

Teacher Education in the Caribbean: the Barbados Experience

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"O Desempenho
dos Professores
na América Latina e
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Prioridades"

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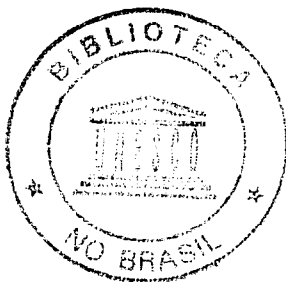


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This paper will provide a review of teacher training at Erdiston Teachers' Training College, Barbados, as well as discuss some of the reform initiatives in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Barbados, the most easterly of all the Caribbean islands, has a total area of 166 square miles - 14 miles wide (at the widest) x 21 miles long, and a population of about 260 thousand persons. There are some 2877 teachers and 103 public schools - 80 primary and 23 secondary. In terms of private schools, there are 25 at the nursery/primary level, and 11 at the secondary level. There is one Polytechnic and one Community College serving the island. As well, there is a campus of the University of the West Indies and one Teachers' Training College. The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports is responsible for all macro- educational policy matters in the country.

The Teachers' College opened its doors in January 1948 to 32 Barbadian teachers. By 1954, the College became a regional institution training teachers from Grenada, St Lucia, Monsterrat, Dominica and Tortola. During its almost fifty-five years of existence, the College's programmes have been revisited from time to time in order to address the professional development needs of teachers, as well as the emergent national issues. It must be stated at the outset that the College is fully funded by the government of Barbados and that Barbadian trainees are not required to pay tuition costs. This is in keeping with the policy of the present and previous governments of Barbados, which seeks to make education accessible to all - an objective that has long been achieved. Hence, Barbadians access education free of cost in Barbados and at the University of the West Indies across the region.

The view is widely held that if teaching and learning in the classroom are to be improved, then attention must be paid to the existing quality of teacher education. Newton (1999) cites Thomas (1993) who observes that the quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teaching force, but in the long run it is the quality of how that teaching force is educated and trained that truly matters. Huang (1998) also articulates this view, and while the emphasis seems to be on technology, the main thought of teacher training is critical. She writes, "The lack of training for teachers may hurt students' chances of surviving the technology revolution and prospering in the 21st century global economy,"

It is in this context that Erdiston College offers several programmes for teacher training. At the level of initial training, they are the:

- Induction Course
- Vocational Teachers' Training Programme in Adult Education
- Diploma in Education
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (September 2002).
- Two Year In-Service Programme

Each of these programmes will be discussed in turn.

The Induction Course is designed for prospective, untrained and inexperienced teachers at the primary and secondary levels. It aims to provide them with strategies of teaching. In addition to promoting an understanding of the basic techniques of classroom management, it aims at developing skills in preparing lesson plans. The programme also introduces participants to concepts such as the project approach, cooperative learning and constructivism. Course participants are also sensitized to aspects of the Education Act and Regulations governing the Act.

During the sessions, trainees engage in resource materials production and are able to display a wide range of teaching materials at the end of the period. The programme is conducted during four weeks of the summer holidays and participants, on satisfactory completion of a portfolio, are awarded a Certificate of Completion. Evaluations of the programme to date, indicate that participants enjoy the activities and benefit tremendously - not only from the content delivered by facilitators but also from the interaction with their colleagues.

The Vocational Teachers' Training Programme in Adult Education is a one year day-release course, designed specifically for untrained instructors (of Technical Education) at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Vocational Training Board who are involved in teaching young adults. The course of study includes:

- Interpersonal Relationships
- Training Methodologies
- Technology in Education
- Resource Materials Production
- Programme Design, Development and Evaluation
- Use of English
- Evaluation Techniques in Business and Industrial Training
- Psychology
- Teaching Practicum

Some of the objectives of the programme are to help participants:

- identify and empathize with adult learners
- provide the necessary guidance for the overcoming of learning difficulties
- use a variety of training methodologies in order to enhance learning and performance

One component of the teaching practicum is micro-teaching. In this activity, trainees prepare and teach a short lesson which is videotaped and then critiqued by their colleagues. Since this activity is not graded by the Tutors, participants find it particularly useful, as it serves to highlight their strengths and weaknesses and provides the opportunity for them to rectify the latter. The other sessions of the practicum are assessed jointly by personnel from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Erdiston College.

