

OECS EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY

Summary, strategies and recommendations

Introduction

The Consultation on Education Reform of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), held in Antigua in July 1991, was part of a large process. This paper not only puts the Consultation in its context, but reports on the end product: the Education Reform Strategy that was developed and approved by the OECS.

Over the last five years there have been several significant international and regional initiatives in education. These include the UNESCO Major Project in Latin America and the Caribbean; the Caribbean Consultation and World Conference on Education for All; the CARICOM Colloquium on the Future of Education leading to the creation of the CARICOM Advisory Task on Education; and the Study of Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean spearheaded by the West Indian Commission. As a result of these initiatives, several agencies have renewed their interest in the education sector.

At the national level, Ministries of Education acting on their own initiative, and in conjunction with regional and international forays, have sought to update their plans for education for their particular countries. The outcome of these national, regional, and international thrusts in education has been an explosion in the demand for information, numerous uncoordinated actions, and an over load of requests to Ministries to develop projects.

It is against this background that Ministers of Education of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), at their meeting in Tortola in October 1990, anxious for action but determined to maximize scarce resources through functional corporation in the sub-region, decided to develop a long-term comprehensive OECS Education Reform Strategy.

Purpose

Acting on the decision of the Ministers of Education, after consultation with the Ministries of Education, and with financial assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency, the Director-General of the OECS Secretariat established the Education Reform Working Group in March 1991

The Working Group was mandated to produce an education reform strategy within six months of its appointment and its mission was clearly set out in its Terms of Reference:

1. Review the relevant literature and documentation on the state of education in the sub-region and relevant issues.
2. Develop a conceptual strategy for an educational reform strategy for the sub-region, identifying all the elements of the educational systems that should be addressed.

3. Organize sub-regional and national consultations involving key personnel from Ministries of Education, education specialists, and persons of proven experience in the field of education, to discuss the conceptual framework, priority areas, and a possible implementation plan for any sub-regional strategy developed.
4. Consult with important sectors/interest groups in OECS member states (e.g., labor unions, the private sector, parent-teacher associations, political parties, religious denominations, and others to be identified) to ensure the widest possible community input in the creation of a sub-regional strategy having due regard to local concerns/priorities.
5. Ensure that due consideration is given to the design of a sub-regional strategy for current and foreseeable demographic trends.
6. Give due consideration to the possibility's for the application of the concept of "Centers of Excellence" in the overall reform of the education sector.
7. Convene a forum of distinguished intellectual leaders in the region to discuss issues and options, and articulate visions for the sub-region's educational future.
8. Take into consideration, in pursuance of its mandate, the exercise being executed by the Caricom Advisory Task Force on Education in an effort to arrive at the most effective strategy for education reform in the OECS sub-region.
9. Seek the development of a reform strategy to prepare a profile of priority areas from which regional projects can be developed for external funding.
10. Submit to the Director General, within a period of approximately six months after initiation of the exercise, the draft regional strategy.

Process

The activities and exercises undertaken by the Working Group can be briefly set out as follows:

1. Analysis of the education systems of the sub-region.

The Working Group analyzed the education systems of the OECS countries by developing a conceptual framework consisting of six elements and nine perspectives.

The six elements were:

- The education of children; early childhood and primary schooling.
- The education of adolescents; secondary schooling.

- The education of adults; formal and non-formal programs.
- The terms and conditions of service of teachers.
- The management and administration of education.
- The financing of education.

The nine perspectives were: past reforms; current policies; the legal basis of education; access and equity issues; efficiency and wastage issues; quality and effectiveness issues; technology and methodology practices; constraints; and vision and mission.

The six elements and nine perspectives constituted the conceptual matrix within which the strengths and weaknesses of education, as it is currently organized, were identified, as well as the issues and problems that should be addressed in the reform process.

2. Interaction with chief education officers of OECS countries.

Throughout the period of the exercise, the Working Group used every, available opportunity to interact with the chief education officers of the OECS countries with the view of benefiting from their considerable experience.

3. National consultations.

The Working Group visited each of the eight OECS countries and consulted with a broad cross-section of persons and interests in each country. Written comments were invited and received in several instances. Each national consultation was carried out over two or three working days.

4. Commissioning of literature reviews and studies.

The Working Group commissioned state of the art reviews on several aspects of education in order to benefit from the best available knowledge and information on those aspects of the operation of education systems.

5. Sub-regional Consultation.

The Working Group held a three day sub-regional consultation in Antigua between July 1 - 3, 1990. The participants were the authors of the reviews referred to previously, Caribbean experts in education, representatives of regional agencies active in the field of education, international agencies funding educational development in the Caribbean, and officials of the Ministry of Education of Antigua and of the Antigua State College.

