

COUNTRY REPORT - GRENADA

Presented to the Sub-Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development

For

"LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER"

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INTRODUCTION

Grenada is the most southerly of the Windward Islands, lying between Trinidad in the South and St. Vincent in the North at latitude 12° North and 61° West longitude. It is a tri-island state with two other islands, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, making a total land mass of 133 square miles (344 square Km). Its population is 100,000 approximately.

Main organizations and mechanisms involved in the process of curriculum development and reform

The main organizations involved in the process of curriculum development and reform in Grenada are as follows:

1. World Bank -In the areas of training and provision of educational materials and consultancy services.
2. OERU -Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Education Reform Unit - responsible for initiating activities relevant to the OECS Reform in Education.

3. UNICEF -United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund-assists in the provision of funds for Early Childhood Education and Health and Family Life Education programmes
4. UNESCO -United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - funding and training
5. CARNEID -Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development.
6. P.A.H.O -Pan American Health Organization.
7. U.N.D.C.P -United Nations Drug Control Problem.
8. O.A.S -Organization of American States.
9. B.D.D (D.F.I.D) -British Development Division (Department for Information and Development).
10. C.I.D.A -Canadian International Development Agency.
11. U.W.I -University of the West Indies.
12. T.A. Marryshow Community College, **Grenada**
13. Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

The main mechanisms are consultations, training workshops and courses, provision of qualified staff for the Curriculum Unit, provision of appropriate resource materials, e.g. textbooks, computers, charts, science equipment, software etc., involvement of Grenada in the OECS Curriculum harmonization process.

Curriculum Development Processes/Reforms

Grenada embarked on formal organized curriculum development in the year 1980. Prior to this, there was very little emphasis placed on Curriculum Development. It was during the People's **Revolutionary Government (PRG)**, 1979 to 1983, that the political directorate saw it fit to initiate some form of central planning of the curriculum. The period could therefore be regarded as a landmark in the development of curriculum in Grenada.

After the demise of the **PRG**, a Curriculum Unit was established in 1985 with funds left over from an OAS-sponsored curriculum project (executed during the 1980 - 83 period). When these funds were exhausted, the government took full responsibility for the maintenance of the unit.

Initially, the development of curriculum in the primary schools was the focus, but later its scope included the lower forms (one, two, three) of the secondary school system. The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) at first concentrated its efforts on the subject disciplines of Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science which were regarded as the core subjects. At **present**, the subject disciplines handled by the CDU include Health and Family Life Education, Technical and Vocational Education, Agricultural Science **as well as** Guidance and Counselling.

Structure of the Curriculum Development Unit

The Curriculum Development Unit is made up of one Senior Education Officer (Head of the Unit) and Curriculum Officers for each of the subject disciplines. The officers are responsible to the Senior Education Officer, who in turn is responsible to the Chief Education Officer.

Philosophies or Principles of Education/Curriculum Development which inform the Curriculum Design and Reform Process in Grenada

Originally, the curriculum was designed to respond to a specific political need (1980 - 1983). After the demise of the PRG, curriculum development followed a model, which could be described as the objectives model. The design of the curriculum was content-driven. Final draft curriculum programmes were documents reflecting what "experts" perceived should be taught to children. The curriculum did not respond to the needs of society. Today, there are complaints from several employers that schooling has not prepared the graduates for the kinds of jobs that are available.

Curriculum reforms are now taking place to focus on meeting the needs of learners and the society in general. Curriculum planners have been mandated by the Prime Minister in his annual New Year's Day Address to pay attention to several key aspects of national development. This is the first time (apart from the brief period 1979 - 1983) that the leadership of Grenada has clearly outlined what trends should be discerned in the Education System and hence curriculum planning.

Some of the key features of the Prime Minister's mandate as it relates to education are as follows:

1. *Adult literacy rate of 99%*
2. *All children receiving a minimum of six (6) years quality education including computer literacy.*
3. *A minimum of six (6) years secondary education for all the children of Grenada including technology and business studies.*
4. *University and tertiary education for a minimum of seventy percent (70%) of secondary graduates.*
5. *Incorporation of Health and Family Life Education, Sport, Recreation and Leisure in the all-round development of our people.*
6. *Computers with access to the Internet in every secondary and primary school within the next five years.*
7. *Computer proficiency and information technology training for all our school teachers within the next five years.*

A more interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to curriculum development is pursued and there is movement in some schools to a transdisciplinary approach where students are taught to be responsible and productive citizens of the future.

Moreover, constructivist approaches to teaching and learning are also advocated, with the training of teachers in the philosophy underpinning it. Teachers are encouraged to become facilitators of learning and to help students to learn on their own.

Curriculum development is also influenced by philosophers and human development psychologists like John Dewey , Jerome Bruner, and Jean Piaget, among others.

