



THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL
SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**



October 2006

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
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Table of Contents

1	Acknowledgements.....	1
2	Executive Summary.....	2
3	Introduction	5
4	Background.....	6
5	The Open School System.....	9
5.1	Defining the Open School.....	9
5.2	Open School Models.....	10
5.3	Philosophy for Open Schooling.....	10
6	The National Open School System of Trinidad and Tobago	12
6.1	Locating the System in the MOE Strategic Portfolio of Projects.....	12
6.2	The National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago (NOSTT): Essential Elements.....	13
6.2.1	The Proposed Model for NOSSTT	13
6.2.2	Programme Design	14
6.2.3	Programme Offerings.....	14
6.2.4	Instructional Process.....	15
6.2.5	Learner Support Services	16
6.2.6	Strategic Partnerships.....	17
6.2.7	Challenges/Risks:.....	17
6.2.8	Cost Drivers/Potential Costs/Funding	18
6.2.9	Materials development	19
6.2.10	Parental, Spousal and Other Support	19
6.2.11	Special and At Risk Groups	19
6.2.12	Open School Services and Support.....	20
6.3	A Policy for the Open School System.....	21
6.4	MOE Management Framework for Open Schools.....	22
6.4.1	Open School Executive Council.....	22
6.4.2	Open School Steering Committee.....	23
6.4.3	Advisory Committees	24
6.5	Cost of Programme.....	24

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2. Executive Summary

To fulfil its aim of enhancing education and making it accessible to more members of the Trinidad and Tobago Public, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is proposing the adoption of a national open school system which will complement the traditional school system from early childhood care and education to the pre-tertiary level.

The Ministry, in keeping with its modernization thrust, has determined that it shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. It further recognizes that to effect this goal it must encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs.

Such a system has the potential of:

- Building capacity through personal growth;
- Providing access to wider learning opportunities;
- Supporting learners and learning throughout life;
- Providing equitable access to quality educational opportunities to all;
- Integrating the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning; and
- De-institutionalising learning by distributing it more equitably and taking learning closer to the learner – at home, in communities and in the workplace.

An open school system can promote social cohesion and reduce marginalization of certain segments of the population.

The Trinidad and Tobago Open School will be based on an amalgam of two models which will each be employed in the short term and the long term. Initially the open school system will be included as offerings in the Continuing and Adult Education classes provided by the MOE. The medium to long term model which will characterize

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

the National Open School Model of Trinidad and Tobago (NOSTT) will be based on an Independent School Model which will see open school centres situated around Trinidad and Tobago.

The Open School Centres will be established in each education district and will be accredited to deliver all Ministry of Education Curricula. Centres shall offer programmes that will be resourced at the same level as programmes delivered in the formal system; Centres will deliver technology enhanced, distance education courses. Centres shall be afforded the necessary human, material and financial resources. Open school will take advantage of the technological infrastructure established by the Ministry of Education to support online delivery and support services.

Open school will offer courses to a pre-degree level, ranging from early childhood education, through primary, secondary, technical and vocational education, ICT training, enrichment and leisure programmes and life skills. A wide variety of courses, some of which are equivalent to those in the conventional school and others that are unique to open school will be offered.

Open schools will not have age restrictions and a significant proportion of open school learners will be “over-age” and may not proceed to tertiary education. Such learners are motivated to learn for self-improvement and through certification and qualification. An approach that combines technical and vocational courses with academic courses for certification will be employed. Flexibility is the hallmark of the open school system.

To evaluate the suitability of the Open School system for Trinidad and Tobago, a pilot project is proposed. This pilot will encompass schools in each of the eight (8) education districts to identify how best to implement the system nationwide. This pilot will constitute Phase I of the Open School System.

The Pilot will be conducted in a total of 9 schools and will target one thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) students in Trinidad and Tobago. It is expected that all

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

students will be enrolled in the programme by the end of October 2006 and will continue in the programme until examinations to be held in 2007. The goals and objectives are as follows:

- To facilitate student improvement of grades and by extension their transition to tertiary education and employment
- To encourage computer competency by providing requisite training and ensuring that each student has access to a computer
- To provide continuous, round-the-clock access to learning content and support in critical curriculum areas
- To evaluate the effectiveness of a blended learning delivery mode as compared to the traditional classroom method, employing a limited pilot study over a one-year period
- To pilot-test the operations of an Open School system to inform the full implementation of the National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is expected that at the end of the programme:-

- students will attain a Grade1-3 in Mathematics and English Language at Caribbean Examinations Council Ordinary Level Examinations,
- both students and teachers will have enhanced knowledge about the use of ICT in education
- students will be able to use ICT for both research and study support purposes
- mentors will be able to successful use and integrate ICT into the curriculum to support student learning and success
- both students and mentors will gain internationally accepted ICT certification.