The programme also affords participants the opportunity to undertake a job attachment (in industry) for two weeks. There, they are expected to observe the organization's functioning and to relate this to their classroom/workshop operation. Participants in this programme benefit from presentations by resource persons from the public and private sectors in areas such as:

- Health and Safety
- Standardisation
- Bio-related Technology
- The Principles of First Aid
- Preventing and Extinguishing Fires

In keeping with the initiative of assessing students on a continuous basis and eliminating one shot examinations, participants are assessed orally and through portfolios, in addition to pencil and paper tests.

The Diploma in Education is a one year day-release programme for graduate teachers at the secondary and tertiary levels. It is offered to local and regional participants. To access this

course of study, participants are required to hold a degree in their area of specialisation. Unlike the previous programme which is prepared by the College and endorsed by the Ministry of Education, the Dip.Ed as it is familiarly called, is a university accredited programme. In this regard, Lecturers from the School of Education, University of the West Indies, moderate the term papers and also assess student teachers during the final teaching practicum.

The objectives of the programme are (inter alia) to help teachers:

- use a variety of instructional skills and management procedures and effectively utilize time, space, and materials for instructional purposes
- improve their understanding of self and others and develop their communication and interpersonal skills
- understand the factors which affect the learning and development of children and adolescents, and the ways in which the educative environment contributes to their growth and development

The course of study consists of the following components:

- The Teaching of English
- The Teaching of Geography/History/Social Studies
- The Teaching of Mathematics
- The Teaching of Modern Languages
- The Teaching of Science
- The Teaching of Business Studies
- The Teaching of Art
- The Teacher in the School and the Community
- Sociology of Education
- Educational Philosophy and Curriculum Development
- Educational Psychology
- Research Methods and Evaluation
- The Practice of Education

The component, the Teacher in the School and the Community includes Resource Materials Production, Technology in Education and Classroom Management. It should also be noted that participants in this course benefit from presentations by Trade Unionists, Attorneys- at-Law, Guidance Counsellors, and other school support agencies including the Child Care Board and the Royal Barbados Police Force.

The theoretical aspect of the course is assessed by term papers, and students complete 20 weeks of teaching practice over a period of two terms. During the first term, the Tutor functions as a guide and the trainees are given anecdotal feedback but are not assessed. However, in the second term, participants are assessed jointly by personnel from the College and University. Participants are required to submit a teaching unit based on the practicum which also forms part of the assessment.

From September 2002, the College proposes to offer a training programme for graduate teachers at the primary level. This has become necessary, since there was no programme designed specifically by which this group could access training previously. The programme designed by the College draws on the existing Dip.Ed and Two Year In-Service programmes. The School of Education has indicated its willingness to accept the programme in principle, subject to some modification. The programme will be offered for two years on a day release basis. In addition to the areas mentioned for the Dip.Ed, participants will also be required to

access training in Physical Education, Health and Family Life Education and Music. This is so designed because teachers at the primary schools facilitate delivery of all subject areas, whereas their colleagues at the secondary level, tend to specialize in one or two areas.

The final course of study for initial training offered by the College is the Two Year In-Service programme. This is a full-time programme designed for nongraduate teachers at the primary and secondary levels, and it is moderated by the University of the West Indies. It should be noted here that this programme is also offered by other Teachers' Colleges in the Eastern Caribbean (OECS) . Since participants are at the College full-time over a two year period, this provides greater opportunity for them to reflect and for the staff to experiment, in terms of delivery strategies. To date, this programme is the one which provides the College with the greatest opportunity to prepare teachers directly to implement the reforms proposed by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports.

Some six to seven years ago, the academic staff of the College sought to revise the initial full-time training programme . The staff (of the College) concur with the views espoused by several authors that preparation of teachers for the 21st century must be significantly different from what existed previously. As a consequence, other features were added to the programme.

