

**Educating for Life: A Stocktaking Review of
Citizenship Education Policies and Practices
in the Anglophone Caribbean**

Extract of Main Findings and Recommendations

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List of Abbreviations

BFLA	Belize Family Life Association
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARNEID	Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CSMC	Caribbean (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
ESS	Education Support Services
ETES	Employment Training for Education Services
GHRA	Guyana Human Rights Association
GSS	General School Services
HRE	Human Rights Education
IBE	The International Bureau of Education
ICR	Information and Communication Revolution
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO	The Pan American Health Organization
PP&PMS	Planning, Projects & Performance Measurement Services
PSE	Personal and Social Education
QADS	Quality Assurance and Development Services
SALCC	Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
TPES	Tertiary & Post-Secondary Education Services
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UWI	University of the West Indies

Executive Summary

This report represents an attempt to engage in a region-wide survey and analysis of citizenship education concepts, policies and practices in the countries of the English-Speaking Caribbean also termed the Commonwealth Caribbean. This geographical/ cultural/linguistic group of countries includes Belize, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Turks & Caicos Islands, Jamaica, the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, St Kitts & Nevis, Montserrat, Dominica, St Lucia, Barbados, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, and Guyana.

Objectives

The study was intended to accomplish three main objectives:

1. Collect and examine policy and curricular documents focusing on school level education from the English-speaking member states of UNESCO/ CARNEID (Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development), with the aim of determining statements and objectives relative to the promotion of citizenship education. Areas to be examined included: how citizenship education is defined (including what learning areas are focused on, in what subject areas is the content of citizenship education reflected); what rationales are used to support it; how policy translates into curricular frameworks.
1. Secondly, to conduct an assessment survey of the content and methodology of pre-service (and where appropriate) in-service teacher preparation with regard to education for citizenship, in the countries mentioned above.
2. Thirdly, to make practical recommendations for improving quality in the design and implementation of teacher education programmes in the area of education for citizenship in the schools of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Methodology

The project utilized a number of research methodologies and strategies including interviews, and the use of a semi-structured questionnaire to collect the required data from various educational stakeholders in the region including the Ministries of Education, teacher training institutions, curriculum specialists teachers, and Non-Governmental Organizations including the Guyana Human Rights Association. However, in most cases the Ministries of Education played a pivotal role in helping to coordinate the collection of the data, particularly for the completion of the questionnaire. This often required broad-based consultations with the various stakeholders. Additionally, extensive review was undertaken of the various supporting and background material collected during the course of this research exercise. These documents included school syllabuses and other citizenship education, and related types of documents.

Major Findings

The following were among the main findings of the study:

1. That citizenship education is in all reported cases integrated across the curriculum and reflected in such subject areas as Social Studies, History, English, Mathematics, Physical Education, Health and Family Life Education, Religious and Morals Education, or through combinations or variations of these subject areas. Social Studies was however seen as the main subject area through which citizenship education was imparted.
2. That citizenship education as taught in the Caribbean countries focuses, albeit with different emphases, on such themes and topics as human rights and responsibilities, cultural diversity, peaceful co-existence, literacy and numeracy skills, economic development, ethnicity, equity and social justice, entrepreneurial skills, conflict resolution, respect for self and others, and patriotism. However, there was a need for more focus on other developmental challenges such as HIV/AIDs, Globalization and Trade Liberalization.
3. That the definitions and notions of citizenship education held by Caribbean educational officials while emphasizing Caribbean realities, issues and themes are very much similar to the

ways in which citizenship education is defined and conceptualized by many other countries globally.

4. That there is among the different Caribbean countries a strong desire to see the issue of citizenship education tackled in a regional and coordinated manner, especially given the commonalities of the developmental challenges faced by these countries. A regional approach, it is believed, would also help to overcome the fact that presently the level of focus on citizenship education tends to be uneven and largely uniformed by what sister Caribbean countries are doing in the field of citizenship education.

5. That while there is some evidence of collaboration between Ministries of Education and civil society organizations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs), in the conceptualization, development and implementation of citizenship education programmes, this level of collaboration needs to be significantly strengthened in order to achieve best results.

6. That while there is evidence of some focus on citizenship education themes and issues in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes across the region, there is need for more specific and explicit focus on strategies of conceptualizing and implementing citizenship education projects, initiatives and programmes in schools and outside the formal setting of the classroom.

7. That there is a need for the citizenship education components of the teacher education and training programmes to be targeted for specific financial and technical support by local, regional and international agencies, in order to better equip the teachers to deliver citizenship education programmes.

8. That there is need for greater and more well articulated regional and international cooperation in developing citizenship education programmes for Caribbean countries since this would help provide the opportunities to promote common values, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge

and skills among regional countries which face similar economic, social, political challenges and desire similar achievements with respect to getting people to live together peacefully, and rise successfully to the challenges of globalization and its attendant challenges including those posed by the new information and communication technologies.