It is anticipated that the pilot open school programme will cost a total of TT\$9,808,920.00. This constitutes funding for the purchase of tools and equipment as well as the payment of salaries and stipends for the materials development consultants, subject matter experts and teaching staff.

3 Introduction

To fulfil its aim of enhancing education and making it accessible to more members of the Trinidad and Tobago Public, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is proposing the adoption of a national open school system which will complement the traditional school system from early childhood care and education to the pre-tertiary level.

The Open School is an educational system which uses a blend of conventional and distance education methods and allows learners to choose how to learn, when to learn, where to learn and what to learn using a wide range of educational media. It is complementary to the formal education system; however, it emphasizes entry skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies rather than qualifications.

Open Schools play a vital role in providing people of all ages with learning opportunities that are diverse, flexible, accessible, inclusive, learner-focused and responsive. It facilitates those who may have missed out at an earlier stage or those who may simply wish to further their career goals or personal development by offering more diversified curricula.

4 Background

In the 21st century, new technologies, rapid globalization and shifts away from traditional employment patterns have contributed to a new emphasis on “lifelong learning” and “open and distance learning”. Furthermore, the emerging political focus on human resource development has confirmed the increased importance of viewing global economies as “knowledge economies”.

The concept of a knowledge economy recognizes knowledge as a vital factor of economic production. In such an environment, workers are valued not only for their physical ability to work but also for their capacity for utilizing and applying knowledge to the effective completion of tasks, decision making and problem solving.

In April 2000, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the Dakar Framework for Action and is therefore committed to achieving the “Education for All” goals, one of which is ensuring that the learning needs of all nationals, especially disadvantaged youth and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

In recognition of these international developments, governments are forced to revisit the mechanisms through which they train and socialize the ‘ideal’ citizen. For this reason, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) points out that “...*success in realizing lifelong learning — from early childhood education to active learning in retirement — will be an important factor in promoting employment, economic development, democracy and social cohesion*” (OECD, 1999: 13). Internationally therefore, administrators believe that education should become a lifelong process, and all persons, regardless of previous education and social status, need to continue their education in adult life.

Beyond its consideration of international trends, the Government of Republic Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) has identified the development of its human capital as a fundamental tenet of national development. Specially, the GORTT also sees the

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

concept of lifelong learning as being critical to the country's response to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) represents an initiative tabled by Caribbean Heads of Government in Grande Anse, Grenada in 1989 to deepen integration within the region and in so doing, create a single enlarged economic grouping. One fundamental hope is that such a grouping allows the region greater bargaining abilities and trade protection from the effects of globalisation.

As a result of the CSME, the region will soon be seeing the free movement of goods, services, capital, technology and labour. Although this will allow citizens of the region greater access to employment opportunities, production and trade, the onus now resides with individual governments to ensure that their populations are adequately prepared for such transformations.

As such, the GORTT has embarked upon a path to transform the country to a developed society by the year 2020. A major facet of Vision 2020 is the development of a knowledge – based society. As a direct result, policy makers and administrators have emphasized the role of education and training in ensuring the country's preparedness in light of the technological, economical and social changes expected to couple Vision 2020 and CSME. Decision makers now accept that there needs to be continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills by our citizens in order for our population to be able to quickly and efficiently adapt to the proposed new environment. Lifelong learning is therefore critical to national development and economic survival, and the survival of nationals in a CSME environment and global environment.

As a critical stakeholder in the education and training arena, the Ministry of Education (MOE) proposes to focus on and address a number of vital issues related to lifelong learning in Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry hopes to reinforce a culture of learning, upgrading qualifications and continuous retraining among its clients. One way of facilitating this process is through a system of ***open schooling***. Such a system has the potential of:

- Building capacity through personal growth;

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

- Providing access to wider learning opportunities;
- Supporting learners and learning throughout life;
- Providing equitable access to quality educational opportunities to all;
- Integrating the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning; and
- De-institutionalising learning by distributing it more equitably and taking learning closer to the learner – at home, in communities and in the workplace.