Limitations of the Process

The Terms of Reference required the Working Group to have extensive consultations within and outside the sub-region. There can be no question about the wisdom and advisability of such a requirement. However, the time allotted to conduct and complete the exercise placed great constraints on the consultative process itself. More time was also needed for regional consultation. In addition, the Working Group was hampered in its task by the difficulty of obtaining reliable, comparable, historical, and current data on various aspects of education in the OECS.

The Working Group fully understood the urgency of the Ministers of Education and the Secretariat to have the task completed. Hence, despite the limitations of time and data, the Working Group met the deadlines for producing the Reform Strategy.

Education in the OECS

The education system in all eight countries is organized into four different levels: early childhood or preschool; primary; secondary; and tertiary. The following is a brief profile of formal education in the sub-region:

1. Early childhood education is provided through a partnership between government and private interests. The common elements to the provision of preschool education are:
 - Shared responsibility for providing schooling between the private sector, the churches, other non-governmental organizations, and the government.
 - User fees.
 - Decentralized administration and decision making, with a high degree of community involvement in all aspects of governance.
 - In-service training as the main modality of training teachers.
 - Low costs per student enrolled.
2. There is very good coverage at the primary level. Universal primary education exists in all territories and the vast majority of children receive at least six years of primary schooling. Gender equity exists in access to and participation in primary education. The greatest challenge exists in making adequate and appropriate provisions for children handicapped by various disabilities.
3. While there have been improvements in access to secondary schooling during the 1980s, provisions vary widely in the sub-region. British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and St. Kitts-Nevis offer universal secondary education. Grenada, and possibly Antigua and Barbuda, offer secondary schooling to more than half the school-age population. In Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, access to secondary schooling is highly restricted and limited to the school places available. More girls than boys have been in receipt of secondary education and are entered for the CXC examinations.

4. The provision of tertiary education is out of step with the rest of the education system. Coverage at the tertiary level is poor. Universal primary education and mass secondary schooling culminate in minuscule opportunities at the tertiary level. The sub-region has a history of sending their nationals abroad to receive tertiary education.
5. Teacher-pupil ratios at both the primary and secondary levels are favorable. The schools are adequately supplied with teachers. However, except for Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat and St. Kitts/Nevis, high proportions of unqualified teachers man the primary schools. With exception of B.V.I., Montserrat, and possibly Antigua and Barbuda, the proportion of graduate teachers staffing secondary schools is uncomfortably low. In several countries the secondary schools are manned by a high proportion of unqualified teachers. In all countries most of the qualified teachers in secondary schools were trained as primary school teachers. Training levels for secondary school teachers in the region need to be significantly improved.
6. The primary schools' systems are efficient in terms of the rate of promotion from one grade to the next, the drop out rate, and the rate of completion of primary schooling in the prescribed time. The vast majority of students entering primary schools are promoted annually, remain in school, and complete the primary cycle in the minimum time allowed. From the limited data available, literacy levels of the adult population appear reasonably good, except in St. Lucia and to a lesser extent in Dominica.
7. The secondary schools are not as efficient as the primary schools. In some countries, particularly Grenada, there is a high degree of wastage in terms of the proportion of students who fail to achieve the prescribed standards in the GCE and CXC examinations. However, four countries namely Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, British Virgin Islands and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have performed, over the last seven years, as well as the best in the rest of Commonwealth Caribbean.
8. The OECS sub-region compares favorably with the rest of the Commonwealth Caribbean in terms of the quality and effectiveness of primary and secondary schooling as measured by CXC examinations results. However, caution must be exercised in generalizing these findings given the shortage of instructional materials, the high proportion of unqualified teachers, and poor learning environments in many schools. The examination results may mask poor quality on cognitive dimensions not measured by paper and pencil tests, and on important non-cognitive attributes.
9. Educational costs in the sub-region appear modest and effective, particularly at the primary level. Government expenditures on education are at reasonable levels. While there is room for improvement in the proportion of government resources allocated to education, St. Lucia may have reached the point where it is not reasonable to expect additional outlays on education unless there are additional inflows of government revenue. When international comparisons are made in terms of cost effectiveness, there is no justification for wholesale change in all aspects of education in the sub-region. While some areas are in need of improvements, the returns on investment in other areas are impressive.

10. Disparities exist between countries on several of the quantitative measures. Caution therefore must be exercised when proposing reform measures as these must take account of the variations between countries. The reform strategies in education must take account of the differing strengths and weaknesses of the existing systems in the eight countries of the sub-region.

Development Imperatives

Education in any society is shaped by political, economic, social, demographic, and cultural imperatives which are simultaneously the context and the substance of education reform. Education can be a means of conserving existing political, economic, social, and cultural forms or a mechanism of fostering change. Education is a means that can serve both ends.

Only a mere listing of the major political, economic, social, cultural, and demographic parameters of education in the OECS is possible here.

