorities coincide. By scanning the sub-region for such coincidence of priorities, countries would form clusters in the implementation of particular sub-sets of the strategies.

In most instances, in the implementation of the various strategies that comprise the reform, it will be necessary to group countries in clusters related to their national priorities and stage of development. Accordingly, it will be clusters of countries – not all countries at the same time – which should normally constitute sub-regional programmes and projects at any particular point in time.

**Strategy 78:** Conduct a mid-decade review of the extent of the implementation of the strategies previously outlined inclusive of any adjustments or additions that needs to be made as a result of developments over the five-year period. This mid-decade review should involve all the partners in the nine countries of the OECS and should also involve the collection of empirical data with respect to the extent of the implementation of the strategies at the level of schools, colleges and communities.