An open school system can promote social cohesion and reduce marginalization of certain segments of the population.

5 The Open School System

5.1 *Defining the Open School*

The Open School is an educational system which uses a blend of conventional and distance education methods and allows learners to choose how to learn, when to learn, where to learn and what to learn using a wide range of educational media. It is complementary to the formal education system; however, it emphasizes entry skills knowledge, abilities and competencies rather than qualifications.

Open Schools play a vital role in providing people of all ages with learning opportunities that are diverse, flexible, accessible, inclusive, learner-focused and responsive. It facilitates those who may have missed out at an earlier stage or those who may simply wish to further their career goals or personal development by offering more diversified curricula.

The major distinctive features that promulgate open schools are:

- Taking education to disadvantaged populations;
- Providing a choice to learners for what they want to learn;
- Providing education to second chance learners;
- Providing a safety net for school drop-outs; and
- Providing education to those who cannot attend conventional schools for a variety of social and economic reasons.

Open Schools have been established globally catering to literacy, basic education, bridging courses, and vocational studies; but they all cater to the multiplicity of learning needs from basic education and beyond. They therefore reduce the pressure on the formal education system and facilitate continuing education and lifelong learning. Open Schools seek to universalize education, increase social equity and justice. It also facilitates the development of a learning society.

5.2 Open School Models

There are three main types of open schools as currently practiced globally.

The **Dual Mode Model** exists where distance education activities are part of the conventional school system so no infrastructure is developed, there is less expenditure and it is faster to implement.

The **Independent School Model** exists where an independent autonomous infrastructure is established with the freedom to design course and curriculum to satisfy national requirements while retaining flexibility and the capacity for innovation. This has very high start up costs.

The third model is the **Open School** which is **established through a dedicated distance institution**. This can be done through existing or newly established distance institutions. The main costs are in the area of establishing the ICT infrastructure and providing training so that target populations can utilize the opportunities to effectively support their goals and objectives.

5.3 Philosophy for Open Schooling

The MOE upholds the philosophy that the twin island Republic should “protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all.”¹ Furthermore, the Ministry, in keeping with its modernization thrust, has determined that it shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. It further recognizes that to effect this goal it must encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs.

¹ Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2002-2006

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

The Ministry also believes that:

- every child has an inherent right to an education which will enhance the development of maximum capability regardless of gender, ethnic, economic, social or religious background;
- this right to education pertains to all children regardless of location, physical or mental ability;
- there is the need to make quality education accessible to all nationals given the global directions and the imperative of Vision 2020;
- education is fundamental to the sustainable development of the nation;
- the open and distance learning experience should reflect the highest pedagogical standards within a learner-centred, research intensive environment;
- open schooling should capitalize on the increasing opportunities generated by information and communication technologies;
- the open school system should increase access to educational opportunities for all and expand participation in MOE's continuing education programmes;
- open schooling should be viewed as a vehicle for creating and sustaining a culture of lifelong learning.
- non-formal and informal learning systems complement the formal education system
- education and acquisition of skills take place both within and beyond the confines of classrooms.

6 The National Open School System of Trinidad and Tobago

6.1 *Locating the System in the MOE Strategic Portfolio of Projects*

The Ministry upholds the philosophy that the twin island Republic should “protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all.

The Ministry is pursuing a number of initiatives funded both locally and internationally which support the thrust towards modernisation. These efforts will revolutionise both primary and secondary school education and include:-

- universalising of five years of equitable, high-quality secondary education through the provision of more school places;
- transforming educational content and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of a modern, skills - based economy;
- the development of a more efficient management of human, physical and financial resources, while simultaneously strengthening sectoral managerial capacity at the central, regional, and local levels.

The projects already established or in the process of being implemented will enable the GORTT to respond to the broad social demand for five continuous years of equitable secondary education for all. It will have an impact on the secondary school -age populations in marginalized urban areas and in poor rural regions. The initiatives will introduce measures to improve educational equity and quality, and support the targeted expansion of general secondary schools.