9. That for the most part, in spite of a desire and shared commitment among regional countries to see citizenship education programmes more well developed, there is currently a severe weakness and limitation in human, financial and teaching/learning materials resources necessary to significantly enhance the scope and quality of citizenship education programmes which are currently in place or being contemplated for implementation.

10. That there is an urgent need for a promotional campaign designed to provide information to all stakeholders (teachers, students, the general public, educational and political officials, NGOs and CBOs etc, about what citizenship education is all about, its benefits, and expected outcomes.

11. That there is a need for greater emphasis to be placed on not only utilizing the modern communication technologies for the teaching and learning processes but also for sharing and exchanging information and details about best practices, innovations and tackling common challenges with respect to curriculum development and the actual implementation of citizenship education programmes.

12. That there is need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of citizenship education curricula and programmes in the region through workshops, seminars and formal reviews in order to ensure consistency in quality.

13. That there are several actual and possible obstacles to the development and implementation of citizenship education in the region. These include:

- a. Firstly, the fact that while there is no significant opposition to citizenship education programmes there is at times some opposition from parents to certain topics such as sex

education being taught in schools, primarily because of the religious beliefs of these parents.

- b. Secondly, in some countries whenever there is a change in government educational policies and emphases may also be changed. Thus political change can cause major policy changes that affect the entire educational system.
- c. Thirdly, because of the over-crowded nature of the school time table on a daily basis it is difficult to achieve an expansion in the curriculum focusing on citizenship education, or for that subject area to have its own dedicated space in the curriculum and school timetable.
- d. Fourthly, curriculum development in several countries is often hampered by the fact that there are not enough well trained curriculum specialists and the ones currently working in the field are stretched to their limit.

14. That there are numerous, not always well-defined, expectations of, and goals for, citizenship education in the various Caribbean countries. These include the following:

- a. The development of citizens who are able to participate effectively in the social and economic activities of the country.
- b. Inculcate in students an appreciation and respect for different peoples, cultures, and a commitment to justice and equity for all.
- c. Develop in citizens an understanding of local, regional and international economic development.
- d. Equip citizens to utilize effectively the various technological and communication modalities of this modern era.
- e. Ensure that students understand their rights and responsibilities.
- f. Ensure that citizens understand and appreciate the environment and its importance to future human survival.
- g. Ensure that Caribbean citizens understand the ties that bind them and the common destiny they share as a people.
- h. Encourage a greater commitment to national development.
- i. Assist the youth to acquire all the requisite skills and knowledge which help to make informed decisions and take more effective control of their lives.
- j. Assist in developing conflict resolution skills and attitudes among all citizens.

Recommendations

Recommendations: To improve the quality, design and implementation of citizenship education curriculum, programmes and activities

Based on the various findings of the study, with respect to improving the quality, design and implementation of citizenship education curriculum, programmes and activities, it is felt that there is a need to:

1. Undertake, periodic (perhaps every two or three years) reviews of existing citizenship education programmes and activities.
2. Undertake periodic (perhaps every two or three years) review official education plans, concept papers and other related documents for an understanding and continuous assessment of governmental commitment to citizenship education.
3. Undertake surveys in schools to determine the status of implementation of citizenship education in schools, and ascertain students' views on the effectiveness and usefulness of citizenship education programmes, and how they may be improved.
4. Utilize the internet as a source for information on best practices in the field of citizenship education, as well as for creating citizenship education sites of learning which students can access both during and after regular school time.
5. Establish a citizenship education forum, perhaps utilizing the internet and related technologies, so that both teachers and learners can freely dialogue and share information on the various dimensions, eg role, objectives, problems etc., of citizenship education in the Caribbean context, but also facilitating exchange and sharing of ideas with the international community.
6. Engage in more systematic teacher training in such fields as curriculum design and development, with special emphasis on citizenship education.

7. Establish a regional fund specifically aimed at providing resources for the development and implementation of citizenship education programmes, and funding prizes for most effective programmes undertaken by individual schools, or particular countries.
8. Engage in more active promotion/marketing of the concepts and benefits of citizenship education among the communities and countries of the region. As educational officials in Montserrat noted, the respective countries must see the need for citizenship education; must come to know what it entails and what its objectives are, as a prelude to undertaking training in citizenship education, curriculum development and implementation. Thus the need for sensitization workshops for key policy makers and other stakeholders including parents, NGOs and CBOs, among others.
9. Ensure greater and more systematic involvement of all stakeholders in the design and implementation of the citizenship education curriculum initiatives.
10. Engage in further consensus building debate on the issue of whether citizenship education should be a separate subject or whether it should be as is currently the case in most countries, integrated into existing curriculum. While the intergration method has many benefits and is widely used throughout the region it may in part be responsible for the arguably inadequate levels of resources now being allocated to citizenship education in most countries, and the relative absence of any theoretical or public discourse on the citizenship education in the region.
11. Ensure that citizenship education themes and programmes are taught and implemented by specialist teachers who have a good understanding and a passion for exploring in enquiring and innovative ways the culture and development challenges of the particular country/region.
12. Ensure that national and regional consultations be undertaken with the various partners and stakeholders in the educational process to ensure the development appropriate and implementable strategies for citizenship education.