The thrust in curriculum development, currently, is to identify learning outcomes for each level in the education system. This will lead to a competency based model curriculum, which aims at clearly indicating to both teachers and students the competencies to be mastered at the end of a particular grade level. The learning outcomes would define the entire scope of each programme of study.

In Grenada, the process of developing new curricula or revising existing curricula is now a bottom-up process rather than a top-down process. This involves the participation of classroom teachers, Teacher education lecturers and curriculum personnel from within the Ministry of Education. The teachers are the ones who dominate the writing teams. This approach is used in the hope that the major players in curriculum implementation, the teachers, would develop a sense of ownership of the curriculum.

The guiding philosophy influencing curriculum development and reform is based on the view that curriculum should be geared to equipping learners to deal with existing or foreseeable societal problems. Hence, issues like improving literacy and numeracy, Health and Family Life Education, programmes for male underachievers and changing the methods of assessing learning are the focus.

Although areas of the curriculum which deal with the creative arts and sports have not been identified, they are addressed and managed by Ministries other than the Ministry of Education and form a significant part of the extra curricular activities of schools.

Every effort is made to cater for the all-round development of students, in keeping with the purpose of a curriculum, which can be defined as all the experiences of a child under the auspices of the school.

Religious Education is also a subject area in some schools that are affiliated to churches or other religious bodies.

New content areas and teaching /learning methodologies introduced in recent reforms

The new content areas are as follows:

1. Health and Family Life Education with emphasis on Life Skills
2. Information Technology
3. Electronics Education
4. Human Rights Education for Citizenship
5. Introduction of modern languages (French and Spanish) at the pPrimary and secondary shools.
6. Career Education
7. Focus on consumer Arithmetic and Graphs and Statistics in Mathematics. Students are taught to interpret graphs.

Teaching /Learning Methodologies focused on are **the following:**

1. Constructivist philosophy in teaching and learning

2. Use of projects in Science and Social Studies
3. Remedial education with focus on multiple intelligence of students
4. Identification of learning outcomes in the areas of Mathematics and Language Arts
5. Continuous assessment and the use of portfolios in assessment
6. Minimum Competency Tests at Grade 4 of the primary school and Form 3 of the secondary school
7. Focus on the participatory approach to teaching and learning, using strategies like role play, drama, stories, case studies, discussions

Curricula areas which focus on the three themes of the seminar

1. **Education for Citizenship: Learning at school and in society**
2. **Social Exclusion and Violence: Education for social cohesion**
3. **Shared values, Cultural diversity and Education: What to learn and how**

The three themes above are focused on indirectly in the following subject areas:

1. Health and Family Life Education with emphasis on Life Skills, enables students to acquire values and attitudes which lead to positive behaviours and healthy life styles. Skills like interpersonal relationship, conflict resolution, problem solving and ability to empathize, address those themes above.
2. The introduction of Career Education through the Guidance and Counselling Unit is another area. The Guidance and Counselling Unit is also involved in a pilot programme focusing on male under-achievers. Male groups were established in two schools with the main objectives of helping males to serve as mentors for one another.
3. A young leaders' programme, initiated and sponsored by the Grenada Bank of Commerce also exposes students to aspects of those themes. Students at the secondary level engage in healthy competition by undertaking projects for the enhancement of their school and community. Not only are leadership skills developed, but students get first hand experiences in being responsible citizens by doing practical activities like planting trees to enhance their environment. The programme also gives credence to the idea of partnership in education.
4. Remedial Education was introduced focusing on making use of the multiple intelligence of students. Teachers are now looking at the different ways in which children learn, to address the needs of those who are under achieving.
5. Adult Literacy is another recent focus where the aim is to give persons who cannot read and write a second chance to do so.
6. Use of the Internet in the area of research also serves to help students to learn more on their own.
7. Early Childhood and Parent education are other areas of focus.

Main problems faced by Curriculum Specialist in Grenada during the Curriculum Development/Reform Process in the area of

1. Design
2. Implementation
3. Follow-up of the process

The main problem faced in the area of design is the limited exposure of curriculum officers to the various designs of Curriculum.

In the area of implementation there is insufficient and inappropriate supervision of curriculum implementation both at the level of the school and at the level of the Ministry of Education. There is, at the level of the school, lack of instructional leadership and, at the level of the Ministry, insufficient manpower to supervise implementation. **This is further compounded by:**

- Untrained teachers
- Insufficient time to monitor the implementation
- Limited resource material
- Inability to obtain the resource material
- Problem of adjusting to change

In the area of the follow-up process, **deficiencies include:**

- insufficient staff to monitor
- inability to obtain quality feed back on curriculum implementation.

Strengths and successful aspects of the process of curriculum change:

1. Teacher involvement at all levels of the process
2. Regional collaboration
3. Support of the political directorate
4. Appropriate planning
5. Increased training opportunities
6. Development of Minimum Competency Tests
7. A Materials Production Unit with fully trained staff
8. Focus on Information Technology which is a unit by itself.