The rationale states inter alia, that

On developing the knowledge and skills needed to demonstrate competence in the classroom, participants will adopt a reflective and problem solving approach as change agents who are willing to enhance the process of education in this country. In addition, they will implement educational practices designed to ensure that their charges develop those attitudes and values which will enable them to meet the challenges of the twenty first century.

The staff examined the kind of teacher that would be required in the new environment-that is - what standards/competencies should be our focus. Our responses include (note that the list is not exhaustive) that the professional teacher should :

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of subject content and application to real life situations
- design/plan instruction appropriate to pupils' needs
- demonstrate a commitment to the community through collaboration with care givers, preservation of the natural environment and involvement in community development activities
- create and maintain a classroom climate that is conducive to learning by providing opportunities for the personal maturity and acceptable social behaviour of pupils

The foregoing are in sync with Parkay (2000) who suggests that any restructuring effort would have to focus on four basic questions namely:

- 1 What should teacher education students know?
- 2 What should they be able to do ?
- 3 Who should they be (as persons) ?
- 4 What experiences will result in the desired outcomes?

Apart from the theoretical component of the programme, there is also the Practice of Education. This is an extremely essential area, as it provides the student teachers with the opportunity to literally operationalise their theory.

A brief examination of this segment of the course reveals that during the first year, the teachers undertake micro-teaching for one week. This helps to prepare them to function as part of a team. Course participants are paired. Here, they learn to work together - planning and executing the plan. More importantly, the lessons are videotaped by their colleagues and are critiqued by the group afterwards. Trainees have indicated that they find this to be a particularly useful activity, especially since they can see how they have taught the lessons and can therefore improve where necessary. This activity is conducted at the College with children from a neighbouring school.

For the first practicum in the schools, students are again paired. In addition, they are assigned to a Cooperating Teacher, an experienced "master" teacher, who observes their lessons and generally befriends them. Students plan lessons together and support one another. The activity provides the opportunity for them to observe and critique the other person's lessons. In these sessions participants are strongly encouraged to experiment and apply the theory to practice. Both the site-based and school-based sessions prove invaluable as opportunities for peer evaluation. It should be noted that neither of the abovementioned activities are graded. Tutors observing, provide anecdotal reports only. The Cooperating Teacher and the Principal of the school also forward reports on a form specially designed by the College. By the time participants are ready for the second and final sessions, their confidence is greater and they can better enhance the teaching/learning situation in their classrooms.

Experience at the College has shown that trainee teachers, like children in the classroom, get bored with only chalk and talk for long periods. Consequently, staff have sought to vary their teaching strategies considerably. So, while the timetable will indicate a session as three hours, a Tutor would not necessarily lecture for this duration of time. Actual delivery may only be half an hour. Students may then be required to work in groups, individually in the library or the computer lab and report back for the last hour or half hour. Tutors may even co-present to add variety, as well as to show collaboration.

It must also be stressed that the integration of technology is pervasive at Erdiston College. Tutors have been trained in the use of technologies in Education and this is paying dividends. From the Tutors' perspective, there is much support and collaboration, so one need not be afraid to venture out re technology use. In essence, staff members seek to model behaviours which they hope that student teachers will emulate on their return to the classroom. The use of technology is not limited to the computer, but includes the tape recorder, overhead projector, digital camera and the video camera.

Special workshops are also organized for the students regarding the use of Technology and in other areas such as Early Childhood, Special Needs Education and Creative Arts in Education. These areas are significant in terms of the thrust in educational reform, and so the College seeks to ensure that the requisite emphasis is accorded them. For example, by the end of the workshop on Early Childhood Education, participants were involved in the production of resource materials which they were able to use during the recently concluded teaching practicum. In Creative Arts in Education, they are required to show how Dance, Drama and Music are integrated into other subjects. It might be important to note that Physical Education and Health and Family Life Education are compulsory subjects. In this area, students have produced brochures on topics including diabetes and obesity.