13. Ensure that there is region-wide, a clearly articulated policy to ensure that the teaching of citizenship education is done in a coherent and comprehensive manner.
14. Adopt strategies to make sure that citizenship education is seen as an integral part of national and regional efforts to create learning societies and life long learning attributes in the Caribbean region.
15. Encourage more interchange between the formal school setting and the various NGOs and CBOs which should also be encouraged to participate in citizenship education programmes.
16. Adopt strategies to obtain a shared emphasis and consensus on the local/community, regional and global dimension of issues in the formulation of curriculum strategies for citizenship education to ensure that citizens are adequately prepared to play their part at all levels by acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills.
17. Establish some type of mechanism to ensure that there is some level on monitoring and evaluation of citizenship education curricula, training for teachers in the field, and programmes to facilitate continuous improvements, relevance and updating of citizenship education programmes.
18. Ensure that some effort is made to have adequate local and regional sharing of information about exciting and innovative citizenship education programmes undertaken each year in the respective Caribbean countries.
19. Ensure that interest in, and the relevance of, citizenship education curriculum and programmes can be greatly enhanced by routinely focussing on key developmental issues facing the Caribbean such as youth violence, drugs, HIV/AIDS.
20. Ensure that in articulating a citizenship education programme, the link between citizenship education and social studies be first clarified to avoid unnecessary duplication and clear up any confusion among teachers students and other stakeholders.

21. Ensure that in evaluating learning outcomes and achievements in any citizenship education programme teachers be required to pay greater attention to evidence of critical thinking and values.
22. Ensure that through the IBE or some other regional mechanism a process of constant evaluation, monitoring, feedback and provision of assistance be established to ensure that countries are able to develop consistently high quality citizenship education programmes.

Recommendations: To improve the training and preparation of teachers to more effectively teach citizenship education

1. Emphasize in a more detailed and cohesive manner citizenship education in the pre-service, in-service and formal teacher training programmes. This means adopting strategies to ensure that teacher training programmes at teacher training institutions in the region include more activities which demonstrate democratic principles and all the relevant themes of citizenship education.
2. Have more training workshops and seminars on the topic of citizenship education during in-service training.
3. Provide opportunities for the upgrading of the information base and skills of persons involved in teaching and researching citizenship education throughout the region.
4. Ensure that all teacher training programmes include a segment which involves a community project, focusing on the themes of citizenship education, which may later be implemented in an identified community.
5. Ensure that teachers who will teach citizenship education are given greater theoretical and practical exposure or grounding in the field of citizenship education education to

ensure that they are better equipped to teach citizenship education. This would mean for example ensuring that persons teaching citizenship education are well grounded and knowledgeable in the areas of values, morals, history and cultural diversity and other.

6. Ensure that citizenship education teachers possess certain characteristics and personality traits conducive to the teaching of citizenship education . They should, for example, demonstrate a passion and love of country, self and others, and demonstrate innovativeness and solid critical thinking skills.
7. Assist the Ministries of Education in making a case for an increase in financial allocations for teacher training activities such as workshops and for additional curricular materials, as a means of strengthening the focus on citizenship education.
8. Agitate for assistance from regional and international organizations and countries to provide resource personnel with expertise in various areas of citizenship education.
9. Foster regional and international collaboration so that local teachers could be given opportunities to examine the curriculum of countries which already have fully developed citizenship education programmes, as part of a quest to enhance local efforts and identify best practices overseas.
10. Ensure that citizenship education teaching and learning materials are presented in an exciting manner and exhibiting innovative ideas, utilizing video, CD, and high-quality print modalities.
11. Ensure that in the training of teachers in the area of citizenship education this is done by utilizing not only the classroom setting but also the community environment as a major site of learning; thus the importance of learning in the informal environment and involvement of civil society groups such as NGO and CBOs.

12. Put together a citizenship education compendium of materials to be made available to teachers and students alike for citizenship education programmes, and perhaps maintained through a site on the Internet.
13. Ensure that, as now exist in Barbados for example, more serious efforts are made to adopt a more student-centred approach to the teaching-learning processes, thereby necessitating alternative and more innovative ways of student assessment, as well as giving students an enabling and active voice and role in the class room, and in constructing and implementing any citizenship education programmes.
14. Ensure that more effort be made to develop a regional approach to curriculum development and evaluation as a means of ensuring consistently high quality, relevant and effective curricula across the region.
15. Ensure that citizenship education curriculum and programmes utilize readily recognizable and understood Caribbean examples, case studies, stories, scenarios and folklore to convey the ideal and lessons to be learnt through the various citizenship education programmes, exercises and initiatives.
16. Implement a programme of upgrading the knowledge base and skills of citizenship education teachers across the region through the use of distance education teaching modalities. This means utilizing the distance education equipment which the University of the West Indies presently uses to reach students across the region.

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