1. Political imperatives.

- The close proximity and shared history of OECS countries seem to dictate some form of political unity. While the exact form and extent is difficult to determine, political unity is an item on the OECS developmental agenda.
- The state in the 1960s and 1970s increasingly assumed greater responsibility for all aspects of communal life. Following the austerity and ideological shifts of the 1980s, the state in the 1990s is being re-evaluated. Divestment of state responsibilities is a contemporary issue.
- OECS countries are micro states whose continued existence seems to depend upon functional sub-regional cooperation as their cornerstone.
- Much of the apparatus and structures of the colonial state remain intact. Top down decision making, secrecy, patronage or antagonist relationships, and centralization are enduring characteristics. These seem inconsistent with open and free democratic societies.

2. Economic imperatives.

- OECS countries have small, open economies with marked dependencies on external factors and great vulnerability to hemispheric and global trends. They are based largely on primary agricultural products, like sugar and bananas, with tourism becoming an increasingly important sector.

- These economics are now confronted with several world-wide trends:
 - a. Increasing globalization: This includes the globalization of consumer tastes, rapid movement of funds through modern technological devices in response to anticipated changes in interest rates or exchange rates and the desire of the USSR, China and Eastern European countries to participate fully in the world economy.
 - b. Regionalism and the growth of mega-blocs in the field of trade. Examples of these are the US-Canadian-Mexican initiative, the European Single Market in 1992, and the emergence of the Pacific Rim.
 - c. Services (e.g., tourism and high tech) are becoming more important than manufacturing in world production and trade. These factors provide both problems and opportunities for the OECS.
- Whether or not the region could make the switch from a strategy based on the development of natural resources to a strategy that depended on development of human resources, knowledge, and technology will not determine the future of the OECS economic development.
- Education and training, therefore, should address the manpower needs of the following sectors over the next 20 years. They are:
 - a. Tourism and tourism-related services.
 - b. Modernized agriculture to ensure food security and adequate linkages with the tourism sector.
 - c. Financial services.
 - d. Maintenance and repair of equipment and machines.
 - e. Micro-processing services.
 - f. Knowledge- intensive services.

3. *Social imperatives.*

- Widening socioeconomic and gender disparities.
- Increasing deviant behavior among males.
- Deteriorating social infrastructure crumbling under the weight of increased demand for services.

- Declining linkages between education and material progress.

4. *Cultural imperatives.*

- Increasing cultural penetration of North America in the Caribbean and corresponding counter- penetration of Caribbean culture into North America and other parts of the world.
- The conflict between the Euro-centric focus of the Caribbean school culture and traits which derive mainly from African and Asian heritage
- The growing potential to export cultural goods.
- The challenge to include the fine arts, the performing arts, and physical education and sports as subjects to equal the academics in the curriculum of secondary and tertiary institutions.

5. *Demographic imperatives.*

- In all OECS countries, it is projected that there will be a decline in the school-age population over the next 20 years.
- Not only are there indications of significant decline in fertility in most OECS countries, but also clear signals of the aging of the populations.
- The implications of these demographic trends are that, with the exception of British Virgin Islands, St. Lucia, and possibly Antigua and Barbuda, by the year 2010 there will be considerably less demand for early childhood, primary and secondary schools since there will be significantly fewer children to be catered to than is currently the case. However, demand for tertiary and adult education will increase significantly.
- The new immigration policies and labor demands in North America have fueled extraordinary levels of migration to the United States and Canada since the mid-1960s and show no sign of being abated. The OECS countries are estimated to have lost nearly 15 percent of their total population through net migration during the 1960s and another 14 percent during the 1970s. Preliminary data for the 1980s seem to indicate that migration was even higher than in previous years; estimating a net loss through migration in the 1980s of 20 percent.
- The prospect of migration fundamentally distorts any attempt to link local economic indices with educational levels in the region. OECS education therefore is required, by its clientele, to respond to economic possibilities and opportunities beyond those available through the local economies.
- The education system and the economy are not closed systems that are so linked that there is direct correspondence between levels of economic and educational development.

- There is no reason to believe that this feature of the region is going to disappear in the immediate future, unless the economies are drastically transformed. In such circumstances, educational planning and reforms must take migration into account. To ignore it is folly.

For both societal and educational development to be sustained, they must take into account, and relate positively to, the imperatives listed above. Education, properly focused and planned, can allow societies to shape their future in desirable directions in spite of prevailing conditions. However, those prevailing conditions cannot be ignored or wished away. They must be confronted and dealt with constructively and creatively.

OECS EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY

The Education Reform Strategy outlined here is the product of the Working Group's analysis of education in the Sub-region; the opinions expressed in national consultations; the papers presented at the sub-regional consultation; and linkage of these with the developmental imperatives shaping the sub-region. This Education Reform Strategy was approved by the Ministers of Education of the OECS at their Meeting on the 9th and 10th of October 1991 in Dominica.

A. Strategies for Harmonizing the Education Systems or the OECS

The Objectives.