One activity which the College undertakes at the end of every term is programme evaluation by students. Faculty and administration believe that this is essential for improvement. Participants are given the opportunity to complete evaluation instruments, as well as to orally express their views on any aspects of the programme. During the term, participants are encouraged to share any concerns they have. Their comments are reviewed and where possible, the concerns are addressed. This has proven to be quite beneficial to students and staff alike.

In addition to the initial training programmes, the College also offers a course in Educational Management and Administration to trained practitioners who function as administrators in the educational system or are potential administrators. This is a one year day release course which seeks to develop administrators who:

- can manage financial and other resources effectively and efficiently
- can build effective work teams
- are skilled in decision-making and problem-solving; and are proactive in their response to meeting the needs of their institutions and the persons whom they serve

The components of the course are:

- Social Psychology
- Educational Research and Evaluation
- Administration and Supervision
- Sociology of Education

The structure of the programme allocates one week off from the classroom, during each term, for participants to be engaged in activities related to the course. These include visits to private sector organisations, as well as other educational institutions, oral presentations, and practical activities including, simulated interviews and meetings. In addition, they benefit from guest presentations on topics such as drug abuse, children at risk, industrial relations and personal development. During the year, each participant writes six (6) term papers, as well as makes an Oral Presentation. Together, they form the basis for assessment. As for all college-based courses, participants will undertake a course in Basic Technology Mastery.

Another means by which Erdiston College trains teachers, albeit indirectly, is through a series of workshops. Some of these are scheduled during the Easter holiday - usually of eight days duration. The College works in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and other stakeholders. The workshops are designed for two main purposes, namely to:

- strengthen the reform thrust of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
- provide an opportunity for teachers to engage in professional development activities

Among the workshops held during this year were:

- Auto CAD
- Creating Mathematical Manipulatives for the Early Years
- Creative School Leadership in a Context of Change
- Planning and Preparing the Programme Budget
- Planning Lessons in Music for Classes 1& 2
- Production of Instructional Video Tapes
- Teaching Reading to Young Children
- The Project Approach

A quick glance would indicate the range of workshops offered and it should be noted that two of those listed above are particularly included for Principals and other senior staff members. This supports the College's view and current literature that teacher development is a continuum and so it is not a matter of "once trained always trained."

In Barbados, there is growing concern among educators and the general public, that boys are underperforming in the classroom, particularly at the primary and lower levels of the secondary schools. To this end, the College has developed a fifty-hour workshop on a one day release basis for ten weeks. It is entitled "Gender Issues in Education: Addressing the Imbalances at the Primary Level."

The workshop is designed to sensitise participants about gender issues in education. It is intended that this sensitivity will bring about changes in practice that will allow students to maximize available educational opportunities regardless of sex. It is also hoped that participants will analyse the reasons why there are differences between the achievement of boys and girls and implement strategies to address these imbalances. The programme constitutes a series of presentations from practitioners in the field of education, and other personnel including psychologists and counsellors. There is much emphasis on sharing and participants are required, as part of the programme, to sensitise other staff members as well as the parents of the school. In addition, they are encouraged to develop gender specific activities to enhance the students' performance. The first programme targeted teachers, but subsequently, principals of primary schools were invited to access it. Training for this group is almost completed, after which, their secondary counterparts will be invited to participate. Following this, the invitation will be extended to all teachers on a phased basis.

In keeping with its Mission Statement, which states, inter alia, that we are "providing training programmes . . . to teachers and the wider public . . .", the College offers courses including:

- Early Childhood Education
- Sign Language (Basic and Advanced)
- Special Needs Education
- Counselling (Basic and Advanced)
- Classroom Management

These are pursued by teachers, as well as persons in other fields of endeavour and are well subscribed. This programme is facilitated by personnel outside of the College.

Despite the existing educational framework, in 1995, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture (as it was then called), committed itself to reforming the educational system and to making it more responsive to national development. While acknowledging that the country had attained universal access, it was recognised that it is imperative to ensure that each child benefits from quality education. It is against this backdrop that Edutech (Education Sector Enhancement Programme) was conceptualised.