It is in the context of these ongoing developments in the Ministry that the open school system is being introduced to support and capitalize on other projects currently taking place in education in Trinidad and Tobago to enhance opportunities to citizens outside the formal education system.

6.2 The National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago (NOSTT): Essential Elements

The NOSTT will be based on an amalgam of two models previously explored (5.2).

In the initial phase the **Dual Mode Model** will be employed. In this stage the provision of open schooling will be included as offerings in the Continuing and Adult Education classes provided by the MOE. Continuing Education classes are those which currently cater for those who did not receive grades one through three in subjects taken in traditional formal secondary school, including Mathematics and English Language.

In the medium to long term model the NOSTT will be based on the **Independent School Model**.

6.2.1 The Proposed Model for NOSSTT

An organizational structure with the necessary personnel and functional and support areas will be established to govern, develop, manage and sustain the open school system; This organizational structure shall be called the National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago (NOSTT).

Open School Centres will be established in each education district and will be accredited to deliver Ministry of Education Curricula. Centres shall offer programmes that will be resourced at the same level as programmes delivered in the formal system; Centres will deliver technology enhanced, distance education courses. Centres shall be afforded the necessary human, material and financial resources. A technological infrastructure will be established to support online delivery and support services

These centres shall be provided with human, material and financial resources along with a technological infrastructure to support face to face or instructor led, technology mediated, and online delivery and support services.

6.2.1.1 Vision

The vision of NOSTT will be to offer a dynamic system which will complement the existing conventional education system and provide individuals, at any stage of educational development, unrestricted access to quality programmes and courses, using a blended learning delivery mode.

6.2.1.2 Mission

The Mission is to excel in the development and delivery of a comprehensive and diverse range of open learning programmes/courses, enabling unrestricted equitable access through the use of appropriate technologies, to quality open learning experiences, resources and services for all individuals seeking primary, secondary, pre-tertiary level as well as professional development and enrichment programmes,

6.2.2 Programme Design

A team approach will be utilized in the design and development of materials for open school. The team of professionals will include subject matter experts, instructional designers, multimedia experts, graphic designers, book designers, and producers.

6.2.3 Programme Offerings

Open school will offer courses to a pre-degree level, ranging from early childhood education, to primary, secondary, technical and vocational education, ICT training, enrichment and leisure programmes. A wide variety of courses, some of which are equivalent to those in the conventional school and others that are unique to open school will be offered.

Open schools will not have age restrictions and a significant proportion of open school learners will be “over-age” and may not proceed to tertiary education. Such participants are motivated to learn for self-improvement and through certification and

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

qualification. An approach that combines technical and vocational courses with academic courses for certification will be employed. Flexibility is the hallmark of the open school system.

6.2.4 Instructional Process

The teaching and instructional methods of the open school are influenced by its dependence on multi-media instruction and the following unique characteristics of open school students:

- Wide variation in age, experience, learning skills, reading skills and life skills;
- Independent, self-propelled and self-motivated learners;
- Less time available for study than a full-time student.

Open learning depends largely on **self-study materials**, usually prepared in modular formats so that flexibility can be maintained. The basic feature of self-study material is its carefully structured presentation designed to make learning easy and effective. Information is presented in small segments with intermediate checks to monitor learning.

The **use of electronic media** is an integral component of open school instruction. The technology intervention strategies include one way communication technologies such as radio, television, print (study guides and newspaper); which will be supplemented by the more effective interactive technologies like audio- and video-conferencing, teleconferencing, interactive television, computer-managed learning, and intelligent tutoring systems.

Open school students usually have a range of learning skills and abilities therefore self study material and electronic media will cater for a wide range of learning styles. Self-study print materials and electronic media will initially supplement the tutor-based

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

instruction, but as the system matures, **face-to-face contact** complements self-study. Contact sessions are usually devoted to counselling, tutorials, drills, laboratory sessions and peer group learning.

Student counselling, another component of open schooling, assists with subject choices to meet career or learning needs as well as monitoring the progress of learning. Open schools provide mechanisms for **monitoring learning and providing help in self-assessments**.

The open school student is expected to complete assignments and submit within a given time to the instructor, who in turn assesses, comment and suggests improvements. This interaction may use mail, fax, audio devices, mobile technologies and/or the Internet. Both teachers and students need to be trained and supported to use the repertoire of instructional technologies to facilitate learning.