- To mobilize the governments and peoples of the OECS to make the transition from development strategies based on the exploitation of natural resources to strategies based on the development of human resources, and the mastery and production of knowledge and technology.
- To inspire the governments and peoples of the OECS to shape the developmental imperatives determining their future by exercising their creativity, imagination, and problem -solving capacities.
- To further promote among the OECS countries the concepts of cooperation, collaboration, sharing, and learning from each other's experiences in the process of educational development.
- To facilitate, on a sub-regional basis, the incorporation of new ideas, thinking, and approaches to education developed inside and outside the Sub-region and the Caribbean.
- To remove education in the OECS from the vagaries of ad-hocracy and set it on a planned, long-term path with the capacity to evaluate its progress and to make needed adjustments.

- To provide to the rest of the Caribbean a model of functional cooperation in education to meet contemporary challenges.
- To preserve the cultural sovereignty of the region and to provide a framework for cultural enrichment.

The Strategies.

The reforms noted here are those that are general to the entire education system and are not restricted to any one level or aspect.

Strategy 1. Harmonize the education systems of the sub-region by:

- a. Adopting a common designation and specification of age bands and/or attainment criteria for each class group at the primary and Secondary levels.
- b. Standardizing the curricula of both the primary and secondary level in the sub-region. Common curricula would also facilitate the sub-region standardization of textbooks used at both levels.
- c. Standardizing the programs of teacher preparation in the several colleges of the sub-region and ensuring that the program is consistent with the common curricula adopted and developed in the sub-region
- d. Articulating the OECS technical and vocational education and training board with the process of educational reform in the sub-region. Such articulation is necessary to ensure the harmonious and integrated development of technical/vocational education within the sub-region

Strategy 2. Create a common legal framework for education within the sub-region.

Kenny Anthony's study of the legal framework of education in the OECS has revealed a number of deficiencies which make education systems in member states vulnerable to litigation. Countries of the OECS all share a common judicial system, so common legislation, which would promote the harmonization of their education systems, is both possible and feasible. Besides, a centralized drafting of the appropriate legislation would enable some member countries to overcome the limitations usually faced while drafting legislation.

Strategy 3. Promote environmental education at both the primary and secondary levels.

This would best be done through the Infusion Method where information about the environment and attitudes towards it are presented through material incorporated into several subjects in the curriculum.

Strategy 4. Strengthen foreign language and inter-cultural learning across all levels of education in the sub-region.

Foreign language learning constitutes one of the educational weaknesses in the Commonwealth Caribbean including the OECS sub-region. The same holds true of learning about other cultures. The proposal here is that school systems in the OECS should adopt a foreign language policy that seeks, by the year 2010, to make at least 90 percent of students at the end of secondary school fluent in at least one foreign language commonly spoken in the region, and at least half the students fluent in two languages other than English.

Strategy 5. Establish a central mechanism for curriculum development.

In developing creativity, imagination, and the capacity for problem solving, education systems in the OECS will have to effect major curriculum reforms and will have to develop an enhanced capability to evaluate student performance. What is proposed is a pooling of resources and the development of sub-regional subject committees similar to those used by the Caribbean Examinations Council to revise syllabi, to draft syllabi in new subject areas such as those proposed for the reform of secondary education, and to develop appropriate instruments to assess student performance.

Strategy 6. Review the recommendations of the OECS/CIDA Primary Textbook Feasibility Study with a view to implement them and carry out a similar feasibility study of textbooks used in secondary schools.

Strategy 7. Commission a study to determine the worthiness of establishing a centralized unit to ensure the appropriate use of the media and new technologies for educational purposes.

Strategy 8. Initiate an exercise designed to develop an explicit philosophy of education, for the sub-region.

The main components of this exercise would be:

- Studies of the philosophies implicit in the books, syllabi, and other curriculum materials, and the instructional strategies commonly used by teachers.
- National consultations and sub-regional conferences on what ought to be the guiding values, attitudes, and outlooks of education in the sub-region. The focus should be on the formation of Caribbean society and the formation of the Caribbean person.
- A review of the lessons learned from similar reforms elsewhere.

B. Strategies for Reforming Early Childhood Education

The Objectives.

The major objectives of the strategies for the reform of early childhood education - i.e., education of children aged three to five years - are:

- To expand the offerings in early childhood education to meet the demands throughout the sub-region.
- To strengthen the partnership between the private and public sectors with a view to providing this level of education on a more equitable basis.
- To improve the quality of the education offered.

The Strategies.

Strategy 9. Continue to promote and facilitate private initiative and philanthropic contributions as the major sources for the creation of preschools.

Strategy 10. Introduce appropriate legislation and administrative guidelines to ensure effective regulation of the establishment and operation of preschools.

Strategy 11. Permit the establishment of preschool departments within both primary and secondary schools where these schools are under-utilized.

