



COUNTRY PRESENTATION: BARBADOS

By: Sylvia Henry

Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is the newly named government agency responsible for the formulation of educational policy and for the administration and regulation of education and educational policy in Barbados. Up to December 2007, the Division of Youth Affairs and Sports was responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies on youth development and sports. A recent change in governmental administration has resulted in a reorganisation of Ministries.

The Barbadian education system caters to approximately 28,000 students at the primary level, 22,000 students at the secondary level and 14,000 at the tertiary level including those enrolled at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. Within the education system there are 71 public primary school, 1 infant school, 7 public nursery schools, 20 public private schools, 22 public secondary schools, 2 public special education schools, 2 private special education schools, 7 private secondary schools, 3 tertiary level institutions, 1 teachers' training college and 1 central administration agency.

Mission

The mission of the Ministry is to:

- ensure equitable access to quality education programmes for all our citizens so that their potential is fully realised; and
- assist in the development of responsible citizens who are disciplined, industrious, creative and confident and who can function effectively in a modern society.

Main Goals

Some of the main goals of the Ministry are to:

- provide high-quality free education for all, from pre-school to tertiary education;
- provide a wide range of higher education and training opportunities to enable those best able, to avail themselves of these facilities to

- develop the professional, technical and other skills they can use to further their careers and contribute to the development of the Barbadian economy and society;
- to promote gender fairness which will produce citizens who are well-balanced, disciplined, creative, self-reliant persons who can think critically and function effectively in a modern society; and
 - use technology as a tool to facilitate teaching and enhance learning

Access to Quality Education

Having achieved the goal of universal access to education, it was only natural that Barbados sought to ensure that students, at all levels should benefit from quality education. Additionally, teachers should be given the tools and resources to allow them to deliver quality education. It was therefore necessary to redefine the school environment to include the utilisation of technology as a tool for learning and as a facilitation of expanded access to educational opportunities, particularly at the post-secondary level where access was limited.

Use of ODL in Barbados

1. Distance Learning/ Open and Flexible Learning Project at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic Project- currently 19 courses;
2. ODL training for teachers in the area of special education;
3. UWI Open Campus for non traditional students who reside in countries without a campus;
4. Establishment of e-campus at Barbados' Audio Visual Aids department to enable online support for programmes and services offered by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.
5. Online Dissemination of HIV/AIDS information and healthy lifestyle information;
6. Codrington College theological Seminary and online facility for teaching and learning;
7. Cave Hill School of Business and gradual repositioning to increase the number of online business courses.

Importance of COL to Barbados' Agenda

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development appreciates the willingness of COL to assist with the development of Barbados' capacity to develop the human resources required for economic and social development, and to support some of the priority initiatives in education. Some of these priority initiatives are as follows:

1. developing quality assurance systems for the Barbados Certificate of Secondary Education and the Barbados Accreditation Council;
2. application of Open and Flexible Distance Learning to increase access to post secondary education; as well as the developing and strengthening of systems, models and materials for higher education through open universities, like the Virtual University for small states of the commonwealth (VUSSC). One policy of the government is to establish a community university to allow for a higher level of access to education for all persons;
3. Increasing awareness, building capacity and developing content for learning in the education sector through online programmes offered at our Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, and online mentoring and learning support for teachers and principals;
4. Expanding teacher education through combinations of open and distance learning and classroom focused training, as well as increasing opportunities and capacity for developing and delivering quality professional development for teachers and other education sector personnel such as education officers;
5. Development of e-Enterprise or self-employment programmes to assist unattached youth who spend considerable time on the “blocks” without gainful activity, and provision of access to facilities for training and positive personal empowerment.

Given the major thrust in Barbados to revolutionise its system through the use of cutting edge information communication technologies, COL can provide valuable assistance as Barbados continues to:

1. make sense of the ICT revolution and the appropriate use of technology in training and the enrichment of education in general;
2. expand opportunities of e-access at the post–secondary level;
3. focus on educational research, quality assurance and quality control of all programmes;
4. offer divergent opportunities for teacher development, alternative forms of schooling and special education;
5. extend its e-learning possibilities of interfacing with distant agencies;
6. allow for a more efficient sharing of expertise and skills, research data and educational materials through online collaboration across e-campuses.

*Commonwealth of Learning
Regional Focal Points Meeting
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Online Access to Education and a Life
Sustainability

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Mission

- Ensure equitable access to quality education for all
- Development of responsible citizens



Main Goals

- Provide a wide range of higher education and training opportunities
- Provide high-quality free educational opportunities for all citizens from pre-school to tertiary
- Use technology as a tool to facilitate teaching and enhance learning
- Promote gender fairness



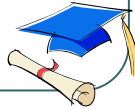
ODL in Barbados

- *Providing food and education are the most important things for the development of the individual and a nation. Morris, 2005*



ODL in Barbados

- Distance learning or Open and flexible learning has the potential to offer new learning opportunities unrestricted by distance, time or individual differences among students
- Demand for places has outstripped the supply at post-secondary level
- Need to free space for HIV/AIDS education and Drugs education



ODL in Barbados

- Centre for Open and Flexible Learning was officially opened at the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic, Barbados in December 2003 and offered 5 courses to 164 students in the first year
- Instructors were trained in design, delivery and management of online courses



ODL in Barbados

- Led to integration into areas with partner institutions
- Challenge to overcome faculty resistance through consensus building within a framework that enables teachers to recognize the need for change
- Development of a seamless system for learning at home, school and workplace



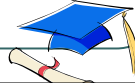
ODL in Barbados

- Challenge to access sufficient funds and technical support to maintain ODL projects and consistent delivery to students



ODL in Barbados

- Over 30 persons have been trained to deliver ODL courses
- In first two years 350 students had enrolled in 5 courses
- Completion and graduation rate has been 50%
- Great benefits for Council for Disabled



ODL in Barbados

- Special Education
- Preparing of teachers of special education through ODL with Mt St Vincent University Canada
- UWI open campus facility for non-traditional students who have no campus in their country



ODL in Barbados

- E-campus at Ministry of Education , Barbados to enable online support for educational programmes and services
- Online dissemination of HIV/AIDS education and Health and Family Life Education information



ODL in Barbados

- Theological education for Christian ministry
- School of Business , Cave Hill Barbados and access to degrees and diplomas in Business Administration



COL and Barbados' Agenda

- Barbados Certificate of Secondary Education and Accreditation Council
- Expansion and sustainability of ODL at post-secondary level and associated training of persons to deliver courses
- Development of ODL to support leadership training for education officers, principals and teachers aspiring to be leaders



COL and Barbados' Agenda

- Development of E-enterprise opportunities to assist unattached, at-risk youth
- Technical expertise as we continue to place these new areas of learning into perspective
- Expertise as we engage in educational research and data-driven instruction
- Better inclusion of special needs in planning



COL and Barbados' Agenda

- Wider opportunities for linkages with distant agencies and inter-e-campus collaboration



The End

- Barbados looks forward to sharing mutual benefits and collaboration with its partners in education in the future

