



(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia, Tuesday February 8th 2011) Education officials in the OECS have made a major stride towards enhancing access to all levels of learning for residents across the nine Member States.

The OECS Education Reform Unit (**OERU**) says during a recent regional workshop on enhancing data management to further inform OECS education policy there was a major development where OECS Education Officials made a breakthrough in the methodology for conducting data quality assessments in Member States: “

We applied an assessment framework that the World Bank uses with development partners and we made some breakthrough. Therefore we are going to recommend to the World Bank that the methodology we developed in our workshop be considered in other regions. In fact, the consultant who worked with us perceived that the methodology might yield better results if used in other countries. So this is one good outcome of this workshop where we have added to the knowledge of the World Bank and to the development work being done in the other regions.”

The OERU welcomes this as one of the success stories coming out of the regional workshop on data gathering which ended on Friday January 28th in Saint Lucia: ***“What we are seeking to do here is to address two essential issues in education. One is how we improve access to all levels of education, from early childhood to tertiary education. Secondly we want to improve the student performance overall. There are a number of factors influencing those two variables in terms of access and quality and we are talking about the management of the system, teacher inputs, levels of resources and the use of technology in learning. In fact there are a whole host of issues where we need to look at the existing policies and perhaps make policy shifts to help improve access by all students to all levels and quality of education. So essentially we are providing the basis upon which we will be in a better position to take those policy decisions through effective data gathering.”***

The OECS workshop on data management also considered the timeliness and quality of data for policy decision making: “***This is the first in a series of steps to help our countries make greater use of evidence based decision making. There is going to be a revised assessment of our country positions to help determine their needs gaps and we will also assist Member States in improving their individual data gathering systems.***”



The OECS Education Reform Unit shares the view that greater efficiency in using evidence based information to improve the quality of the education sector, creates far reaching benefits for students and other stakeholders: ***We are not the only users of education data. We are just one of many and based on the complaints we have been hearing from others such as Development Partners, Students, Researchers, etc, all of us are concerned about the quality and timeliness of the data. Hence, this workshop also sought to help persons involved in the management of data such as collection, storage, dissemination, processing and reporting get a better appreciation of the areas that need to be improved upon. This includes the accessibility of data produced at the various ministries of education to the users.***” -Albertin

The OERU adds that in April 2011 OECS Education Officials will reconvene to look at common key indicators against which they will report on progress at the national and regional levels. This, the OERU says, will eventually enhance the basis on which to monitor the impact of policies, programmes and projects in Education. **End**