Strategy 12. Promote awareness programs for parents and other care-givers in the home.

Strategy 13. Provide government assistance for the following:

- a. Teacher training.
- b. Curriculum development; design and production of materials.
- c. Teachers' salaries.

C. Strategies for Reforming Primary Education

The Objectives.

To improve the quality of primary education in the sub-region.

To transform the prevailing practices of primary education from an emphasis on student passivity to an emphasis on student interaction and independent learning.

To make primary education more responsive to the special needs of students.

Since countries of the OECS have developed self-sustaining systems of primary education which are reasonably efficient, the focus of the strategies is the provision of capital and developmental inputs that would have a maximum impact on the quality of education while minimizing recurrent costs.

The Strategies.

Strategy 14. Modernize the primary school plant.

Strategy 15. Improve the quality of primary education by:

- a. Expanding and improving the quality of teacher education.
- b. Establishing teacher resource centers in association with teacher education institutions.
- c. Instituting training for primary school principals.
- d. Evaluating and assessing streaming where this practice currently exists in primary schools in the sub-region.
- e. Encouraging schools and teachers to experiment with a wide variety of instructional strategies.
- f. Adopting functional standards that primary schooling should achieve.
- g. Establishing a system of student records.

Strategy 16. Democratize the management of primary schools.

To achieve democratization, a management board should be established for each primary school. Such a board would be made up of representatives nominated by parents, teachers, churches, past students, and community members. The board, which would be linked to the National Education Advisory Council, would be responsible to the Ministry for the day-to-day management of the school and would be mandated to foster closer links between the school, the homes, and the community it serves.

Strategy 17. Establish support services in respect of children with special needs.

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

Strategy 18. Integrate the creative and fine arts into the teaching/learning process.

To stimulate creativity and imagination, students should be encouraged to explore concepts, ideas, and social situations through the medium of creative and fine arts.

Strategy 19. Review the mechanism for the transfer of students from the primary to the secondary level.

D. Strategies for Reforming Secondary Education

The Objectives.

- To expand the provision of secondary education in the sub-region.
- To re-conceptualize its nature, form, and content.
- To improve its quality.

The Rationale.

Secondary education and schooling have a multifaceted character.

- It is education for persons at a particular stage of human development (i.e., adolescence).
- It is education of a standard above that of the primary level.
- It is intermediary education, that is, it can no longer be considered terminal education for those who receive it.
- It is schooling which can enhance and foster social cohesion and solidarity on the one hand, and deep social cleavages on the other, depending upon how it is structured.

Taking into account this multifaceted character of secondary education, the approach adopted here is that education beyond the age of 11 or 12 should relate to the developmental process of the children. The assumption is made that in each chronological age group (cohort) there will be children at different developmental stages. These stages can be broadly defined as:

1. Precocious or gifted in several areas. These children are developmentally advanced in relation to their peers and account for approximately 10 percent.
2. Normal. These children's capabilities are considered standard for that stage and constitute about 50 percent.
3. Developmentally lagged or slow learners. These children can achieve the same stage as the so-called "normal children," but will take a longer period of time and will require sympathetic and supportive treatment from teachers and parents. They account for about 25 to 30 percent.
4. Developmentally disabled. These children are moderately or severely disabled in one or more areas, and are not able to achieve all that the so-called "normal" children can achieve or attain even with sympathetic and supportive treatment by teachers and parents, and make up 10 to 15 percent.

There are, however, two important qualifications to these assumptions:

- a. Categories overlap and are not mutually conclusive.
- b. Empirical studies and surveys are needed to give approximations of the incidence of the different categories in any particular society at any given time. For example, the occurrence of severe malnutrition or Rubella could significantly alter the incidence of various developmental disabilities in a specific cohort of children.

The Strategies.

Strategy 20. Restructure the school system along the following lines:

- a. The rest of the OECS should follow British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis in providing schooling to all children up to the age of 16 years.
- b. All territories should aim to transfer all children who are not developmentally disabled; that is, approximately 90 percent of each age cohort to secondary schooling.
- c. All countries should provide special schooling for the developmentally disabled up to age 16.
- d. The transfer from primary to secondary schooling should be based on satisfying functional standards of literacy and numeracy at the primary level (this would lead to the phasing out of the Common Entrance Examinations which still exist within the sub-region).

- e. The age of transfer should be allowed to vary between 10 and 13 years.
- f. Establish certification for students reaching the functional standard or primary education, such as a primary school leaving certificate, in order to add structure to continuing and adult education.
- g. Establish mechanisms to maximize continuity of instruction between primary and secondary schooling.
- h. Establish two exit standards of success for those leaving secondary school: one standard would be the current CXC and the other would demand cognitive competence one year below the current CXC standard.

Strategy 21. Re-conceptualize the program in secondary education as follows:

- a. General education that would emphasize and promote:

- Problem solving
- Creativity and imagination
- Independent judgment
- Generic technical skills
- Inter-personal skills

- b. A common curriculum in first three years.