Its primary goal is to increase the number of students contributing to sustainable social and economic development of Barbados. It was determined that if a new individual is to be developed, the teachers would be required to change from a didactic teacher-centred mode to a constructivist approach. In addition, the programme will promote project-based learning among students at primary and secondary schools, in an effort to foster a collaborative culture in the classroom and beyond. Integral to the programme, is the integration of technology in

education and the revision of the existing curricula. The programme will also improve the physical plant of the schools, and promote institutional strengthening.

In summary, the major components of the programme are:

- Civil Works
- Technological Infrastructure
- Curriculum Reform and Evaluation
- Institutional Strengthening to include Teacher Training

Each of the above will be discussed in turn:

As alluded to earlier, the physical plant of the island's schools is generally in dire need of repair. This is due mainly to the fact that the plant is aged. Many of the island's schools are between 40-100 years old, added to which there has been no comprehensive maintenance system in place. It should be noted that the rehabilitation of schools is planned (like the rest of the programme) to be undertaken on a phased basis, 20 schools annually, over a period of seven years.

The component of technological infrastructure will provide for the introduction of technology in all the island's schools and will include hardware, software and networking infrastructure. All schools will be equipped with computers, associated peripherals and other equipment to include, overhead projectors, scanners and digital cameras. Of note here is that each classroom will have a teacher's media centre, consisting of a television, a video cassette recorder and an electronic whiteboard. These are expected to enhance the teacher's presentation of lessons. While some academic software will be purchased, teachers will be encouraged to use web-based products where possible.

The advent of Edutech signals a systemic approach to education reform in Barbados and is considered as a school improvement project. The curriculum reform component addresses issues both at the primary, as well as the secondary levels. It emphasises student-centred approaches, the integration of technology into the curriculum and the integration of subjects across the curriculum. Syllabi have been rewritten to include suggested activities and resources. There is also a focus on social and emotional learning, as it is recognised that this is an important aspect of the student's development. Some prominence is given to alternative methods of assessment, particularly portfolio and continuous assessment. While pencil and paper tests have not been abolished, teachers are encouraged to include other forms of assessment, as these will minimise the one-shot examination and give teachers an overall view of student's performance over time.

At the secondary schools, the system of levels has been introduced. This will provide the opportunity for students to work at their own pace, as is deemed necessary by the teacher. In addition, all students at the secondary schools will be required to write an examination to qualify for the High School Diploma (the Barbados National Diploma of Secondary Education).

In order to assess the effectiveness of the Edutech programme, the Education Evaluation Centre has been established at the University of the West Indies. The two major areas currently being examined are the implementation of the programme in the phase one schools and the training for school personnel.

One of the components of Edutech is institutional strengthening. This includes retraining of all school personnel and other relevant persons. To this end, Education Officers of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, staff of the Audio Visual Aids Department and the academic staff of the College have engaged in extensive training in preparation for this programme. In fact, it should be pointed out here that training for the aforementioned Officers of the Ministry of Education and the College is ongoing.

Another significant aspect of the Edutech programme is the Attitudinal Change segment. This is to be undertaken by all persons involved in education at the level of the Ministry of Education, Erdiston College and the schools. It is believed that if persons are required to manage successfully the change which currently exists in the education system, then they should be given the concomitant training. This facet of the programme has been put out to tender and on completion of that process, it is expected that the training will begin.

Erdiston College coordinates all the training for teachers and support personnel for the Edutech programme. The College's administration is seeking to ensure that all teachers who are registered for regular training programmes, access training at the same time (where possible) in Basic Technology Mastery and Teaching Methodologies - a total of 140 hours of training.

At the beginning of the calendar year, the School's Leadership Team usually led by the Principal or Deputy Principal, with the Curriculum Coordinator and Information Technology Coordinator is released from regular duty for six (6) months to access full-time training. Other teachers in the schools are encouraged to access training after school in the evenings. Training is conducted at some schools where adequate facilities exist, otherwise, teachers are invited to choose from designated centres across the island. The training is conducted by selected facilitators from the schools.

