



## **ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

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During the period under review, there is a continuing thrust to incorporate ICTs in education and training from primary through the tertiary level of the educational system.

Under the aegis of the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, Telecommunications, Science and Technology, an ICT-based learning project, Education Max, was launched in two private primary schools in 2009. It was intended to benefit both public and private primary schools throughout Antigua and Barbuda. The Education Max sought to introduce ICT-based learning into the primary school curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 6 (5 – 12 years of age). At the same time, this initiative strengthened English literacy, numeracy, health awareness and computer literacy.

The Ministry of Education organised workshops at the secondary level, to orient principals and to guide teachers in the integration of technology into education. A component of these workshops was devoted to the development of strategic plan for ICT at each school plant.

An increasing number of facilitators at the tertiary level are using the available technologies to enhance the delivery of their courses. Some courses use a blended approach of face to face and e-learning while at least one course is fully online. These courses are only offered to students who are currently registered in the regular face to face programmes.

Two challenges arise to limit these activities:

- a fully developed infrastructure to include dedicated servers and reliable connectivity with appropriate bandwidth, and
- resource persons to support the delivery of online courses.

In fact, once these hurdles are overcome, it is envisaged that using ICTs in ODL programmes could provide a useful mechanism to narrow the gap between successful and unsuccessful learners in the formal education sector.

At the community level, an increasing number of Community Computer Access Centres/Empowerment Centres provide an opportunity to deliver ODL programmes. These can be used to further the mandate of the Ministry of Education to provide full access to

universal secondary education. The need here is for development of suitable content at the various levels across the curriculum. These centres can also be utilized to fulfill the need for community-based life-long learning.

In keeping with this vision, every effort has been made to engage in initiatives which develop trainers and provide resources for ODL. Hence, Antigua has benefited from the following training exercises initiated by COL during the period under review:

1. In collaboration with Open Campus, University of the West Indies, “Managing and Facilitating Online Instruction Course”, March 09 – April 19, 2009
2. Under the auspices of the Virtual University of Small States in the Commonwealth, Antigua participated in two (2) “bootcamps” namely:
  - International Training and Materials Development Workshop in Maritime Training, particularly Transport and Logistics, November 23 - December 11, 2009.
  - Business and Entrepreneurship at the Bachelor’s degree level, March 7 – March 25, 2011.
3. Training to enhance the work of the Education Broadcasting Unit. The regional workshop in Dominica in June 2009 aimed at equipping participants with the skills to produce short multi-media productions. The practical component of this objective is yet to be completed. The unit currently develops educational programmes which are aired on the local television and radio stations. EDU also prepares stimulus material in digital format to support the teacher in the classroom.

**PRIORITY AREAS WHICH COL CAN SUPPORT DURING THE NEXT THREE YEAR PLAN 2012-15.**

1. Technical Assistance with the Development of a Digital Development Strategy.
2. Provide technical training to staff at the Antigua State College in the use of Moodle to fully expand the reach of programmes to non-campus students, particularly those resident in Barbuda.
3. Development of infrastructure, human and material resources required in an Open School environment. This system is being considered to support “at risk” groups existing in the formal education system.
4. Further strengthening of the Educational Broadcasting Unit to produce appropriate indigenous materials to enhance the use of technology in education. This would

involve workshops with intensive practical component in scriptwriting, recording and editing in the production of short multi-media productions.

5. Assist in the training of health media workers to provide appropriate culturally relevant educational materials.
6. Create a one stop e-bulletin zone for farmers and agricultural practitioners. The purpose of this initiative is to provide ready access to information pertinent to increased food production and improved production systems.