The subjects of the Common Curriculum would be English language and literature, mathematics, integrated science, integrated technology, social studies, foreign languages, physical education, religious and moral education, and the creative and performing arts.

- c. Introduction of broad specialization in the last two years.

Specialization would be introduced so students would be allowed to choose the subjects to make up their program. The guidelines for choice should promote combinations of various subjects. There should be a requirement that all students should study English and at least one foreign language.

- d. The concentration of individual schools on particular areas of specialization, since no one school could offer all the programs.

The areas of specialization in individual schools would need to be evenly allocated so that all programs are offered in the sub-region, if not in each country.

Strategy 22. Encourage innovation in the schools in respect to the following:

- a. Semesterization of at least some programs of instruction.
- b. Setting and other forms of grouping for instruction.
- c. Modular programs.
- d. Flexible programming across year groups.
- e. Internal assessment and promotion strategies.

Strategy 23. Improve the quality of secondary schooling by:

- a. Establishing a program of training school principals.
- b. Establishing a comprehensive program for educating and training secondary school teachers in the sub-region. The sub-region should aim to create a self-sufficient capacity to train secondary school teachers in sub-regional institutions.
- c. Lengthen school days to five and one half hours of instruction where this is not currently applicable.
- d. Strengthen foreign language teaching through cooperation with neighboring non-English speaking Caribbean and Latin American states.

Strategy 24. Strengthen support services:

- a. Guidance and counseling.
- b. Social welfare.
- c. Libraries and learning resources.

Strategy 25. Articulate secondary schooling with:

- a. The upper primary grades.
- b. Tertiary programs.
- c. Continuing education.
- d. Regional, sub-regional, and national TVET programs.

Strategy 26. Promote:

- a. Enrichment programs in vacation periods, particularly the summer. Clubs, societies, and other extra-curricular activities could be reorganized on a concentrated basis in vacation periods instead of the one to two hours per week that is currently being practiced.
- b. Sub-regional and regional exchanges of students and teachers.

E. Strategies for Reforming Tertiary, Continuing, and Adult Education

The Objectives.

- To transform tertiary education into the engine of human resource development and of knowledge generation in the sub-region.
- To facilitate the consolidation of technology transfer to the sub-region.
- To provide the opportunity for educational renewal and advancement for all citizens with relevant educational background...

The Rationale.

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

- a. Specialization within the context of vocational interests.
- b. Integration of education with specialized skills training and consequently their articulation within the working world.
- c. The lifelong education and training of the Eastern Caribbean citizenry as technologies change, society is transformed, and other related developments occur which will require education and training responses.
- d. Provide additional chances for individuals who did not capitalize on earlier education and training opportunities.

The Strategies.

Strategy 27. Continue the amalgamation and integration of small single- disciplined colleges into larger multi-disciplinary institutions.

- Strategy 28.* Increase tertiary education by expanding existing institutions and adding new institutions where necessary.
- Strategy 29.* Re-think and reorganize Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) to produce a standardized system which functions as a partnership with the private sector and which is intimately integrated into the working world.
- Strategy 30.* Facilitate and provide on-going professional training for educators in adult education, TVET, and the formal tertiary system.
- Strategy 31.* Mandate tertiary institutions to establish more intensive and extensive working relationships with the sectors, occupations, and individuals they serve.
- Strategy 32.* Revise existing legislation to give tertiary education a sound legal basis.
- Strategy 33.* Restructure the governance of tertiary institutions to allow greater autonomy, wider national representation and require greater accountability.
- Strategy 34.* Rationalize the existing programs in terms of their relevance, costs, demand, and maximal utilization of the available qualified teachers.
- Strategy 35.* Encourage private and public sector initiatives in providing continuing education for adults through programs which are self-financing.
- Strategy 36.* Articulate programs at tertiary institutions with those at the University of West Indies and other universities within the Caribbean region.
- Strategy 37.* Upgrade the modes of delivery of tertiary education in keeping with current world-wide trends.
- Strategy 38.* Ensure equity in the access to tertiary education of students from poor homes, females, and rural residents.

Strategy 39. Provide hostel accommodations for out-of-island students.

Strategy 40. Create an Eastern Caribbean College Council under the aegis of the OECS Secretariat.

The Council would be authorized to:

- a. Coordinate programs and specializations in all government tertiary institutions in the sub-region.
- b. Monitor the development of tertiary education and liaise with regional and extra-regional tertiary institutions to ensure accreditation of programs done in the OECS.
- c. Determine and validate costs in tertiary institutions.
- d. Act as a clearing house in the transfer of funds from countries to institutions for support of their students.

F. Strategies for Reforming the Terms and Conditions of Service of Teachers

The Objectives.

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

The Strategies.