The Ministry of Education has granted permission for schools with the requisite facilities to conduct training during the school day for their staff members and some schools have been able to organise this. To date, however, Edutech training is not mandatory, but it is hoped that teachers will eventually deem it essential enough to get on board.

In addition to teachers and principals, the College also provides training for school secretaries, clerk-typists, clerical officers, library assistants and secretary-treasurers (school finance officers). The fact that training is offered for all support personnel demonstrates to some extent, the inclusive nature of the programme, and epitomizes the philosophy postulated by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, "Each One Matters: Education for all."

An examination of some of the English-speaking Caribbean islands shows that many of them are also involved in education reform at a systemic rather than perfunctory level. Newton (1993) provides the framework for the discourse on this section of the paper. This thrust is driven by the Report of the West Indian Commission- Time for Action (1992). Newton (1993) alludes to the Report which notes that "education in the region was in crisis and in need of intensive revitalization if West Indian children of the future were not to inherit a stagnant agricultural and industrial backwater"(p.1). The Report also takes into consideration the notion of competing. Newton (1993) citing the Report observes, "the quality and frequency of the kind of education on offer throughout the systems do not measure up to what is required for a future in which we can compete" (p.1).

Against that backdrop several concerns were raised. Among them were poor performance of students at the primary and secondary levels, inappropriateness of curricula and teaching

methods to include the absence of linkages between school and work, shortages of teachers and instructional resources and the poor physical condition of the schools. It should be noted that these are some of the areas addressed in Barbados Edutech programme. While some of the concerns raised above may be considered generic, some islands have specific needs. In Trinidad and Tobago, a National Task Force on Education,(NFTE,1993) identified the following among the issues specific to that territory:

- low quality and high degree of inequality in access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- low level functional literacy and numeracy at the primary and secondary levels
- need to upgrade physical facilities at both primary and secondary levels
- need to continue to expand the secondary sector
- need to enhance the curriculum and curriculum delivery at the primary level

As a corollary to the (NFTE'S) two projects were developed- the Basic Education Project (BEP) funded partly by the World Bank and the Secondary Education Modernization Project (SEMP) funded partly by the IDB. The BPE has four segments, viz:

- Early Childhood Care Education
- Quality Primary Education
- Physical Environment
- Education Management and Strengthening

The Early Childhood Care Education segment was designed to address quality and access. Regarding quality, the in-service training and supervision of teachers was to be improved. Under access, ECCE centres would be more accessible to poor children, new ECCE centres would be built and parental outreach programmes expanded.

Under the QPE, the emphasis was placed on enhanced delivery of teaching/learning, limited establishment of a text book loan scheme, professional development of staff, improved teacher training including training in the use of computers for educational purposes and the provision of instructional materials.

In terms of physical environment, it is envisaged that 15 new schools would be built to accommodate the increased demand as well as remodel/upgrade others.

Regarding the Education Management and Strengthening, some of the objectives include improving the managerial, planning and technical capacity of the Ministry of Education, providing technical assistance and training workshops to involve school staff in planning the decentralization strategy, encouraging principals, teachers and parents to diagnose their own schools and developing quality improvement projects.

The SEMP like the BEP has four segments and some of the objectives are quite similar.

- Improved Educational Quality and Equity
- De-shifting, Rehabilitation and Upgrading of school infrastructure
- Institutional Strengthening
- Studies and Measures for Improved Sector Performance

Under Improved Educational Quality and Equity some of the objectives are

- the development and validation of a new secondary curriculum in five core areas in forms 1-5
- the introduction of a pilot reading programme

- the introduction of a variety of instructional resources to support new approaches to teaching/learning
- the limited establishment of a textbook loan scheme
- development of a programme for the professional development of teachers, principals and Ministry staff

The entire programme (like Barbados) will be phased over a seven year period. Trinidad and Tobago will also issue a National Certificate of Secondary Education.

Rehabilitation of the school plant includes building and equipping 18 new schools, equipping all secondary schools with computer laboratories, and upgrading science laboratories in all secondary schools.