6.2.5 Learner Support Services

The basic objective of learner support services is to help students learn. Learner support services hold the key to the programme's success and determine the quality of education an open school delivers. The five critical and interdependent components of learner support for open schooling require integrated implementation.

The components are:

- “**Pre-student support**”, informing prospective students about the programmes and methods used at open schools is the first component of learner support services aimed at engaging suitable students.
- Enrolment and registration
- Advice and counselling on selecting courses
- Ensuring the timely availability of self-study print and multi-media materials
- Personal contact programmes

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

6.2.6 Strategic Partnerships

The Open school system will foster public, private and civil society partnerships especially in the area of ICT which, with its networks and multiple partner value chains can never survive in isolation. Indeed, for it to work there must be linkages and partnerships. The MOE shall forge linkages and partnerships beyond government, to civil society, NGO's, commercial interests and the international community to develop the ICT economy of Trinidad and Tobago. These will include but not be limited to: -

- Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
- Open School British Colombia (OSBC)
- National Association of Library and Information Services (NALIS)
- NGOs
- National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)
- the Ministry of Science Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE)
- Other Ministries
- Telecom providers
- Embassies & High Commissions
- University of Trinidad and Tobago

6.2.7 Challenges/Risks:

The Open School concept is new to students, teachers, principals, other education officers, learning material developers and producers and education management staff. All stakeholders must adjust themselves and learn the new system. Typical challenges that have arisen in mature and developing Open School systems are:-

Table I – Challenges and Risks

Challenge/Risk
<i>Students' Learning Style:</i> Students have developed a learning culture of dependence on teacher. Open school requires them to be active, independent learners.
<i>Print Material:</i> This needs to be visually appealing, easy to follow, and full of frequent feedback to facilitate independent learning.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
THE NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Challenge/Risk
<i>Materials Production and Distribution:</i> Timely distribution and adequate supply of materials, especially for students preparing for examinations.
<i>Online access</i> Critical to the success of any open school system is the ability to utilise technology at will to access media which support continuous self managed learning.
<i>Library</i> Library access must be built it to the support systems which will allow students access to multi-media systems and tools.
<i>Enabling Policy</i> A formal system must be put in place which policy which is understood and supported throughout the education system.
<i>Budgetary constraints</i> The open school system especially one based on the independent model is expensive to equip, maintain and operate.
<i>Open School Centres</i> <i>Access to facilities and Security</i> for extended hours <i>Resources:</i> provision of adequate human, material, technology and financial resources to adequately sustain the open school system without adversely affecting the host schools. <i>Staffing</i> Ready availability of staff to manage, operate and maintain the system.

6.2.8 Cost Drivers/Potential Costs/Funding

The following are the major areas of cost for the establishment of open schooling in Trinidad and Tobago:-

- Hardware
- Connectivity
- Materials production
- Licensing of software
- Broadcasting
- Training
- Software
- Salaries
- Travelling
- Marketing/promotion
- Research/evaluation
- Outpacing obsolescence

6.2.9 Materials development

The instructional materials development component will focus on the preparation of learning packages in print and non-print formats. Specifically, its areas of concern are:

- Choice of media to be used by various content areas developed by the subject matter expert group;
- Development of media designs, formats and approaches;
- Actual technical production of prototypes;
- Pre-test of these prototypes and mass production of revised prototypes, for distribution by the student support component.

Packaged materials may be included provided these meet the requirements that have been set on this policy.

6.2.10 Parental, Spousal and Other Support

Parents and other support persons play a vital role in supporting their children's education. An ICT strategy for education must ensure that support persons have some understanding and experience of ICT. Special programmes for parents, partners and other support persons shall be developed and delivered using multimodal formats.

6.2.11 Special and At Risk Groups

Special and at risk groups such as the incarcerated; recovering addicts and orphans shall have access to all Open school programmes through ICT enabled programmes and services.

6.2.12 Open School Services and Support

The following key areas shall be addressed to ensure that the system can function effectively and efficiently.

They are:-

1. Maintenance and Support of ICT

A maintenance and support regime must be in place to ensure that ICT and other resources in all Open School facilities are available, functional, and secure. Timely and effective maintenance and support services must be in place to ensure efficient and cost-effective use of ICT. Support services inclusive of initial and continuous training must be provided for MOE personnel supporting NOSTT.