Strategy 41. Improve the salaries of professionally qualified teachers.

Strategy 42. Improve benefits to teachers by implementing health insurance and mortgage assistance schemes.

Strategy 43. Improve the working conditions of teachers in the schools.

Strategy 44. Expand teacher training to achieve 90 percent trained teachers at primary and secondary levels by the year 2000, by:

- a. Increasing the teacher education capacities of the sub-region.

- b. Creating regional centers of specialization for training of technical/vocational teachers.
- c. Establishing scholarship and loan schemes to allow teachers to take advantage of the training being offered in these institutions.
- d. Providing opportunities for the continuing education of teachers and introduce requirements for teachers to refresh themselves professionally at least every five to seven years.
- e. Establishing a national quota for teachers to be trained annually.

Strategy 45. Enhance the status of the teaching profession by:

- a. Establishing the legal parameters of teacher authority to protect teachers in the exercise of such authority.
- b. Encouraging teacher organizations in the sub-region to establish a code of ethics for the teaching profession.
- c. Introducing pre-service training of teachers as mandatory.

Strategy 46. Establish a career path for teachers.

The following are proposed:

- a. Introduce paid ranks – senior teachers and Vice Principals – between the current starting grade of qualified teachers and principals. Such posts should be established in all schools based on formulae that would need to be developed.
- b. Posts should be provided so that at least one-third of the qualified teachers in a school could be promoted to these ranks.
- c. Mechanisms should be established to determine the duties and responsibilities of these senior teachers within the school.

G. Strategies for Reforming the Management and Administration of the Education System

The Objectives.

- To restructure and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and administration of the educational system at both the central and institutional levels.

The Rationale.

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

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

The Strategies.

Strategy 47. Promote wider participation in the management of education by:

- a. Appointing national advisory councils of education with well-defined roles and membership coming from a wide cross-section of the society.
- b. Establishing individual school boards with extended powers (e.g., in the areas of staff selection, financial management, discipline of staff and students).
- c. Establish students' councils and guidelines which specify the issues on which these councils should be duly and appropriately consulted in all secondary and tertiary institutions.
- d. Re-design the procedures and practices used in the supervision of schools to include greater involvement and participation of principals and teachers,
- e. Review the dual system of education management.

Strategy 48. Provide adequate and appropriate training in management and administration for ministry and school.

Strategy 49. Pool education development specialist resources in the OECS.

There is no territory that currently has development specialists covering all of the following areas: planning, curriculum development, measurement and evaluation, special education, education media and production, guidance and counseling, adult education, and project management. The proposal here is to pool the education development specialists by:

- a. Re-organizing the existing territorial specialists into a sub-regional network mandated to deliver specialist support to the education systems in the sub-region.
- a. Creating central units of development specialists in planning, curriculum development, measurement and evaluation, media and production, adult education, special education, and project management. These central units could be located in different territories or in a single territory depending on what was considered most desirable and effective.

Strategy 50. Establish independent bodies to award scholarships.

Attention is drawn to the highly personalized environment of small states leading to the problem of excessive political influence on personnel selection and training. It is recommended therefore that a broad based selection committee for scholarship awards be set up in the Ministry responsible for education. Such a committee would then set up appropriate strategies to ensure fairness in the allocation of awards.

Strategy 51. Create an autonomous OECS human resource development institute.

This institute would be designed to constantly monitor human resource development in the sub-region, produce decision-oriented research, conduct policy studies, carry out project and program evaluation, and promote innovative responses to perennial problems.

Strategy 52. Review the existing organizational structure of Ministries.

The current rigid separation of administrative/financial and professional education functions in the organization of Ministries of Education has created numerous problems in the operations of Ministries and in the management of the education system.

H. Strategies for Reforming the Financing of Education

The Objectives.

- To increase the financial resources allocated to education from all sources.

- To maximize the efficient and effective deployment of such resources.
- To promote long-term investment in programs and projects and in the education sector generally.
- To ensure public accountability for the funds allocated or granted.

The Strategies.

Strategy 53. Redefine and Restructure financial obligations of the stakeholders in the education system.

- a. The State should assume full responsibility for tuition at the primary and secondary levels. Free tuition at the primary and secondary levels should be provided within the context of a balanced budget. To ensure that the State shoulders this responsibility on a continuing basis, the State should be required by law to allocate a set proportion of its annual budget to education: at least 20 percent of its overall budget, of which at least 75 percent would go to provide tuition in primary and secondary schools. These figures are derived from current sub-regional averages and are illustrative of the principles being enunciated. (A study would need to be done to determine the exact proportions that are feasible and workable from several perspectives.)
- b. Parents would be expected to take responsibility for books, transportation, nutrition, clothing, and examinations fees.
- c. Philanthropic organizations and individuals should be encouraged to give assistance to parents unable to meet their obligations.
- d. The costs of tertiary education should be shared between the state, students, and employers.
- e. Where regular taxes are unable to meet the cost of new developments, the State could introduce special taxes whose proceeds would be used to finance developments, partially or totally. The proceeds from the tax should not form part of the general revenue of the Government and therefore should not be part of the Consolidated Fund, The State should be required to account annually and publicly for the deployment of the revenue collected for this purpose.
- f. There should be some monitoring mechanism, established by law, to ensure that all partners are fulfilling their obligations.