In terms of Institutional Strengthening, specifically targeted for the Ministry of Education, some of the components are

- overall planning and management of the change process
- school-based management and the establishment of school boards
- incentives for the improved performance of teachers and students
- establishment of a new teacher remuneration structure
- strengthening the overall capacity of the Ministry of Education

Studies and Measures for Improved Sector Performance form the bedrock for further reform. Over time, the Ministry will seek to expand 'A' level coverage, provide enhanced services to children with special needs and appraise the Ministry's role in the provision of technical and vocational education.

Like Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago's philosophy caters to the individual and is concerned inter alia with the "... need to be relevant to each individual in the process of schooling" (Newton 1993,p.6).

Jamaica, like its regional neighbours, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, also saw the need for reform. Newton (1993) refers to some of the factors which existed at the time, namely, high levels of functional illiteracy, low levels of achievement, inequalities in access and disparities in the allocation of resources and programmes offered.

In this regard, the government of Jamaica launched several projects. Among these was the Education Assistance Project I (PEAP-I) in 1993-1994. It sought to

- improve the delivery of mathematics education at the primary level and student achievement procedures
- decentralize management activities and train principals to manage schools effectively

One of the major activities of PEAP I was the development of the School Community Outreach Programme (SCOPE). This programme sought to foster closer relationships between the school and the community. As a consequence, vandalism was eliminated, Parent-Teacher Associations were more effective and school attendance improved.

Another project developed to support education at the primary level was the Primary Education Improvement Project - Phase II (PEIPII) 1993-1999 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of primary education. This project was funded by the government of Jamaica and a group of lenders led by the IADB. Among the areas addressed are:

- curriculum evaluation - which seeks to coordinate the revision and evaluation of the curriculum for primary grades
- civil works - this aspect is concerned with the physical conditions of the schools and sought to construct and extend the existing facilities
- Language Arts - this component made provision for on site training for teachers to help them identify those students underperforming in reading and writing

Also introduced was the National Horizons Activity (NHA) 1998. The project funded by U S Agency for International Development (USAID), was designed to increase the levels of literacy and numeracy in 72 selected primary schools. It aimed to:

- develop innovative literacy and mathematics programmes
- provide in-service training in reading and mathematics
- offer parent education and training facilitation of nutritional programmes
- train teachers in educational technology and establish computer laboratories
- link schools with the Jamaica regional and national EMIS network

At the secondary level, the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE), funded by the World Bank, was started in 1993 and extended until 2000. It was designed to improve quality and increase equity and access to secondary education. The most critical aspects of the ROSE project were

- curriculum reform
- resource materials production
- the extensive training of teachers and other education personnel

It may be noted from the foregoing, that unlike Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago which undertook a major reform project - in the case of Trinidad and Tobago - two projects, Jamaica participated in several projects designed particularly to improve primary education.

The reform undertaken by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) will be discussed for individual islands. They are Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis. Ministers of Education in the region mandated a group of educators, with Professor Errol Miller of the University of the West Indies (as Chairman) to develop an Education Reform Strategy for this area.

All the islands developed the Basic Education Project during 1996-1997 but with different objectives. For Antigua and Barbuda the objectives were

- an enhanced learning environment at the secondary level
- qualitative improvements in the delivery of teaching and the effectiveness of student learning
- enhanced capabilities of the Ministry of Education, Youth Sports, and Community Development to effect qualitative improvements in the development, supervision and management of basic education

It was necessary for personnel in Education to respond to the needs regarding deteriorating physical facilities and an adequate supply of furniture and equipment. Other issues raised included deficient educational quality, manifested in weaknesses in teacher quality, national curricula and assessment, inadequacies in coordinating, supervising, monitoring and appraising the education system.