2. Networking

Networking will provide for local area network (LAN) and wide area network (WAN) services, which ensures communication between clients, servers and ultimately between people. All educational sites selected as Open school centres shall be connected via high speed infrastructure, thereby increasing communication, improving efficiency, and widening the sphere of influence and knowledge of the site. Standards already developed and maintained shall be adhered to thereby ensuring network availability and security.

3. Digital Library

A Digital Library will provide materials to support the curriculum, the MOE administration, and the wider education community. In its quest to develop a knowledge based society, the Open schools shall:

- publicise international best practices regarding knowledge management systems.
- establish and maintain a digital library for NOSTT consumers to retrieve information.

6.3 *A Policy for the Open School System*

The MOE, in keeping with its modernization thrust has determined that it shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. It further recognizes that to effect this goal it must encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to the community needs.

A policy to govern the operation and functioning of a sustainable open school system is being developed. Its goals and objectives are to:

- i. achieve continuous alignment with the Ministry of Education's general goals for education;
- ii. ensure the establishment of an efficient and effective open school system fueled by quality programmes and supported by appropriate technologies and delivery methods and mechanisms;
- iii. create an enabling environment to support Open Schooling;
- iv. harmonize activities, programmes, approaches and standards for distance learning, adult and continuing education within the Education System;
- v. Point to the establishment of a sustainable National Open School System for Trinidad and Tobago.

6.4 MOE Management Framework for Open Schools

The Ministry of Education will oversee the management of the Open Schools system through the establishment of a framework to ensure accountability, consistent monitoring and efficient and effective evaluation of the system. The main components of the management framework are the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee.

6.4.1 Open School Executive Council

A Cabinet appointed Open School Executive Council shall be established to strategically advise, support and coordinate the implementation of this system and policy which support open schooling. The Open School Executive committee shall have representation from the: -

- MOE Executive
- Division of Education Tobago House of Assembly (THA)
- Distance Education Unit
- Adult Education Unit
- Curriculum Development Division
- Schools Supervision Division
- Principal's Association
- MSTTE
- University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre
- Telecom Authority

The role of the Open School Executive shall be to:

- i. oversee the Implementation of the policies related to open schooling
- ii. report to Cabinet on the status of the National Open School System in Trinidad and Tobago
- iii. Establish and maintain a framework for co-operation amongst line ministries, educational institutions, stakeholders and partners to ensure the successful implementation of the policy;
- iv. Make recommendations to the Ministry of Education Executive and the Cabinet regarding the implementation of open schooling

The Open School Executive Committee shall report to the Cabinet.

6.4.2 Open School Steering Committee

An Open School Steering Committee consisting of members appointed by the Minister of Education shall manage the implementation of the policy and system of open schooling.

The committee shall have core representation from the Heads of Open School Departments; Adult Education; Distance Education Unit; Curriculum Development Division; Divisions of Schools Supervision; Student Support Services; Educational Services; Human Resources, IT, Education Research and Evaluation, Remedial Education, Continuing Education and the Distance Learning Secretariat-MSTTE.

The role of the Open School Steering Committee shall be to:

- i. manage the implementation of the policy
- ii. report on the implementation of the system.
- iii. advise and make recommendations on
 - standards,
 - cost and quality of operations,
 - services,
 - support and maintenance,
 - ODL tutor training,
 - institutional development,
 - capacity building,
 - research, and
 - public awareness within the Open School Policy Framework;
- iv. monitor the implementation of the Open School system
- v. coordinate the implementation of Open School programmes and initiatives;
and
- vi. conduct periodic audits and evaluations of the system

The Open School Steering Committee shall report to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education.

6.4.3 Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees will include the following:-

- Chambers of Commerce
- Accreditation Committee
- College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
- Trinidad and Tobago Distance Learning Association – TTDLA
- Ministry of Public Administration and Information
- The University of Trinidad and Tobago
- School of Continuing Studies

6.5 *Cost of Programme*

Budgets for the financing of the open school system shall be computed for the total cost of operation (TCO) in present value dollars. Elements contributing to the TCO include:

- Acquisition of hardware and software
- Installation and configuration
- Connectivity
- Maintenance and operational costs
- Support and training
- Upgrading of physical facilities
- Replacement costs (in three year depreciating cycles)
- Development and distribution of course materials