Strategy 54. Guarantee the education subvention and decentralize the control of spending.

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

- a. That the funds allocated in the annual budget are disbursed to the Ministry of Education.

- b. That, with the exception of teachers' salaries, the control of spending by the Ministry of Education be decentralized to school boards which would be accountable to the Ministry on an annual basis.
- c. That school boards would retain all funds raised or earned by the school and be able to deploy those funds as they see fit. Ministry permission would only be required where the board seeks to erect buildings in government-owned schools.

Strategy 55. Devise equitable bases for allocating funds to schools.

Strategy 56. Strengthen the financial management capabilities of Ministries of Education and of schools and colleges.

Strategy 57. Introduce cost recovery schemes for tertiary education and for specific Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Strategy 58. Provide incentives for private investment in education seeking to deliver services, produce materials and education software, and market education expertise.

Strategy 59. Limit and control external borrowing for education.

External borrowing should only be resorted to in very specific circumstances.

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

I. Strategies for the Reform Process

The Objectives.

To ensure, the long-term success of the reforms by providing the following:

- Scope for resolution of those issues not fully agreed to or determined at the outset of the reform process.
- Capacity to adjust the reform strategy in the case of unanticipated and unplanned developments, and/or unintended outcomes of planned strategies.

The Strategies.

Strategy 60. Accept the reform strategy as a whole.

The education reform strategy cannot be implemented all at once. Yet the overall reform strategy needs to be adopted as a whole. While some aspects can be implemented almost immediately, others will take years before meaningful action can be taken. The proposal is that:

- a. Ministers of Education of the OECS in their October 1991 annual meeting accept the education reform strategy in principle.
- b. On the recommendation of the Ministers of Education, the Central Authority of the OECS would accept and endorse the entire strategy in principle.

Strategy 61. Mobilize the sub-region for implementation.

The Proposals are

- a. Distribute the reform strategy to all the groups, institutions, and individuals that participated in the national consultations.
- b. Circulate the reform strategy to ALL regional agencies engaged in education in the sub-region.
- c. Ministers of Education should table the reform strategy as a White Paper in Parliament.
- d. Convene a Donor and Regional Agencies conference. Invite government and opposition spokesmen, advisors, and representatives from critical interests within the OECS to this conference.

Strategy 62. Establish an education reform council to coordinate, manage and monitor implementation.

The council should be named by and report to the Ministers of Education of the OECS. The OECS Secretariat staff directing the implementation of the reform strategy should be ex-officio members of the council. The CARICOM Secretariat, University of West Indies, CDB, Carneid and CXC should be given observer status on the council. The mandate of the Council would be as follows:

- a. To further refine and develop the strategies and approve the programs and projects.
- b. To develop cost-estimates concerning the capital, developmental, and recurrent expenditures that the reform strategies imply.
- c. To develop a plan of implementation.
- d. To monitor progress in the implementation of the reform.
- e. To report annually to the Central Authority.
- f. To negotiate with national authorities regarding their participation and timely implementation of agreements.
- g. To ensure linkage and coordination with regional initiatives.
- h. To negotiate with international agencies for funding support.
- i. To ensure continued consultation within the OECS concerning all aspects of the reform.

Strategy 63. Establish a reform unit staffed with professionals to support the education reform council.

Strategy 64. Establish national priorities.

The eight countries of the OECS are at different stages of development in their education systems in introducing various aspects of the reforms. This requires that each country assess itself within the comprehensive strategy in order to establish its own priorities. The following is proposed:

- a. That countries with National Education Advisory councils or committees would mandate these bodies to determine the national priorities and liaise with the OECS Education Reform Council concerning all aspects of implementing the reforms.

- b. That countries without National Education Advisory councils or committees would need to establish a National Commission on Education Reform which would determine national priorities and liaise with the OECS Education Reform Council concerning all aspects of implementing the reforms.

Strategy 65. Commence Implementation through the immediate development of some projects.

Action in the field is critical to the success of the implementation of the reform strategy. It is important to start promptly, and to maintain the momentum by implementing additional elements of the reform in a timely manner. The proposal here anticipates that there will be phases in the implementation plan, and suggests the possible content of Phase 1. It is expected that Phase 1 would consist of two elements: a) strategies that could be implemented almost immediately, and b) the commissioning of studies where immediate action is not feasible.

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The Group benefitted from the participation of Dr. Wolfgang Teschner, OECS Education Advisor, in its working sessions.