The project therefore comprised

- repairs to and expansion of eight secondary schools
- provision of furniture, equipment and materials for schools and the Ministry

- technical assistance in the form of fellowships in educational planning and management, curriculum development, and diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate degree training for teachers at the primary and secondary levels as well as principals

In St Vincent and the Grenadines issues similar to those of Antigua and Barbuda arose, namely, inadequate physical facilities, shortage of equipment and materials, inadequately trained teaching and supervisory staff, as well as inadequacies in managing the education sector. The objectives of the project were

- to enhance the learning environment at the primary level and improve the quality of basic education at both primary and secondary levels
- to improve capacity to deliver and manage quality basic education programmes

The components of the project were, enhancing the learning environment, quality improvement and institutional strengthening, and addressed the following

- construction, furnishing and equipping of three replacement primary schools and an extension to another
- provision of furniture, equipment and supplies for the Central Curriculum Resource Centre
- technical assistance in the form of consultancy services to strengthen the project management capability of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Women's Affairs; fellowships in regional and non-regional studies in education planning, statistics, research, and testing and measurement; bachelor's degrees for teaching core curriculum subjects at the secondary level and local training for teachers in the production of curriculum materials

Among the issues under discussion for St Lucia were the shortage of places in the secondary system, giving rise to low transition rates from primary to secondary and the limited capacity to plan and manage the educational system. The Basic Education Project sought to

- enhance the capabilities of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Labour (MOECL) to deliver more effective basic education programmes (primary and secondary), and manage the education system; implement and systematically monitor and evaluate basic education programmes
- increase the number of students accessing and successfully completing the upper level of basic education (secondary level) and thus better preparing them for entry into the world of work, and for further education and training

Three facets comprised the project. They were:

- I. Technical Assistance in which fellowships for overseas study in several areas were awarded - namely - education planning, computer programming, financial management and analysis and educational administration. These are aimed at institutional strengthening and qualitative improvement at the classroom level
- II. Civil Works - through which they sought to extend and/or construct secondary schools, District Education Officers, and repairs to primary and secondary schools
- III. Equipment where supplies and equipment for schools were ordered

In St Kitts and Nevis, the government acknowledged that an educated and trained workforce was critical to the country's existence. In this regard, the government recognised the shortcomings and the project was established to

- I. provide and maintain a more appropriate learning environment for a greater number of students in the system pursuing basic education at primary and secondary level
- II. enhance the education system in the areas of management, particularly planning, data collection, and analysis, student assessment, curriculum development and pedagogy

This project had three components, namely, institutional strengthening and quality enhancement, the learning environment/school facilities and project management. It provided for the building/expansion of primary and secondary schools and the construction of a Curriculum Development Unit and a Teacher Resource Unit; the supply of materials, furniture and equipment; technical assistance and project management. Attention was also paid to the assessment of student performances, teacher quality, school management and training and development for improved institutional capacity in planning and management.

In relation to the OECS territories, the OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU) submitted recommendations to the OECS Ministers of Education in May 2002. These were based on research arising from a 'Study of Teachers' Work and Education Reform in the Eastern Caribbean'. While it is universally recognised that teachers are pivotal to any reform undertaken in the educational system, the report indicates that "their point of view on their work and their role in education reform has never, until now, been examined systematically at the sub-regional level" (p.1). This is a strong indictment on policy planners and school administrators and clearly needs to be addressed. In fact, it is at variance with the position espoused by Hargreaves (1994) who opines,

The restructuring of schools, the composition of national and provincial curricula, the development of benchmark assessments - all these things are of little value if they do not take the teacher into account. Teachers don't merely develop the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get (p.ix).

Other issues raised in this report, which were also highlighted under the BEP projects, are opportunities for career enhancement and professional development, and the strengthening of management capacities.

Both in Barbados and the other English-speaking territories, it is noted that teacher training continues to be high on the education reform agenda. Ministers of Education in this region continue to place great emphasis on this component of their portfolio, as is borne out by the continued stipends, and in some cases full salaries, which teachers receive as they pursue teacher training. Traditionally, education in this region is deemed to be very important, as it is considered a means of social mobility.

In this era, however, such reform has become a necessity, as the region seeks to equip its young citizens for the rapid and unprecedented changes enveloping the world in which we are forced to function. The teacher is still the key to our countries' developmental efforts, particularly as the latter relates to functional literacy, a concept that is constantly being redefined. As a consequence then, it behoves educational planners to keep teacher professional development at the centre and on the cutting edge of this revolution .

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